

Food Stamp Outreach & Access Toolkit

Appendix P: **Glossary of Terms**

All County Letter (ACL) and All County Information Notices (ACIN) CDSS issues these to inform counties of changes to Food Stamp Program rules and regulations.

http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=35

Authorized Representatives (63-402.6) A person who is not a member of the household applying for food stamps, but is designated to attend the interview, provide needed information, and apply on behalf of the household. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=84 Note, food stamp outreach funds cannot pay for an outreach worker to be the authorized representative of an applicant.

ABAWD (Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents) People who may only receive food stamps for three months in a three-year period if they are not working or in an acceptable work program. This rule is waived for economically struggling geographic regions and was waived federally in 2009 through the ARRA. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=121

Cash Out In California, people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and State Supplementary Payment (SSP) are “cashed out” of the Food Stamp Program. This means that they receive an additional amount of cash assistance in lieu of receiving regular food stamp benefits. They are not eligible for food stamps, however, other members of their household may be eligible. If they live with others, their income is not counted in determining eligibility for other members of their household.

Case Number The number assigned by a county welfare department to an individual or family receiving benefits. This number determines which day of the month an individual's or family's food stamp and/or cash benefits will become available.

Categorically Ineligible People who are categorically ineligible include: (1) disqualified drug felons, (2) unqualified immigrants, or (3) sanctioned adult household members (see [Glossary](#)) and (4) SSI/SSP recipient.

CBO (Community-Based Organization) The CBOs referred to in this toolkit are primarily those that serve low-income clients.

CDSS (California Department of Social Services)

County Welfare Department (CWD) or “County” The primary entity that administers the Food Stamp Program in a given county. Official names of CWDs vary by county (e.g., Alameda County Social Services Agency, Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, Solano County Health & Social Services, Yolo County Department of Employment & Social Services).

Change Reporting Households that fall into this category do not submit quarterly reports. Instead they must report specific changes when they happen. Households that are included in this category are: seasonal and/or migrant farm workers, persons who reside on an Indian

reservation, persons who are homeless, and households where all members are elderly or disabled. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=63

Citizenship and Eligible Non-Citizens (63-405) An individual must be a US citizen or a “qualified immigrant” to receive food stamps. “Qualified immigrants” include: lawful permanent residents (LPRs), including American immigrants, refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, or some battered spouses and children. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=113

Deductions Utilized to determine net income for the Food Stamp Program. They are updated every October by state administering agencies and the US Department of Agriculture. Includes items such as housing, standard deduction, utilities, dependent care, and for out-of-pocket medical costs over \$35 per month for elderly or disabled people. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=40

Disaster Food Stamps Applies to households suffering from a natural disaster or household misfortune, and includes three categories: replacement food stamps, expedited food stamps, and disaster food stamps. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=106

Drug Felon Persons convicted of drug-related crimes. In California, people with a felony conviction for possession or use of illegal drugs are eligible for food stamps if they are or have been in a recovery program, or are on the waiting list to be enrolled in one. People convicted of felony drug manufacturing or sales are not eligible for food stamps in California; other people in their household may be eligible. The income of the drug felon is prorated. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=59

EBT (63-603.1) Electronic Benefit Transfer refers to the “debit” card that is now utilized by food stamp recipients. The Golden State Advantage Card is the official name of California's EBT card. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=118

Elderly For the purposes of the food stamp program, anyone over 60 years of age or older.

Eligibility Worker In California, the county employee who is able to determine whether a household is eligible to receive food stamps http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=97

Excluded Household Members (63-402.2) Some people cannot be included in a food stamp household, though their income, or a portion of their income, may be for eligibility calculations for other people in the household. In California, this includes, among others, people receiving SSI/SSP, undocumented non-citizens, and those who have committed food stamp fraud in the past. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=100

Exemption This word is used in different contexts within the Food Stamp Program. 1) When determining gross and net incomes, there are certain items that are not counted. For a further explanation of income exemptions, see Chapter Five. 2) When considering work rules in the Food Stamp Program, some household members can receive an exemption. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=73

Expedited Food Stamps Commonly referred to as “emergency food stamps.” Persons with very low incomes may qualify for this program and, in California, be eligible to receive food stamps in three days. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=107

Fair Hearing Used to appeal an action that impacts a household's food stamp benefits. Can be done in person, via phone, or in writing. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=90

Food Stamp Issuance Tables (63-1100) Updated by the USDA every October; lists the maximum benefit that a household is eligible to receive. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=41

FNS (Food and Nutrition Service) The Federal agency within the USDA responsible for the overall administration of the Food Stamp Program. <http://www.fns.usda.gov>

Federal Poverty Guidelines The Federal Poverty Guidelines are the income guidelines that determine poverty. They are readjusted every year and are used as the bases for eligibility for many means-tested programs like food stamps. To see the most recent poverty guidelines, go to the Federal Health & Human Services Website: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/09poverty.shtml>

Golden State Advantage Card The official name of California's EBT card.

