

From the Hotline

Q. A food stamp recipient owns her own single-family home and her mortgage payment includes principal, interest and escrow. The escrow includes her homeowners insurance and taxes. When determining the food stamp benefit amount, do we need to obtain the actual tax bill and homeowners insurance policy or can we just use the escrow amount ?

A. In this situation, the escrow amount is acceptable, as it is what the AU is actually paying each month. If the home was not a single family dwelling, however, itemized bills would be required. Refer to 106 CMR 365.930 for additional information on income from rental property and 106 CMR 365.950 for information on self-employment income.

Q. A food stamp applicant is Work Program required. He is employed twenty five hours per week and earns \$5.15 per hour. Is he meeting the Food Stamp Work Program requirements?

A. Yes. If the applicant verifies twenty hours of work per week averaged monthly, then he is meeting the Food Stamp Work Program requirements. Refer to 106 CMR 362.320(A) for more information on Food Stamp Work Program requirements.

Q. A food stamp recipient who is currently Food Stamp Work Program required verifies new employment of 18 hours per week. She is earning \$9.25 per hour. Is she still subject to Food Stamp Work Program requirements?

A. No. She is exempt from the Food Stamp Work Program requirements because she is receiving wages equal to or greater than the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour multiplied by thirty hours. Refer to 106 CMR 362.320(B) for additional information on exemptions from the Food Stamp Work Program requirements

Q. Can we allow the telephone SUA for an applicant if she only uses a cell phone and has no other utility expenses?

A. Yes, the telephone SUA is appropriate for this AU. Refer to 106 CMR 364.400(F) for more information.

Q. An individual was reluctant to apply for food stamp benefits due to her INS status. How does the AU Manager record the INS status of an individual who reports they are undocumented or not legally residing in the U.S.?

A. When an individual indicates inability or unwillingness to provide verification of an eligible noncitizen status for any assistance unit member, the Department shall not continue efforts to obtain documentation. The AU Manager must enter "Undetermined" as the INS Designation on BEACON if the individual does not provide any verification.

The AU Manager may only enter "Not Legally Residing" on BEACON if the individual verifies an illegal status by providing a Final Order of Deportation or other formal document with a determination subject to Administrative Review and Immigration Review that the noncitizen is present in the U.S. illegally. See 106 CMR 362.220 and 106 CMR 262.240 for more information.



Relocation Benefit

TAFDC, EAEDC
State Letter 1248

The relocation benefit is increased from \$750 to \$1000 effective February 3, 2003.