

Food Stamp Outreach Toolkit

Utahns Against Hunger
Utah Department of Workforce
Services



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Why Food Stamp Outreach?

- The Food Stamp Outreach Program is as an effort between Utahns Against Hunger and the Department of Workforce Services to increase our reach to Utahns who are struggling with food security and eligible for food stamps but not receiving them. The purpose of the Outreach Program is to support and increase the work that community organizations employees do in educating individuals about the benefits of the Food Stamp Program and how to access benefits.
- Food stamps, known as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Access Program) at the federal level, is a federal nutrition program managed at the state level. In Utah the Food Stamp Program is managed and distributed by the Department of Workforce Services.
- According to DWS, currently about 19% of Utahns who qualify for food stamps do not receive them. Research shows that the number one reason that people do not apply for food stamps is that they do not know they are eligible. By partnering with organizations who work with marginalized and at-risk populations, we hope to increase the Utah participation rate by helping more people learn about their eligibility.

Food Insecurity in Utah

- 1 in 8 (11.9%) of Utahns are food insecure (USDA).
- 12.9% of Utahns suffer from food hardship (FRAC).
- Child food insecurity in Utah is 18.2% (Feeding America).
- Utah ranks last (51) in the nation in the School Breakfast Program participation (FRAC, USDE).
- 19% of Utahns who are potentially eligible for food stamps do not participate in the program.

Food Stamp Usage in Utah

- 53% of participants are children, 12% are people with disabilities, and 6% are seniors (DWS)
- 75% of participants have some form of income (DWS)
- The average benefit amount is \$125.15, roughly \$4 a day (DWS)

Outreach Basics

Outreach Activities

Outreach activities are any activities that educate the public on the Food Stamp Program and help them receive food stamp benefits. Your most common outreach activities will be educating clients using the food stamp brochures, screening clients for eligibility using the Food Stamp Calculator (see pg. 26), and providing application assistance-including helping clients complete the application, complete the interview, and provide verification documents (see pgs. 25-31).

What will your organization do?

- Screen for clients who are potentially eligible for food stamps
- Provide education about the benefits of food stamps
- Assist clients with accessing Utah's online food stamp application
- Track and report the number of clients provided food stamp assistance along with the household data collected
- Report any best practices learned while assisting clients
- Report any barriers or issues encountered

Allowable outreach activities

- Eligibility pre-screening (see pg. 26)
- Application assistance (see pgs. 26-29)
- Assistance obtaining verification documents (see pg. 28)
- Information dissemination
- Oasis Insight (see pgs. 9-14)
- Outreach exhibits or booth at community events
- Conducting outreach workshops
- Trainings
- Development of printed educational or informational materials
- Translation of materials

Non-reimbursable activities (allowed, but may not be counted as outreach hours)

- Activities supported by federal funds
- Private volunteers
- Acting as an authorized representative
- Transporting clients to or from DWS offices
- Providing tokens, voucher, or similar items for transportation clients to or from DWS offices

Prohibited Activities (contract will be terminated if performed)

- Interference during certification interviews
 - FNS defines interference as attempting to influence, interfere with, or otherwise attempt to affect the result of an interview
- Campaigning on behalf of specific applicants or recipients
 - Outreach workers may be present to provide support or help explain complicated terms
- Recruitment of individuals to participate in food stamps
 - FNS defines recruitment as an activity intended to persuade an individuals who has made an informed choice not to apply for food stamp benefits to change his or her decision

Outreach Workers CAN:

- Assist clients with the application or interview
- Be present during the interview to assist the client
- With the client's permission, follow up with DWS on behalf of a client's application
- Help a client challenge their eligibility status if they feel they have been wrongfully denied
 - Inform clients of the benefits of food stamps
 - Encourage clients to apply for food stamps

Outreach Workers CANNOT:

- Try to influence DWS eligibility workers
- Answer questions, or provide answers, for a client during an interview
- Attempt to change a client's eligibility status by contacting DWS without the client's permission
 - Attempt to change a client's mind about applying for food stamps

What will UAH do?

An Outreach Manager from UAH will manage the Outreach Program and will be your primary contact. The Outreach Manager will:

- Facilitate reimbursement process for 50% of employees' salaries for time spent on outreach activities
- Provide training and policy related assistance
- Monitor the monthly data in Oasis Insight (pgs. 9-14)
- Conduct yearly in-person monitoring to observe outreach process, collect feedback, and provide additional training
- Serve as an intermediary with Department of Workforce Services

Outreach Ideas

You may find that screening clients is not enough to interest people in applying for food stamps, and you may desire to do additional outreach activities. These activities can be fairly simple, or more involved. Do what fits best with your organization's mission and resources.

- Distribute flyers or brochures with the benefits of food stamps, shopping tips, or how to apply
- Include food stamp information with any food or other materials that you distribute
- Partner with your local DWS office and discuss outreach opportunities
- Table at community events
- Work with the local school districts, Head Start offices, senior centers, Veterans Affairs, churches, homeless shelters, refugee centers, clinics, and other direct service providers to distribute information
- Host a food stamp event; feature a cooking demonstration, shopping tips, or share success stories, along with information dissemination and application assistance
- Submit an op-ed or letter to the editor about the benefits of food stamps to the local paper

How to Find Clients?

