
**FOOD STAMP CERTIFICATION
APPLICATIONS
Filing An Application**

FS 305 Filing An Application

Change #3-2004

August 1, 2004

305.01 FILING AN APPLICATION

Households wishing to participate in the Food Stamp Program must make this desire known and provide the county with enough information regarding household income, resources, and circumstances to make a determination of eligibility.

305.02 REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING AN APPLICATION

Households must file food stamp applications by submitting a state-approved application form to the food stamp office in the county in which they reside. Acceptable application forms are the DSS-8207 or the DSS-8213. The application may be submitted in person, by an authorized representative, **faxed**, or by mail.

305.03 REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING AN APPLICATION AT THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION)

A food stamp unit (FSU) consisting of only SSI applicants and/or recipients may apply for food stamp benefits at the SSA office. Refer to Section 325, SSA Applications, for further instructions.

305.04 TIME FRAME REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING AN APPLICATION

The application processing time frame for food stamp benefits is calculated from the date the application is filed in the food stamp office designated by the county to accept the household's application. The date used to determine when an application is filed is the earlier date of the following:

- A. The date the interview occurs if this is the same date the application is signed; **or**
- B. The date the signed application is received in the food stamp office if this is prior to the date of the interview.

Each household has the right to file an application on the same day it visits the food stamp office during office hours. Advise the household that it does not have to be interviewed prior to filing the application and may file an incomplete application form as long as the form contains the applicant's name and address and is signed by an adult member of the household or the household's authorized representative. If there is no adult in the household, an emancipated minor may sign the application. The signing of the application form protects the date of application. Register the application using the DSS-8590, Client Record, within one business day from the time the application form is received or signed in the agency.

305.05 JOINT SSI/FOOD STAMP APPLICATIONS TIME STANDARDS

When a resident of an institution is jointly applying for SSI and food stamp benefits prior to leaving the institution, the filing date is the date the applicant is released from the institution. Refer to Section 325, SSA Applications, for further instructions.

305.06 CONTACTING THE FOOD STAMP OFFICE TO APPLY FOR BENEFITS

County departments must encourage households to file an application on the same day the household or its representative contacts the food stamp office in person or by telephone and expresses interest in obtaining food stamp benefits or expresses concerns which indicate food insecurity.

**FOOD STAMP CERTIFICATION
APPLICATIONS
Filing An Application**

- A. If a household contacting the food stamp office by telephone does not wish to come to the appropriate office to file the application on the date of the telephone call, he may receive the application form by mail. If the household chooses to have the application form mailed to them, the county must mail the application form to the household on the same date as the phone call.
- B. The county must inform the household that an application form that is delivered by mail is not considered a filed application until the application is signed and returned to the agency.
- C. If a household submits a written request for food stamp benefits, the county must mail an application on the same day the request is received in the food stamp office.
- D. If a county has designated food stamp offices to serve specific geographic areas, households may contact an office other than the one designated to serve the area where they reside.
 - 1. If a household contacts the wrong food stamp office in person, the household must be allowed to file an application on the same day. The food stamp office must offer to forward the application form to the appropriate office. If the household accepts the offer, the food stamp office will forward the application to the appropriate food stamp office on the same day as long as the applicant has completed enough information for the application to be filed. Inform the household of the location of the appropriate office by giving the address and telephone number. Inform the household that the application will not be considered filed and the processing time standards will not begin until the appropriate office receives the application. If a household contacts the wrong food stamp office by telephone, assess the household for waiver of the office interview and refer the household to the appropriate food stamp office. See Section 310, Interviewing, for information on waiver of the office interview.
 - 2. If a household has mailed the application to the wrong office, the food stamp office must mail the application to the appropriate office on the same day. Processing time standards will not begin until the appropriate office receives the application.
- E. If a household attempts to apply for food stamp benefits in a county other than their county of residence, inform the applicant that he must apply in the county in which he lives. Give the household the address and telephone number of the food stamp office in their county of residence.
- F. If the agency attempts to divert households from applying for Work First cash assistance, do the following:
 - 1. Encourage applicants to continue with their application for food stamp benefits.
 - 2. Explain that some of the restrictions and requirements of applying for Work First cash assistance, i.e., time limits, do not apply to the Food Stamp Program.
 - 3. Inform households that receiving food stamp benefits does not effect Work First time limits that may be applicable to Work First families.

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APPLICATIONS
Filing An Application**

305.07 AVAILABILITY OF APPLICATIONS

The county department of social services must make application forms readily accessible to potentially eligible households and those groups and organizations involved in outreach efforts. The department must also provide an application form to anyone who requests the form. The county will post signs in the certification office which explain the certification processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact. Information regarding same day filing must also be included in outreach materials and on the application form.

305.08 WITHDRAWING AN APPLICATION

A household may voluntarily withdraw its application at any time prior to the determination of eligibility. It is not necessary for the withdrawal to be in writing. Document the reason for withdrawal if the household has given a reason and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal. Advise the household of its right to reapply at any time following the withdrawal.

305.09 HOUSEHOLD COOPERATION

- A. To determine food stamp eligibility:
1. The application form must be completed and signed,
 2. The household or its authorized representative must be interviewed, **and**
 3. Certain information on the application must be verified.
- B. If the household refuses to cooperate with the county department in completing the above process, deny the application at the time of refusal.
1. A determination of refusal to cooperate can be made if the household is able to cooperate, but clearly demonstrates that it will not take the required actions to complete the certification process. For example, a household must refuse to be interviewed or refuse to provide verification in order to be denied for refusal to cooperate. Failure to appear for an interview or failure to provide verification is not refusal to cooperate.
 2. If there is any question as to whether the household has failed to cooperate versus refused to cooperate, do not deny the application.
 3. Deny an application if the household refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of its eligibility, including reviews generated by reported changes, recertifications, or as part of a quality control review. Once denied or terminated for refusal to cooperate, the household may reapply but cannot be determined eligible until it cooperates. Refer to Section 210, Household Concept, for instructions regarding QC reviews.