



College Students and the Michigan Food Assistance Program

What's changing in April 2011?

What is the general rule regarding student eligibility?

A person age 18-49 who is enrolled at least half time in a post-secondary education program is considered to be "in student status." A person in student status is not eligible for Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits¹ unless he or she meets certain special criteria.

What has changed?

Effective April 1, 2011 clients in student status are no longer eligible to receive FAP based solely on an approved education plan.² Previously, the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) allowed self-directed post secondary education programs when DHS determined that program would help the student be more employable.

Which students will still qualify?

Federal law says certain students can still receive FAP benefits. The students who can still qualify are listed below. More information is available in the [Michigan Benefits Eligibility Manual, Item 245](#).

1. Working students	<p>Students who receive federal work study assistance.</p> <p>Students who work at least 20 hours a week or who earn weekly wages of at least \$145 (20 hrs x federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hr).</p> <p>Students in an approved on-the-job training program or one under the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA).</p>
2. Students caring for young children	<p>A parent who lives with and provides at least half of the care for a child under 6 (even if there is more than 1 adult in the household).</p> <p>A parent in a two-adult household who shows they cannot get adequate childcare to allow them to work and go to school for a child age 6-11. Other adults in the home who are at least 18 may be expected to provide care.</p> <p>A parent who is a full time student and providing all the care for a child under age 12.</p>

¹ The Food Assistance Program (FAP) is Michigan's name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as "food stamps." Program benefits are placed on a debit-like electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card known as a "Bridge Card." FAP benefits may only be spent at approved retailers and only on food items allowed by federal law.

² Students who qualified under this exception will be reviewed to see if they qualify for one of the other exceptions before they are sent a notice of termination.

3. Students receiving FIP	Students who receive Family Independence Program (FIP, "cash assistance") benefits from DHS because they care for a minor child. Any student who receives FIP will also have to comply with the FIP work rules.
4. Disability	Students who have disability benefits or can otherwise show that a medical doctor has determined they are physically or mentally unable to be employed.
5. Group living situations	<p>A parent's income must be counted against a child if the parent and child live together and the child is under age 22.</p> <p>A student cannot lawfully receive FAP benefits if they live in a boarding house or institution that provides a majority of meals to the residents (e.g.: Dormitory, Sorority or Fraternity house, etc...).</p> <p>Students may be eligible even if they are temporarily sharing food with someone they live with, or if they ever previously bought, fixed, or otherwise shared meals together.</p>

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the law allow students to get FAP?	<p>Federal law allows students who are caring for children or who are working or disabled to receive FAP, even though they are in school. By going to school they are better able to get jobs and become self-sufficient.</p> <p>Food Assistance benefits are 100% federally-funded. These benefits are not paid out of Michigan's state budget.</p>
How many students get FAP?	There are different estimates about how many students are currently receiving FAP. All sources say it is fewer than 20,000 and it may be as few as 10,000. Some of these students will still qualify under the April changes. No one knows yet how many students will qualify after their cases are reviewed in March.
How much assistance per month can students receive?	The FAP allowance depends on numerous factors. This includes how many people in the household live together and share food and how much income the household actually has available to them to buy food. The maximum a single student with no income may receive is \$200 per month or \$367 for a two-member household.
Is there a lot of fraud among students?	No. In 2010 a representative from the state Office of Inspector General testified before the Michigan Legislature that they investigate complaints of student fraud. They found the incidence of fraud is low, and no worse than for any other group.

Students or organizations with specific questions should call the statewide Food and Nutrition Program Helpline operated by the Center for Civil Justice (CCJ), 1-800-481-4989.