You may need to seek out clients, especially if you are not a direct service provider. There are a number of techniques for finding clients, from asking for referrals to media campaigns.

- Ask for referrals
 - Direct service providers
 - Clinics/health workers
 - Community centers
 - Religious communities-churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.
- Submit a press release or write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper
- Create posters, flyers, brochures, and other printed materials for distribution at community events
- Post on social media

Tracking Hours

Any time spent on allowable outreach activities should be tracked on the **Time and Effort Logs (ATTACHMENT B)** provided by the Outreach Manager. These logs require documentation of the number of hours spent on outreach activities each day, along with a brief description of the activities.

A separate time and effort log must be kept for each employee that is participating in the Food Stamp Outreach Program. If an employee or organization has no hours to report for a month, the time and effort log should still be turned in to the Outreach Manager.

Time and effort logs are due to the Outreach Manager by the 10th of the following month (e.g. January's log is due February 10th), or the next work day if the 10th is a holiday or weekend. Any time and effort logs that are received after the reimbursement request has been sent to DWS will be ineligible for reimbursement.

Name: Ollie Outreach

Title/Position: Case Manager

Location: Utah Food Pantry

Month: January

Day	Hours Worked	Activity
1	2	Application assistance
2		
3	2	Talking to clients about food stamps
4	1	Oasis
5		
6		
7		
8		
9	3	Application assistance
10	2	Application assistance
11	2	Oasis
12		
13		
14	2	Community Presentation on Food Stamp benefits-utah Library
15		
16		
17	1	Screening clients for eligibility
18		
19	1	Application assistance
20		
21	1	Helped client verification documents
22	1	Oasis
23		
24		
25	2	Talking to clients about food stamps
26	3	Application Assistance
27		
28		
29		
30		
31	1	Oasis

Month's Total Hours: 24

Oasis Insight

Oasis Insight is an online database that is used by the Food Stamp Outreach Program. Every client that is provided with application assistance should have a profile on Oasis, whether they receive food stamps or not. A complete Oasis profile may require following up with clients to find out if they qualified for food stamps.

This is a required activity that is vitally important to the success of the Outreach Program. The information gathered in Oasis is an important key to determining the success of the outreach efforts. The demographic information requested is especially important, and allows the Outreach Manager and DWS to see if target populations are being reached. Organizations that do not enter information to Oasis in a timely manner may be denied reimbursements.

Because some identifying information will be entered into Oasis, clients must give permission to release their information. Have the client sign the **Release of Information Form (ATTACHMENT A)** before you begin any application assistance. Explain that this information is solely for tracking purposes and will not affect the client's eligibility for food stamps. If for some reason a client refuses to sign the release form, provide them with assistance and do not create an Oasis profile.

Information is due in Oasis the 10th of the following month, or the next work day after if the 10th is a holiday or weekend, along with time and effort sheets (e.g. January's log is due February 10th). It is best to enter the information into Oasis as you assist the client with food stamp application, as much of the information will be duplicated.

<https://uah.oasisinsight.net/>

The screenshot displays the Oasis Insight web application interface. At the top, the user is identified as Melissa Jensen, PLUS, with Utahns Against Hunger. The navigation bar includes Home, My Agency, Agencies, Events, and Admin. The main content area features a yellow banner for 'Introducing Custom-Built Reports!' and a 'Community Dashboard' with three key metrics: 212 people served, 81 applications, and 1,826 if approved. Below this is a welcome message and a 'Bullets' section containing a 'QuickStart Guide' and an attached PDF file named 'Oasis Insight - Quick Start UAH.pdf' (82.2 KB). The left sidebar lists 'Recent Cases' and 'Recent Searches'.

Oasis Insight Melissa Jensen PLUS
Utahns Against Hunger

FEEDBACK HELP CONTACT ADMIN LOG OUT

Home My Agency Agencies Events Admin

SEARCH
ADD NEW CASE
BARCODE MODE

Recent Cases
Denise Paulino
Anna Melugin
Ella M Acosta
Esmeralda Lepe
Stephanie Bradley
Lorna Ricetti
Zeniff Hathaway
Antonia Shuman
Michelle Lane

Recent Searches
kacy carroll (0)
kacy carroll (0)
theresa archuletta (1)
theresa archuletta (1)

Using Custom-Built Reports!
One report. One click. Everything you need. — [Click here to learn more](#)

Community Dashboard 212 people served 81 applications 1,826 if approved, what amount?

Welcome to Oasis for Utahns Against Hunger! Thanks to your efforts, we can monitor those who receive Food Stamp assistance and get a better picture of who is qualifying. We can also better understand the barriers that prevent people from receiving assistance. Thank you for your help!

Bulletins ADD BULLETIN +

[Here is A QuickStart Guide!](#) Fri, Jun 7, 2013 at 11:10 a.m. | EDIT | DELETE

Please find the attached file. Hopefully you will find this to be a helpful resource.

ATTACHED FILE
Oasis Insight - Quick Start UAH.pdf 82.2 KB

Posted by Marti Woolford from Utahns Against Hunger Post the first comment

1 Bulletin Previous Next

This is the Oasis Insight home screen that is seen upon log in.

To create a profile for a new client, click **Add New Case** on the top left.

