



2008 Farm Bill Changes to SNAP/Food Stamps

Public Law No. 110-246, commonly known as the 2008 Farm Bill, changed the national name of the Food Stamp Program and invested \$7.8 billion in new ten-year funding for Food Stamp Program improvements. The changes took effect October 1, 2008.

Highlights include:

- Renaming the national Food Stamp Program as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (states are free to use their own names);
- Increasing (for the first time ever) the minimum monthly benefit, from \$10 set three decades ago to \$14 in FY 2009 and then indexing it thereafter;
- Increasing to \$144 and then indexing thereafter the standard deduction for households of three or fewer, which will have the effect of raising benefits for those households;
- Taking into account the full amount of dependent care costs that households have (previously the deduction was capped);
- Indexing the too-low and outdated asset limits and excluding retirement and education savings accounts from them.
- Excluding special combat pay from income of households with deployed military member;
- Extending simplified reporting options to elderly food stamp clients;
- Allowing states to provide transitional food stamp benefits for those leaving state-funded cash programs;
- Giving states the option of letting applicants submit a telephonic signature; and
- Fully implementing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) in place of paper coupons and expanding EBT capacity to more farmers' markets.

For more background on the 2008 Farm Bill changes to the Food Stamp Program, see USDA Food and Nutrition Service memorandum of July 3, 2008, posted at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/rules/Memo/08/070308.pdf>