

Georgia Department of Human Resources

FOOD STAMPS IN GEORGIA

The Food Stamps program is a federally funded program that provides monthly benefits to low-income households to help pay for the cost of food and to improve their nutrition education. In Georgia, the Food Stamp Program is administered by the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Last year, food stamp benefits added over 2 Billion dollars to Georgia’s economy.

Benefits are issued using an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card and Personal Identification Number (PIN). Food stamp recipients use their EBT cards at authorized retailer stores to purchase food items.

Who qualifies?

Households whose gross income is no more than 130 percent of the federal poverty level and who have no more than \$2,000 in assets (or \$3,000 for households with an elderly or disabled member).

Childless adult recipients between the ages of 18 and 50 can receive food stamps for only three months in a three-year period. They can continue to receive food stamps only if they find employment or participate in a work activity. Each year, Georgia is granted a waiver from the three-month rule for counties or cities with a labor surplus or with insufficient jobs based on data from the Labor Department. This means there are more people looking for work than available jobs in the market. In FFY 2008, there are 74 counties in Georgia that met the labor surplus or insufficient jobs waiver criteria.

What do food stamps buy?

Food stamp benefits can be used at stores to buy any kind of food, but they cannot be used to buy alcohol, tobacco, soap, paper products or any other non-food item except vegetable garden seeds. People who are homeless or elderly or disabled may use food stamps to buy prepared meals. It is illegal for recipients to use benefits for anything other than purchasing food. DHR’s Office of Investigative Services investigates cases of food stamp fraud and misuse or overpayment in benefits.

The stats:

- People receiving food stamps in January 2008..... 986,245
- Households receiving food stamps in January 2008 402,330
- Average size of household receiving food stamps..... 2.40 people

Average number of households and individuals receiving food stamps each month:

SFY	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
•Households	302,434	344,704	370,261	386,665	385,932
•People	700,876	847,886	908,073	947,683	947,146

- Total value of food stamps issued in FY 2007 \$1,094,806,758 (federal funds only)
- Average monthly food stamp benefit per family \$236
- Maximum monthly benefit for household of three\$426