Add Case

Identification Income & Expenses Demographics

First Name * Middle Name Last Name * Suffix

Maiden Name Nickname

Date Of Birth (MM-DD-YYYY)

Head Of Household

Household Type — Required (Select at least one)

Low Income Worker
 Senior (Age 65+)
 Limited English Proficiency
 Mixed Citizenship Status
 N/A

Household Size — Required

----- ▾

This screen will then be generated to create a profile for the client. Fill out as much information as possible; some information is required.

The most important information on this screen, besides the name, is the **Household Type**. This information is how the Outreach Manager and DWS track if target demographics are being reached.

The screenshot shows a vertical sidebar on the left with categories: Other, Pacific Island, Education, Marital sta, and Employment. The main form area contains four questions, each with a dropdown menu:

- Question 1: "In The Last 6 Months Have You Had To Decide Between Buying Food Or Medicine? (Intended For Senior Households)"
- Question 2: "In The Last 6 Months Have You Had To Decide Between Buying Food Or Other Medical Expenses? (Intended For Elderly Households)"
- Question 3: "Have You Received Food Stamps In The Last 12 Months?"
- Question 4: "IF YES, Why Did You Go Off Them?" followed by a text input field.

Four tracking questions are mid page on the client profile. While not required, these questions are very helpful in painting an accurate picture of food insecurity in Utah and should be answered every time.

The first two are only intended for senior households. Other households should skip them.

The second two are intended for all households. They help the Outreach Manager and DWS identify barriers

The screenshot shows the "Identification Numbers" section. It features a table with two columns: "Description" and "Number". Below the table is a blue link that says "Add Identification Number". At the bottom of the section are two buttons: "Add Case" (with a green plus icon) and "Cancel" (with a red X icon). There are also navigation arrows on the right side of the section.

At the bottom of this page, where it says "Description" write "Case Number" and under Number add the client's myCase number, if they have one.

Add Case

Identification | **Income & Expenses** | Demographics

Income Sources

Name: Phone: - - Amount: Interval:

[Add Income Source](#)

Expenses

Name: Phone: - - Amount: Interval:

[Add Expense](#)

[Add Case](#) [Cancel](#)

There are two other tables on the client’s profile that should also be completed. The first tab is Income and Expenses. This will help the Outreach Manager and DWS compare those who are receiving earned or un-earned income.

Add Case

Identification | Income & Expenses | **Demographics**

Gender

Female
 Male
 Transgender
 Prefer Not To Disclose
 Other (Enter A Value Below)

Ethnicity

Education

College
 Highschool-Incomplete
 Highschool/GED

Marital Status

Divorced
 Married
 Single
 Widowed
 Other (Enter A Value Below)

The second tab is Demographics. This should be completed as thoroughly as possible.

OasisInsight Melissa Jensen PLUS
Utahns Against Hunger

SEARCH | ADD NEW CASE | BARCODE MODE

Recent Cases: Susie Smith, Rodney Rollins
Recent Searches: Joe Smith

Personal Info for Susie Smith

Address: 123 Main Street, Anycity, UT 33333
County: Salt Lake
DOB: Feb 2, 1950 - 65 years old

Mailing Address: Not Provided
Maiden: Not Provided
Nickname: Not Provided
Personal Income: Not Provided
Household Income: \$11400 yr (\$950 mo - 550% poverty)
Personal Expenses: Not Provided
Household Expenses: \$6300 yr (\$525 mo)
Total Living in Household: 3

Case #: C0004
Phone: Not Provided

Other IDs: Not Provided
Details: Gender: Female, Ethnicity: Caucasian, Household Size: 3, # of Minors: 1

History of Modifications
 Modified by Marti Woolford from Utahns Against Hunger
 First Name changed None to Susie
 Last Name changed None to Smith
 Date Of Birth changed None to 02/02/1950

13 Modifications

ADD PHOTO

Susie Smith
 123 Main Street, Anycity, UT 33333
 DOB — Feb 2, 1950
 Case # — C0004

Personal Info | Relationships: 2 | Notes: 0 | Alerts: 0 | Applications: 2

EDIT CASE | MERGE CASE | DELETE CASE | CASE REPORT

To submit the profile, hit the Add Case button and this profile will be generated. Once the profile has been created, the information about the food stamp application must also be added. To do so, click on the Application bar on the right.

OasisInsight Melissa Jensen PLUS
Utahns Against Hunger

SEARCH | ADD NEW CASE | BARCODE MODE

Recent Cases: Susie Smith, Rodney Rollins
Recent Searches: Joe Smith

Applications for Susie Smith

ADD APPLICATION

ADD PHOTO

Susie Smith
 123 Main Street, Anycity, UT 33333
 DOB — Feb 2, 1950
 Case # — C0004

Personal Info | Relationships: 2 | Notes: 0 | Alerts: 0 | Applications: 2

EDIT CASE | MERGE CASE | DELETE CASE | CASE REPORT | PRINT ID CARD

0 Applications

This screen will then appear. To add a new application, click New Application on the top right.

Add Application

SNAP Application Type — **Required**

SNAP Application Status — **Required**

If Approved, What Amount?

0

If Denied, What Reason?

If Other, Please Specify

Follow-Up Date (MM-DD-YYYY)

Description

On this screen, add in all available information about the food stamp application. It might be scarce at first, but follow up with clients after 30 days to find out if they received food stamps or not, and then update it.

