

Pursuant to Section 3 (o) (3) of the Act, maximum food stamp benefits for Guam and the Virgin Islands cannot

exceed those in the 50 States and the District of Columbia, so they are based upon either the lower of their respective

TFPs or the TFP for rural II Alaska.

MAXIMUM ALLOTMENT AMOUNTS ¹—OCTOBER 1997, AS ADJUSTED

Household Size	Urban Alaska	Rural I Alaska	Rural II Alaska	Hawaii	Guam ²	Virgin Islands ²
1	\$154	\$196	\$239	\$197	\$180	\$157
2	283	360	439	361	331	288
3	405	516	628	517	474	413
4	514	656	798	657	602	525
5	611	779	948	780	715	623
6	733	935	1,138	936	858	748
7	810	1,033	1,257	1,035	948	827
8	926	1,181	1,437	1,183	1,083	945
Each Additional Member	+116	+148	+180	+148	+135	+118

¹ Adjusted to reflect the cost of food in June, adjustments for each household size, economies of scale, and 1.00 percent of the TFP and rounding.

² Adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of food in the 48 States and D.C., which correlate with price changes in these areas. Maximum allotments in these areas cannot exceed those in Rural II Alaska.

Dated: November 17, 1997.

Yvette S. Jackson,

Administrator, Food and Consumer Services.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food And Consumer Service

RIN 0584-AC57

Food Stamp Program: Maximum Allotments for the 48 States and the District of Columbia, and Income Eligibility Standards for the 48 States and the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the Virgin Islands

AGENCY: Food and Consumer Service, USDA.

ACTION: General notice.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to update for Fiscal Year 1998 the maximum allotment levels, which are the basis for determining the amount of food stamps which participating households receive and the gross and net income limits for food stamp eligibility. These adjustments, required by law, take into account changes in the cost of living and statutory adjustments since the amounts were last calculated.

DATES: This notice is effective December 8, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Margaret Werts Batko, Assistant Chief, Certification Policy Branch, Program Development Division, Food Stamp Program, Food and Consumer Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302, (703) 305-2516. The e-mail address is Margaret_Batko@FCS.USDA.GOV.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Implementation

As required by Section 3(o) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (the Act), 7 U.S.C. 2012(o), State agencies should have implemented the adjustments to the maximum food stamp allotments reflected in this notice on October 1, 1997, based on advance notice of the new amounts. In accordance with regulations published at 47 FR 46485-46487 (October 19, 1982), annual statutory adjustments to the maximum allotment levels and income eligibility standards are issued by general notices published in the **Federal Register** and not through rulemaking proceedings.

Classification

Executive Order 12866

This notice has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866 and therefore has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Executive Order 12372

The Food Stamp Program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.551. For the reasons set forth in the final rule related notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29116, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services has certified that this action will not have a significant economic impact and will not have an impact on a substantial number of small entities. The action

will increase the amount of money spent on food through food stamps. However, this money will be distributed among the nation's food vendors, so the effect on any one vendor will not be significant.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This action does not contain reporting or recordkeeping requirements subject to approval by OMB pursuant to the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3507.

Unfunded Mandate Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA)

Title II of UMRA establishes requirements for Federal agencies to assess the effects of their regulatory actions on State, local, and tribal governments and the private sector. Under Section 202 of the UMRA, FCS generally must prepare a written statement, including a cost-benefit analysis, for proposed and final rules with "Federal mandates" that may result in expenditures to State, local, or tribal governments, in the aggregate, or to the private sector, of \$100 million or more in any one year. When such a statement is needed for a rule, Section 205 of the UMRA generally requires FCS to identify and consider a reasonable number of regulatory alternatives and adopt the least costly, more cost-effective or least burdensome alternative that achieves the objectives of the rule.

This notice contains no Federal mandates (under the regulatory provisions of Title II of the UMRA) for State, local, and tribal governments or the private sector of \$100 million or more in any one year. Thus this rule is not subject to the requirements of sections 202 and 205 of the UMRA.

Background

Income Eligibility Standards

The eligibility of households for the Food Stamp Program, except those in which, in accordance with Section 5(a) of the Act, 7 U.S.C. 2014(a), all members are receiving "benefits under a State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act [], supplemental security income [SSI] benefits under title XVI of the Social Security Act [], or aid to the aged, blind, or disabled under title I, X, XIV, or XV of the Social Security Act. * * *", is determined by comparing their incomes to the appropriate income eligibility standards (limits). Pursuant to Section 5(c)(2) of the Act, households containing an elderly or disabled member are required to have qualifying net incomes, while households which do not contain an elderly or disabled member must have qualifying net incomes *and* qualifying gross incomes. Households in which all members are receiving Social Security Act title IV benefits or SSI are "categorically eligible;" under 7 CFR 273.2(j)(2) their incomes do not have to be below the income limits.