Gross Income A household's earnings before expenses are taken out. Gross income limits for the Food Stamp Program are set at 130% of the Federal Poverty Level. Households with seniors and disabled members do not need to pass the gross income test (i.e., have incomes less than 130% FPL). http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=43

Household (63-402.1) A "food stamp household" refers to all persons within a residence who "purchase and prepare meals together." Some people must be in the same household as other family members, including children under 22 living in their parent's home and people who are married or present themselves as married. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=44

Interview All food stamp applicants are required to participate in an interview with an eligibility worker. The stated purpose of the interview are to: acquaint the applicant with the program, answer questions that the applicant may have, and give the applicant an opportunity to provide additional information necessary to qualify for food stamps. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=97

Legal (or Lawful) Permanent Residents (LPR) Legal Permanent Resident is a term used in this toolkit to refer to immigrants who are in the country legally and are in possession of a valid green card.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Refers to people with limited English skills. For information about the kind of help available for these populations when they apply, go to: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/civilrights/PG594.htm>

Limited Utility Allowance (LUA) Some households who pay for utilities separate from their rent or mortgage do not qualify for the standard utility allowance and must use the LUA when determining benefits. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=146

Maximum Shelter Deduction The maximum deduction that a household can take regarding shelter costs and is adjusted annually by the USDA. Elderly and disabled households do not have a limit to their shelter deduction. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=40

Mixed Status Household A mixed status household refers to a household where some members are undocumented and others are citizens or legal permanent residents. These households must be considered differently in the food stamp application process.

Narrow Categorical Eligibility Effective July 1, 2009, households that were already receiving benefits that have children under the age of 18 can have resources that exceed the food stamp resource limit and still be eligible for food stamps. Counties in California are still in the process of implementing this policy but all must implement by January 2010 for new applicants.
http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=45

Net Income For the purposes of the food stamp program, “Net Income” refers to income after all allowable food stamp deductions are removed. For information about these deductions, see Chapter Four of this Toolkit.

Notice of Action (NOA) A letter from the county notifying the applicant or client of pending or needed action. This is required to be in the household’s preferred language.
http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=188

Notice of Missed Interview (NOMI) Letter sent to food stamp applicants who do not attend their scheduled interview. Informs the applicants that s/he is responsible for rescheduling the appointment. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=97

Overissuance Occurs when the county grants a household more food stamp benefits than the household qualified for. When the county finds its error, it will notify the household that it must repay the difference between the overissuance and the correct amount. Sometimes called a claim or overpayment. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=133

PIN (Personal Identification Number) A four-number secret code that a recipient must use with his or her EBT card to access benefits.

POS (Point-of-Sale) Machine A device that reads EBT cards and allows recipients to buy food with food stamp benefits or make purchases with cash benefits.

Quarterly Report (QR – 7) All households except those who fall under “change reporting” must submit a report every three months to retain benefits. The report form is referred to as a QR-7.
http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=129

Residency (63-401) Applicants must reside in the county in which they apply for food stamps. Residency can be verified through proof of rent/mortgage payments, utility bills, and identity. There is no minimum length of time that someone needs to live in the county to be eligible for benefits there. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=59

Resources (63-501) For the purpose of applying for food stamps, resources are distinguished from income. A resource is property or money that a household has or does not regularly receive. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=69

Resource Limit Households will not be approved for food stamps if they have more than \$2000 in resources (or \$3000 if someone in the household is elderly or disabled). The exception to this is Modified Categorical Eligibility. By January 2010, all counties will have implemented Modified

Categorical Eligibility, which will exempt all households with a child under 18 in the home from the resource limit. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=70

Restaurant Meals Allowance California is one of four states in the country that permits the purchase of restaurant meals with food stamp benefits for special populations. These populations include elderly or disabled people or people without access to a kitchen. This program is only available in some counties.

Sanction A county may sanction an adult from the Food Stamp Program if they do not participate in work programs for which they are assigned. Sanctions may last for one, three or six months.

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) SNAP is the new name for the Food Stamp Program, as designated by the 2008 Farm Bill. States are allowed to select their own names for the program. In California, the Food Stamp Program continues to be used. <http://www.foodstampguide.org/fns/2008/an-08-22.pdf>

SSI/SSP (Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment) SSI/SSP is a cash benefit given to elderly, blind or disabled people. For information about how SSI/SSP clients are excluded from receiving food stamps in California, See Appendix C of this Toolkit.

Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) A fixed amount, set by CDSS, that households that have heating and cooling costs separate from their rent or mortgage can use to calculate food stamp benefits. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=146

Statewide Fingerprint Imaging System (SFIS) This system was put in place in 1996 and was widely implemented by 2000. It facilitates the requirement that all adult members of a food stamp household provide electronic fingerprints. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=158

Students (63-406) Students are eligible for food stamps if they meet one of the following: are employed 20 hours per week, receive federal or state work-study money, have young children, receive CalWORKs, are enrolled in a food stamp employment program, or do not intend to return to school the next semester. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=99

Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA) Households that are not eligible for SUA or LUA, but have telephone expenses, can claim \$20 when calculating food stamp benefits. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=146

Termination The process of the county stopping benefits to the client. The county must provide the food stamp recipient with “timely and adequate” notice if benefits are going to be stopped. This must occur at least ten days before benefits are to end. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=88

Underissuance Occurs when a household gets fewer food stamp benefits than it was qualified to receive. Households have the right to receive these food stamp benefits. http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=132

USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) The Federal agency that administers the Food Stamp Program. (FNS is part of USDA.) <http://www.fns.usda.gov>

Verifications May include proof of income, expenses, and immigration status. Food stamp

applicants must provide verifications in twelve categories relating to their situation. The only verification required for expedited food stamps is proof of identity.
http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=59

Work Registrant (63-407) Work registrants are food stamp recipients between 18 and 55 who are able-bodied and do not have children under 6 years of age. The county determines who must register to work and who is exempt from the work registration requirements.
http://www.foodstampguide.org/?page_id=110