Oasis Insight Melissa Jensen PLUS
Utahns Against Hunger

SEARCH ADD NEW CASE BARCODE MODE

Recent Cases: Susie Smith, Rodney Rollins

Recent Searches: Joe Smith

Applications for Susie Smith

ADD APPLICATION

Melissa Jensen
Utahns Against Hunger
Fri, Jan 22, 2016 at 10 a.m. | EDIT DELETE

No description provided

Application for Susie Smith

Household Type - Older Utahns:	Yes
Household Type - Mixed Status:	No
SNAP Application Type:	Initial
SNAP Application Status:	*Pending*
If approved, what amount?:	None
If denied, what reason?:	None
Follow-up Date:	None

UPDATE APPLICATION ADD COMMENT

Susie Smith
123 Main Street
Anydy, UT 33333
DOB — Feb 2, 1950
Case # — C0004

Personal Info Relationships 2 Notes 0 Alerts 0 Applications 1

EDIT CASE MERGE CASE DELETE CASE

1 Application

This is how the application will look after the application information is added. In order to update any information after the client receives notice of their application status, click Update Application on the bottom right.

Reimbursements

When an Outreach Site joins the Outreach Program, they are required to submit a budget that includes the hourly salary and benefit rate of each employee that will be performing outreach work. The benefit rate must be part of an established, standard employment package. Benefits provided may include, health, payroll taxes paid by the employer, retirement, life insurance, etc. and does not include holiday, vacation pay, sick pay, or PTO. The rate is generally around 20%.

Reimbursed salaries may only be funded with the following:

- Private cash/donations
- Public cash
- Cash contributed or donated by non-federal public agencies
- In-kind donations of public agencies

No federal funding is allowed. The Outreach Site must provide some sort of verification that funding for the salaries is not federal, generally a budget or a grant letter.

Volunteer hours may not be reimbursed.

The reimbursement process proceeds each month as follows:

- Time and effort logs, along with any other eligible reimbursements, are due to the Outreach Manager by the 10th of each month
- The Outreach Manager invoices all reimbursable hours and items using a standard formula
- The totals are then submitted to DWS
- DWS sends a reimbursement check to the Outreach Manager
- The Outreach Manager sends a reimbursement check to each Outreach Site

While we try to be as prompt as possible with this process, there are sometimes delays. Reimbursement checks can take up to 2 months. If there are any issues, please inform the Outreach Manager.

Civil Rights Complaints

SNAP Outreach Sites are bound by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits in programs and activities receiving federal funds, discrimination based on:

- race,
- color,
- national origin,
- sex (including pregnancy),
- age,
- Disability,
- political beliefs, or
- religious beliefs

Outreach sites may help a client file a Civil Rights complaint because either the client has a complaint against (1) the outreach site or (2) DWS, and would like assistance. Either way, **Outreach Sites are required to assist in helping file a complaint if help is requested.** In addition, a blue “And Justice For All” poster must be prominently displayed at each Outreach Site. This is the primary method of informing clients of their rights.

In the Event of Allegations of Discrimination:

- Inform the person that they can file a complaint with the USDA. You must ensure that clients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and clients with disabilities have the same access to services as other clients, anonymous complaints shall be handled as any other complaint;
- Complete the **USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027 (ATTACHMENT C)**, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form;
- Sufficient information must be obtained to determine the identity of the agency or individual to whom the complaint is directed towards;
- If the individual makes the allegation(s) verbally or through a telephone conversation and refuses or is not inclined to put the allegations in writing, the person to whom the allegations are made shall write up the elements of the complaint for processing.
- Forms must be submitted to USDA by mail, fax, or email within 180 days of the alleged discrimination, unless a waiver is granted. Forms are available online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer> and should be sent to one of the following:

- Mailing address:

USDA

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Stop 9410

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

- Fax: (202) 690-7442

- Email address: program.intake@usda.gov

Food Stamp Policy

Policy Basics

Policy Manual

It is not necessary to understand all of food stamp policy in order to serve your clients or for them to apply for food stamps. However, a basic understanding will help you answer client questions and navigate the system. If you have questions on any policy issues, your first resource is DWS's Eligibility Policy Manual, available at https://jobs.utah.gov/Infosource/eligibilitymanual/Eligibility_Manual.htm. If you cannot find the answer there, then contact the Outreach Manager.

Eligible Foods

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition program, but as of now there are limited nutrition guidelines on food. It is intended to supplement a household's food budget for the purchase of food that can be taken home and prepared.

Allowed:

- Breads and cereals
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, fish, & poultry
- Dairy products
- Food producing seeds and plants

Not Allowed:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Non-food items: soap, paper products, diapers
- Pet food
- Vitamins & medicine
- Hot food or food sold for on-premises consumption

Horizon Cards

The use of paper food stamps ended in the 1990's with the introduction of the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, known as the Horizon Card in Utah, which works like a debit card. Some clients, especially seniors, may not be aware of this change and may be more willing to apply for food stamps if they know they will receive a card. A Horizon card is given to the client who applied, as well as up to 3 alternate payees: an individual who has access to the EBT accounts, such as a spouse, child, authorized representative, or a protective payee. Food stamp benefits are issued throughout the month, the issuance dates are staggered based on last name. All benefits are available at 6:00 a.m. on the issuance day.