As provided in Section 5(c)(1) of the Act, the net and gross income limits applicable to food stamp eligibility are derived from the Federal income poverty guidelines established under Section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act, 42 U.S.C. 9902(2). The net income limit is 100 percent of the poverty line. The gross income limit is 130 percent of the poverty line. The guidelines are updated annually. Based on that update, the Food Stamp Program's income eligibility standards are updated each October 1. Instructions for implementation of the required adjustments for October 1, 1997, were issued by the Deputy Administrator of the Food and Consumer Service, Food Stamp Program, in a July 29, 1997, memorandum to all State Food Stamp Program Directors. The revised income eligibility standards for the 48 States (including the District of Columbia, Guam and the Virgin Islands), Alaska and Hawaii are as follows:

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM—OCTOBER 1, 1997—SEPTEMBER 30, 1998

Household size	48 States ¹	Alaska	Hawaii
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Net Monthly Income Eligibility Standards (100 Percent of Poverty Level)			
1	\$658	\$823	\$ 756
2	885	1,106	1,017
3	1,111	1,390	1,278

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM—OCTOBER 1, 1997—SEPTEMBER 30, 1998—Continued

Household size	48 States ¹	Alaska	Hawaii
4	1,338	1,673	1,539
5	1,565	1,956	1,800
6	1,791	2,240	2,060
7	2,018	2,523	2,321
8	2,245	2,806	2,582
Each add. member	+227	+284	+261

Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Standards (130 Percent of Poverty Level)

1	\$855	\$1,070	\$983
2	1,150	1,438	1,322
3	1,445	1,806	1,661
4	1,739	2,175	2,000
5	2,034	2,543	2,339
6	2,329	2,911	2,678
7	2,623	3,280	3,018
8	2,918	3,648	3,357
Each add. Member	+295	+369	+340

Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Standards For Households Where Elderly Disabled Are A Separate Household (165 Percent of Poverty Level)

1	\$1,085	\$1,358	\$1,248
2	1,459	1,825	1,678
3	1,833	2,293	2,108
4	2,207	2,760	2,539
5	2,581	3,228	2,969
6	2,955	3,695	3,399
7	3,329	4,163	3,830
8	3,703	4,630	4,260
Each add. Member	+374	+468	+431

¹ Includes District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) and Allotments

As provided for in Section 3(o) of the Act, the TFP is a plan for the consumption of foods of different types (food groups) that a household might use to provide nutritious meals and snacks for household members. The plan reflects a diet required to feed a family of four persons consisting of a man and a woman aged 20 to 50, a child 6 to 8 and a child 9 to 11. The cost of the TFP is adjusted monthly to reflect changes in the costs of the food groups.

The TFP is also the basis for establishing food stamp allotments. "Allotment" is defined in Section 3(a) of the Act as "the total value of coupons a household is authorized to receive during each month." Food stamp allotments are adjusted periodically to reflect the changes in food cost levels indicated in the changing amounts of the TFP. Prior to the amendment of Section 3(o) of the Act by Section 804 of Pub. L. 104-193, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, allotment

amounts were established on each October 1 at 103% of the cost of the TFP in the previous June. Amended Section 3(o)(4) of the Act now provides that the TFP will be adjusted each October 1 to reflect the exact cost, or 100%, of the TFP for the previous June, rounding the results to the nearest lower dollar increment for each household size, except that on October 1, 1996, the TFP was not to have been reduced below the amounts in effect on September 30, 1996.

To obtain the maximum food stamp allotment for each household size for the period October 1, 1997, to September 30, 1998, June 1997 TFP costs for the above described four-person household were divided by four, multiplied by the appropriate household size and economy of scale factor, in accordance with Section 3(o)(1) of the Act, and the final result was rounded down to the nearest dollar. The maximum benefit, or allotment, is paid to households with no net income. For a household with income, the household's allotment is determined by reducing the maximum allotment for the household's size by 30 percent of the individual household's net income in accordance with Section 8(a) of the Act, 7 U.S.C. 2017(a). The following table shows the current allotments for the 48 States and the District of Columbia.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM—OCTOBER 1, 1997—SEPTEMBER 30, 1998
[Maximum Food Stamp Allotments]

Household size	48 States ¹
1	\$122
2	224
3	321
4	408
5	485
6	582
7	643
8	735
Each Additional Person	+92

¹ 48 States and the District of Columbia.

Dated: November 25, 1997.

Yvette S. Jackson,
Administrator, Food and Consumer Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Kodiak Electric Association, Inc.; Finding of no Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA.