

Questions and Answers about Public Benefits and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Q. What are public benefits?

A. Public benefits are government programs that provide services (like job search training) or other kinds of help (like help paying for child care) for people who need assistance. Food Stamps are an example of a public benefit.

Q. I work and I receive ADC. Can I still claim the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit?

A. Yes. As long as you earn wages and meet the income and other eligibility requirements.

Q. Will getting the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Child Tax credit lower the amount of the public benefits I receive, like my food stamps?

A. Generally, no. The EITC and the CTC are not counted as income for Medicaid, food stamps, SSI or federally assisted housing programs.

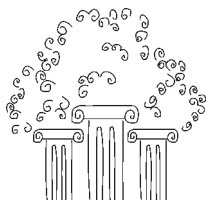
Q. Will getting or saving my EITC or CTC make me ineligible for public benefits?

A. Most likely not. Saving part of a tax credit refund will not make you ineligible for benefits programs unless your total resources (also called assets) exceed eligibility levels. Resources are generally considered money in savings or checking accounts, but do not include things like your car or home.

Q. Do I have to report my refund to my caseworker?

EITC refunds are not considered “income” and do not need to be reported to your caseworker. But, if you plan to save a portion of your refund, you should contact your caseworker to see if you are required to place your refund into a special savings account. Also, if you need to recertify in the next few months, you should let your caseworker

know that you recently received an EITC tax refund and the amount should be excluded from your resource limits



NEBRASKA
Appleseed

Myths and Facts about Working People and Public Benefits

Myth: You cannot receive public benefits if you work.

Fact: Working people do qualify for public benefits if their income meets eligibility requirements. In fact, some public benefits programs require you to work if you are able.

Myth: I will have to pay back my public benefits.

Fact: You do not have to “pay back” your public benefits, like food stamps or ADC. However, in some cases, child support payments may be used to cover the costs of a public benefits program.

Myth: Public benefits levels are too low to really be helpful.

Fact: It all depends on your family budget and income. The minimum food stamp benefit is \$10 per month, but the maximum amount a family of three can get is \$426.



Myth: If I get public benefits I will have to fill out paperwork all the time.

Fact: It depends. Some programs, like ADC have fairly strict reporting requirements. Other programs, like Food Stamps for people who receive Social Security payments, only need you to fill out paperwork once a year.

Myth: If I get public benefits, everyone will know.

Fact: Your information must be kept confidential within the HHS office. Some programs, like food stamps, use a card that is just like a debit card.

Myth: Two-parent households are not eligible for public benefits.

Fact: Two-parent households are eligible for public benefits if you meet income guidelines.

Myth: If I've applied for public benefits before, there's no reason for me to apply again.

Fact: The income limits for most programs are increased each year. If your circumstances have changed and you think you might qualify, applying again could be a good choice for you.

CORE VALUES | COMMON GROUND | EQUAL JUSTICE

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

This information should be used as a guide. Many things are used to decide eligibility.

If you have needs and think you might be eligible, please apply.

FOOD STAMPS

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	and up...
Gross (Total) Monthly Income	\$1,107	\$1,484	\$1,861	\$2,238	\$2,615	+

If you are elderly or disabled you should ask your caseworker if different income limits apply to you.

LIHEAP

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	and up...
Gross (Total) Yearly Income	\$11,846	\$15,883	\$19,920	\$23,956	\$27,993	+

There are several special rules for Medicaid – contact the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for more information.

KID'S CONNECTION

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	and up...
Adjusted Monthly Income	\$1,574	\$2,111	\$2,647	\$3,184	\$3,720	

NON-ADC CHILD CARE

Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	and up...
Total (Gross) Income	N/A	\$1,369	\$1,717	\$2,065	\$2,413	+

FOR EXAMPLE

Jenny has two children, Susie (2) and John (4). Jenny works full-time in the payroll department of a staffing agency and makes \$10 per hour, or about \$1,600 per month in total (gross) income.

Jenny's income is \$1600 per month for a family of three which means that her family:

- is likely to receive about \$233 in food stamps each month
- is eligible for LIHEAP if they need help with heating or cooling costs.
- can apply for "Kid's Connection" health insurance coverage for Susie and John
- may be eligible for non-ADC child care assistance