A-G 5th of the month

H-O 11th of the month

P-Z 15th of the month

Horizon cards are accepted at grocery stores, most convenience stores, and some hardware stores, for seeds that produce food (clients should be aware that in some instances hardware stores' registers may not be set up for EBT, even though the seeds are eligible). They are also accepted at over 20 farmers markets in Utah, and some of these markets will match food stamp benefits dollar-for-dollar, up to \$10 each market day. For more information on farmers markets visit <http://www.uah.org/projects-initiatives/fms/>. For seniors, senior center congregate meals accept EBT cards.

If there is an issue with a Horizons Card, the client should call the EBT Card Helpdesk, not DWS, at 1-800-997-4444.

Households

Eligibility and the level of benefits received is determined by the size of a household and its combined income. While DWS makes the official determination based on the household size and income levels, understanding who is counted as a household member is key to helping screen clients for potential eligibility.

All people living together and purchasing and preparing food together must be one food stamp household.

Who Must be Included (all income and assets counted):

- Spouses living together
- Parents and natural, adoptive, and/or step children age 21 years of age and under that live together.
- A child under parental control, under 18 years old, living in the same household with an adult where there are no spousal or parental relationships.
 - Exceptions:
 - Foster care children can be included or excluded
 - Children 18 and younger living with their spouses

Ineligible and Disqualified household members (income and assets count):

Ineligible and disqualified household members do not count to the household size, but their income and assets must be included.

Ineligible household members (ineligible to receive food stamp benefits)

- Ineligible aliens
- Sponsored aliens who do not provide their sponsor's information needed to determine eligibility
- Household members who fail to, or refuse to apply for, or provide a social security number
- Able-bodied Adults without Dependents who do not participate or meet an exemption

Disqualified household members (disqualified from receiving food stamp benefits)

- Persons disqualified for an intentional program violation
- Fleeing felons and probation or parole violators

Who Can be a Separate Household (income and assets not counted):

- A permanently disabled household member who is unable to purchase and prepare food
- Ineligible students
- Non-family members who do not purchase and prepare food
- Live-in attendants who provide medical, housekeeping, child care or other similar personal services
- Boarders to whom a household furnishes only lodging for compensation, but not meals

*Family members normally counted as a household member cannot be a boarder or live-in attendant

Citizenship and Alien Status

To be eligible for food stamps, a client must either be a U.S. citizen or meet specific alien status requirements of those programs. Aliens must meet criteria to be both “qualified” and “eligible.” **Applying for food stamps does not effect immigration status.**

Qualified and Eligible Aliens

- Refugees
- Victims of trafficking
- Asylees,
- Cuban and Haitian entrants
- An immigrant whose deportation has been withheld
- Iraqi/Afghani alien granted special immigrant status

All aliens claiming to be qualified and eligible must be able to provide the supporting documentation, such as visas and court orders.

Undocumented Aliens

Undocumented aliens are obviously not eligible for food stamps, however, children born in the US to undocumented parents are U.S. citizens, and therefore are eligible to apply. The head of household (regardless of citizenship) completes the application for the children. Eligibility is based on total household income, including undocumented household members’ income, but the household size only counts citizens and qualified aliens. **DWS does not submit names of undocumented applicants to U.S. Immigration and Customs.**

Students

The following students are not eligible for food stamps and do not count as household members:

- Age 18-49
- Physically and mentally able to work
- Enrolled at least half time in an institution of higher learning (requires high school diploma or GED)

However, Utah has a large number of non-traditional students that may fall under exceptions:

- Working an average of 20 hours per week
- Participating in State or Federal Work Study
- Receiving Family Employment Program (FEP) or Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) funds
- Physically caring for a dependent child under age 6
- Responsible for physical care of a dependent child from age 6 through 11, who is included in the food stamp household, and it is determined that adequate child care is not available
- Single parent enrolled full-time responsible for the physical care of a dependent child under age 12 who is included in the food stamp household

Income Eligibility

Income Tests

Once the household size has been determined, it is used along with the income to determine eligibility.

The income tests are performed automatically by the eligibility computer system. Households must pass both a **net income test and gross income test** in order to qualify.

- If a household member qualifies as a senior (60+) or person with a disability, only the net income test is used.
- If a household is categorically eligible, neither of the two income tests is used. Instead, the allotment is determined. Categorically eligible households already participate in:
 - Family Employment Program financial assistance (FEP or FEP-TP), including diversion payments or TANF
 - FEP specified relative cases where all household members are included in the financial assistance
 - FEP Emergency Assistance Homeless Prevention Program (for the month the benefit is paid)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
 - General Assistance (GA)

All countable income expected to be received in the issuance month is used to determine eligibility.

- Earned income: wages and self-employment
 - Excludes children under 18 and in school
 - Includes income for ineligible household members
- Unearned income: Social Security, child support, alimony, unemployment, public assistance
 - Tax returns, tax credits, and student loans DO NOT count as income

Gross Income Test: If the gross income is less than or equal to the Gross Monthly Income Limit, the household passes the test. If the gross income is more than the Gross Monthly Income Limit, the household is not eligible.

Net Income Test: Allowable deductions (see pg. 22) are subtracted from the gross income. If the net income is less than or equal to the Net Monthly Income Limit, an allotment is determined. If the net income is more than the limit, the household is not eligible.

