Expedited (Emergency) Food Stamps

NOTE: Food Stamps or Food Support is now being called SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

What are expedited food stamps?

"Expedited" means fast. If you are eligible, they have to give you the expedited food stamps within 5 days. In some cases, you can get food stamps within 1 day. You don't need to be out of food. They can't make you go to a food shelf or church first.

Who can get expedited food stamps?

You can get expedited food stamps if you don't have money for food because:

- Your rent or house payment, plus your utility bills, are more than your monthly income plus your cash on hand or in the bank; **or**
- Your gross income is less than $150 per month, and you have less than $100 cash or in the bank. Gross income means your pay before taxes are taken out.

What if I just moved to Minnesota?

For MFIP or GA cash, you have to wait 30 days after moving to Minnesota. This 30-day wait does NOT apply to food stamps.

- If you got food stamps this month in the state where you used to live, you have to wait until the beginning of the next month to get food stamps here.

- If you did not get food stamps in the other state, you can get expedited food stamps in Minnesota.

- If you are getting away from family violence, you **can** get food stamps more often and the rules above **do not** apply.

What if I am a migrant or seasonal farm worker?

You can get expedited food stamps if:

- Any income you got during the month you apply, was paid to you before the date you apply *AND*
- You will not get paid any more by that employer in the month you apply, *AND*
- You don't expect to get more than $25 from a new place in the next 10 days.

The food stamp office will not count money given to you by an employer to pay you back for travel expenses.

How do I apply for expedited food stamps?

Go to your food stamp office. In most Minnesota counties this is the Economic Assistance Office.

- Fill out an application. If time is short, it should be enough to fill out your name and address, date it and sign it. You can fill out the rest later.

- Give proof of your identity. This can be a driver's license or state ID card, but it can also be anything else that proves who you are. It could be the phone number of someone who knows you and can say you are who you are – like a shelter worker or relative. If you have no other proof, a signed sworn statement from you should be enough.

If you need help right away, you will get an interview to see if you are eligible for expedited food stamps the **same day** you apply.

How much in food stamps can I get?

If you apply before the 15th of the month, you can get 1 months' worth of food stamps. If you apply after the 15th of the month, you can get food stamps for the days left in that month, plus food stamps for the month coming up.

There is no yearly or life-time limit to how many times you can get expedited food stamps as long as you get regular food stamps in some months in between.

What can I do if they turn me away?

If they don't want to give you expedited food stamps, you can appeal. Fill out an appeal form at the office or write a note saying you want to appeal right away. Write that you want an "expedited" appeal, so that it will happen fast. Keep a copy. Call your legal aid office right away.

For more information see our fact sheet, *Welfare Appeals*.

To get referrals to other help for emergencies, call 211 statewide. You can also text them your zip code at 898-211 or chat online at www.211unitedway.org.