Household Size	Gross monthly income (130 percent of poverty)	Net monthly income (100 percent of poverty)
1	\$1,276	\$981
2	1,726	1,328
3	2,177	1,675
4	2,628	2,021
5	3,078	2,368
6	3,529	2,715
7	3,980	3,061
8	4,430	3,408
Each additional member	451	347

Assets

A household's assets must also fall below a limit in order to qualify for food stamps. **An asset is something someone legally owns that is worth money.** An item can never be both income and an asset in the same month.

\$2,250 asset limit for most households.

\$3,250 asset limit for households with household member who is a senior (60+) or person with a disability.

Common assets:

- Savings account or trust fund
- Stocks
- Bonds
- Personal and real property

The following assets are exempt: (DO NOT count)

- 401K/pensions
- Home
- Vehicles
- Tax returns/tax credits
- Assets of SSI/FEP recipients

Deductions

The following deductions are subtracted from the gross income to determine the net income:

- Standard deduction (~\$115)
- Shelter costs
- Court ordered child support or alimony
- Dependent (child) care
- Medical expenses (seniors/people with disabilities only, must be over \$35)

Not deductible

- Student loans
- Senior dependent care (may be deducted as a medical expense if the senior is paying for it out of pocket)
- Car payments

Work Requirements

Many food stamp participants are subject to work requirements. They will be informed of these requirements by DWS, however, often people find these requirements confusing, so it is helpful to let them know what to expect upfront.

Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs)

An ABAWD is defined as someone:

- Age 18 through 49
- Who is mentally and physically able to work
- With no child in the home
 - If a child present in the home, even if not on the food stamp case, the responsible adult is not an ABAWD

An ABAWD can only receive 3 months of food stamps out of a 36 month period unless an exemption or participation requirement is met.

- Working an average of 20 hours per week (80 hours a month, paid or unpaid)
- Participating 20 hours or more per week in a WIOA training program
- Participating 20 hours or more per week in a Trade Act program
- Participating in a combination of work and training

Exemptions (anyone claiming an exemption needs to speak with a DWS employment counselor):

- Chronically homeless
- Family Employment Program recipients including FEP-TP/diversion
- Responsible for the care of an incapacitated person
- Receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits or has applied and/or waiting for a decision
- Participating regularly in a drug and alcohol treatment program (not AA)
- A student enrolled at least half time in any school or training program
- Participating in refugee employment services

ABAWD waivers are in effect in Garfield, Wayne, Grand, and San Juan county.

Employment & Training Program

Certain food stamp recipients are required to enroll in the Employment and Training Program in order to maintain their benefits. Most E&T participants will be adults with children between the ages of 6 and 18.

Food stamp recipients will be notified through if they are required to participate in the E&T program. The letter provides detailed instructions on how the client needs to complete the E&T participation requirements.

It is common for people who receive this notice to not follow through and lose their food stamp benefits. It is important to help clients understand that there is a of potential of work requirements when they complete the food stamp application.

If clients find the instructions confusing or the E&T programing too challenging to complete, they should be encouraged to visit DWS. There are also a number of exemptions that clients may be eligible for. If a client is potentially exempt, they need to speak with a DWS employment counselor in order to receive an exemption. This should be done as quickly as possible after receiving the notification letter, to ensure that the client does not lose any benefits.

Exemptions (anyone claiming an exemption needs to speak with a DWS employment counselor):

Age 47 and older or 16 and younger

Physical or mental disability

Enrolled in a drug or alcohol treatment program- not AA

Receiving FEP assistance

Participating in refugee services

Responsible for the care of a child under 6 or an incapacitated person

Receiving unemployment insurance

Applied for SSI or in the appeals process

Domestic violence issues

Functional limitations

Has some earned income

Homeless

Lacks appropriate child care

Lacks public or private transportation

Lives more than 35 miles from an employment center

Participating in a partner program

Primary language other than English

On probation or parole

Pregnant

Temporarily laid off

Managers/Designee determination

Application Assistance and myCase

Before the Application

Food Stamp Calculator

The Utahns Against Hunger web page provides a food stamp calculator to screen individuals for whether they qualify for food stamps and how much they might receive. It is available at <http://www.uah.org/calc1.html> or on the uah.org homepage. The calculator only provides an estimate of benefits, and is not a guarantee that a person will qualify. It is, however, a good way to gauge if an individual or household may qualify.

Application Time Frames

Everyone who applies for food stamps will receive a Horizon card in the mail within a week. This **DOES NOT** mean that they have been approved for benefits, they still need to receive a DWS notification letter before they can use the Horizon Card.

A phone interview and verifications are required to complete the application; clients cannot be approved for food stamps until these are completed. Applications can take up to 30 days to be processed. If a client has not received notification within 30 days, they should contact DWS.

Clients may be denied benefits because they failed to complete the application, usually they need to provide verifications (identity, income, deductions etc.), but otherwise qualify for food stamps. If this is the case, they should be notified by DWS of what is missing and then have an additional 30 days to complete the application. If they fail to complete the application after the second 30 days, a new application is required. However, benefits will be prorated from the time the first application is submitted.

How to Apply

Online

- <https://jobs.utah.gov/mycase/>

Fill out a paper application

- Available at the DWS offices
- Call 1-866-435-7414 to receive an application in the mail
- The paper application is for Food Stamps, Financial Assistance, Child Care, and Medical Assistance, only need to fill out sections indicated for the Food Stamp Program.

At a DWS office

- Offices are open Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm (local hours may vary)
- For a nearby location, call 801-526-WORK (9675) or visit jobs.utah.gov
- Computers, phones, and translators or interpretive services are available

With UAH or a Community Organization Partner

- UAH: 1-800-453-FOOD (3663)

myCase Application

Online application available at <https://jobs.utah.gov/mycase/>.

If a client is already receiving Social Security, SSI, or other assistance, they should already have an account. An email address is required to create a myCase account. Clients can also log in using their UtahID, Facebook, Yahoo, or Gmail accounts. After the account is created, the client will be assigned a case number.

The application has 5 sections: Person, Income, Expenses, Assets, Other. Each section contains individual items that need to be completed. It is fairly intuitive. At the end of each section there is a comments box, this should be used to explain any irregularities in the client's status or anything that may be confusing about the application. Use the comments, they can sometimes make the difference in clients receiving benefits. All that is required to submit an application is the client's name, address, and signature. However, the more information that is given on the application, the less involved the interview will be and the fewer unnecessary verifications will be requested.

There is a chat feature that can quickly answer questions about the application. However, they will not be able to answer questions about eligibility.

After the application is complete, the application will take you to Wrap Up and Submit. Under Wrap Up and Submit clients will see a PDF of the entire application to review to make sure all information is accurate. Clients may print this off for their own records, it is helpful to write their myCase number on it. In addition, clients will then review the Rights and Responsibilities document and electronically sign before submitting the application. This section explains the laws pertaining to food stamps and how to avoid fraud. After that, the application can be submitted.

Only submit the application ONCE. If it has been submitted online, do not fax or drop off a hard copy too, this creates problems for DWS. After it is submitted a confirmation page will appear with information about the interview portion. This is also helpful to print off, also write the client's myCase number on it.

After the Application

Interview

An interview is required to complete an application, during it an eligibility worker will review all information on the application.

Interview must be completed with an eligibility worker within 30 days of submitting application; it is best for clients to complete the interview within 7 days of submitting application in case they are eligible for expedited foods stamps.

Most interviews are completed on the phone, but a face to face interview can be requested. Phones are open from 8:00am-5:00pm, wait times are shortest before 10:00am. Clients should always keep a record of the name of the eligibility worker who conducts the interview, in case they need to follow up with DWS afterwards.

- DWS Eligibility: 801-526-0950
- Toll free: 866-435-7414

Required Verifications

Verifications may be faxed, mailed, or dropped off at a local office (see pg. 32). The client's case number should be on all documents.

- Identity
- Social Security Number
- Income
- Disability
- Expenses
- Alien status
- Residency

Reviews

Most clients are required to have a 6 month review and an interview every 12 months. All factors of eligibility will be re-addressed

- Elderly/disabled clients with no earned income only have a 12 month review.

Using myCase

Once the application is completed, clients can log back in to myCase to view their accounts. It is also available in Spanish.

- Message center: Will indicate any actions that are required of them-verifications, reviews, Employment & Training program, etc.
- Benefits Tab: If clients are receiving benefits, they can see the current month's benefits, as well as their 12 month benefit history
- Services tab: Clients can see the applications submitted, estimated decision dates, applications denied, interviews needed
- Change Reporting tab: Clients can update any of the information on their case, clients are required to report any changes within 10 days of changes (benefits may be reassessed)

Special Options

Cash Out Option

A client who is eligible for cash-out may ask to change from a cash account to a food stamp account or from a food stamp account to a cash account at any time. Individuals must call in and specifically request this option; it's not advertised anywhere. There is a fee for withdrawals, but it can be helpful for paying for medications.

To qualify for cash-out, ALL household members must either:

- Be age 65 or older
- Receiving SSI (disability)

Expedited Food Stamps

Certain households qualify for expedited service and will receive benefits within 7 days. You don't apply for expedited food stamps, DWS will automatically screen applications to see if households qualify.

- Households with income less than \$150 in monthly gross income and liquid assets that do not exceed \$100
- Migrant or seasonal farmworker households which are destitute and have liquid assets that do not exceed \$100
- Combined gross income and liquid assets are less than the household's monthly rent/mortgage and utility costs

Authorized Representatives

A client may choose to name an authorized representative to assist in applying for benefits, reporting changes, and completing reviews. This representative will also receive a Horizon Card.

Outreach sites MAY NOT serve as authorized representatives, however, for seniors, people with disabilities, and others who have difficulty managing the system, they may want to have someone apply as their authorized representative

Form 114MC (Authorization to Release Information to a Third Party)

This is different than an authorized representative and may be used by outreach sites. Clients can fill out and sign this form to give an outreach worker permission to see their information and case. This way, DWS can release information to the outreach workers if there are questions or issues after the application is submitted. This can be helpful for seniors, people with disabilities, and other who have difficulty navigating the system.

The form may be found at <http://www.deafservices.utah.gov/forms/114MC.pdf>

Clients can also give verbal permission for outreach workers to access their information, but this is a one time granting of permission.

Complaints and Appeals

Occasionally you or a client may run into problems with an eligibility worker, feel that benefits were wrongly denied, or have other problems with DWS. These problems can and should be addressed each time.

Complaints About Eligibility Workers

DWS eligibility workers go through an intense training process, however there is high turnover in the positions, which can sometimes lead to unsatisfactory service. This is rare, but should be reported.

When a client begins an interview, they should clarify and document the eligibility worker's name. If the client decides to complain at a later date, DWS can review the actual call if they have the date and the eligibility worker's name.

If a client feels like they are receiving unfair service at any point in an interaction with an eligibility worker, they should ask to speak with a supervisor. Transferring immediately to a supervisor is the easiest and most effective way to complain about service. However, if a client does not ask to speak to a supervisor in the moment, they can do so later by calling eligibility at 1-866-435-7414 and asking for a supervisor.

Be specific when complaining. Include the date, time, eligibility worker's name, and specific details of the incident. DWS takes these claim seriously, however without these details they may be limited in what investigating and recourse they can take. If the client feels like the supervisor did not properly address the issue, they should then contact Constituent Services at 801-526-4390 or 1-800-331-4341.

If a client feels that an eligibility worker discriminated against them, they should file a complain with the USDA in addition to complaining to the supervisor (see pg. 16).

Appealing Eligibility Decisions

Eligibility is a complicated process. Clients may be denied benefits, even though the food stamp calculator indicated that they may be eligible. However, sometimes mistakes are made by eligibility workers and people are wrongly denied benefits. If a client feels like their benefits were denied, reduced, or ended unfairly, they should appeal it.

Contact Eligibility

A client's first recourse should be to contact Eligibility and discuss their issue with an eligibility worker. They can also request to speak with a supervisor at any time. An eligibility worker can review their case and explain why the decision was made, or if a mistake was made they can start the process to fix it.

Fair Hearing

If a client is unsatisfied after speaking with an eligibility worker, they have a right to a hearing before an impartial administrative law judge if the DWS takes any action regarding their benefits with which they disagree. The ALJ cannot change eligibility rules or policy, but decides if eligibility was correctly determined. Food stamp benefits will be granted to the client after a hearing is requested, however if the ALJ finds that benefits were rightly denied, the client will have to pay these benefits back.

A fair hearing can be requested by:

- Calling 1-877-837-3247
- Filling out a request form
 - A request form can be found at <https://jobs.utah.gov/appeals/490.pdf>
 - Submit
 - Fax: : 877-824-6534
 - Mail: Department of Workforce Services – Fair Hearings, PO Box 143245, Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Resources

Utahns Against Hunger

- Outreach Manager: Melissa Jensen
 - jensen@uah.org
 - 801-214-3227
- Contact
 - www.uah.org
 - P.O. Box 4103, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110
 - 801-328-2561
 - 1-800-453-3663
- Food Stamp Calculator: <http://www.uah.org/calc1.html>

Department of Workforce Services

- <http://jobs.utah.gov/>
 - Apply Online
 - myCase access
 - Online policy manual
- Eligibility
 - 801-526-0950
 - 1-866-435-7414 (toll free)
- Verifications
 - Fax: 877-313-4717
 - Mail: PO Box 143245, SLC, UT 84114-3245
- Auxiliary aids and services
 - Available upon request to individuals with disabilities by calling (801) 526-9240
 - Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call Relay Utah by dialing 711
 - Spanish Relay Utah: 1-888-346-3162
- Constituent Services
 - 801-526-4390
 - 1-800-331-4341.

- Fair Hearing Request
 - Phone: 1-877-837-3247
 - Form: <https://jobs.utah.gov/appeals/490.pdf>
 - Fax: 877-824-6534
 - Mail: Department of Workforce Services – Fair Hearings, PO Box 143245, Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Horizon Card

- Horizon Help Desk
 - 1-800-997-4444

United States Department of Agriculture

- Outreach Toolkit
 - <https://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/about-outreach-toolkits>
- Civil Rights Complaints
 - <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer>
 - Mailing Address
 - USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
 - Fax: (202) 690-7442
 - program.intake@usda.gov

Comunidades Unidas

- Spanish speaking, Salt Lake Valley
 - <http://www.cuutah.org/>
 - 1750 W. Research Way, Suite 102 West Valley City, UT. 84119
- Contact
 - 801-487-4143
 - info@cuutah.org

Attachments

Attachment A: Release of Information Form

Attachment B: Time and Effort Log

Attachment C: USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form

Copies of all attachments can also be obtained from the Outreach
Manager



Release of Information Form

I, the undersigned, authorize _____ to release in good faith copies of all information to UTAHNS AGAINST HUNGER. This includes personal identifying information, contact information, income, and demographic information. UTAHNS AGAINST HUNGER will use this information for their own uses, including monitoring Food Stamp participation and food insecurity in Utah. UTAHNS AGAINST HUNGER will otherwise keep information confidential and will not release any identifying information. I agree that UTAHNS AGAINST HUNGER may contact me to follow up regarding my food stamp application.

This AUTHORIZATION shall be considered as continuing and may be relied upon in all respects unless withdrawn by me in writing.

Signature

Print Name

Date

Food Stamp Outreach Time and Effort Log

Name:

Title/Position:

Location:

Month:

Day	Hours Worked	Activity
1		
2		
3		
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