



Illinois Hunger Coalition

Working to End Hunger in Illinois since 1988

HUNGER HOTLINE

1-800-359-2163

Se habla español

The Homeless have the same rights under the Food Stamp Program as people who have a permanent residence.

A person is considered homeless if he/she:

- Has no fixed, regular place to sleep at night
- The place he/she sleeps at night is one of the following:
 - A shelter
 - A halfway house that doesn't provide meals
 - The home of someone else if he/she is there for less than 90 days
 - A place where people do not usually sleep such as a doorway, a lobby, a bus station, a hallway, or a subway

⇒ **For example**, if an unemployed person stays among the homes of family and friends for no more than 90 days in the same place at a time, he or she is considered homeless and is eligible for food stamps, regardless of whether the household provides the person with meals

The Homeless are entitled to food stamps even if they:

- Do not have a permanent mailing address
 - Homeless clients do NOT need to provide proof of their place of residence
- Live in a nonprofit homeless shelter or domestic violence shelter, even if the shelter provides meals
- Do not have a place to cook or store food
- Do not have a Photo ID – clients can prove their identity by providing a birth certificate, pay stubs, or school records. A “collateral contact,” someone who knows the client and can verify certain information, can also be used to verify identity

⇒ **For example**, if a person who lives in a domestic violence shelter where meals are provided has no form of identification, a staff member from the shelter can verify his or her identity for the purposes of applying for food stamps by writing a letter to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)

Additional Rights of Homeless Clients:

- Many homeless clients are eligible for “expedited” food stamps because they have no or very low income. DHS must either approve or deny a food stamp application within 5 days of submission instead of the normal 30 days if the client is eligible for expedited service
- Homeless clients have the right to submit their application at the local IDHS office of their choice. However, once their case is processed, they must stay at that office until the client takes the appropriate steps to transfer it to another office

⇒ **For example**, if a homeless family moves from a shelter to an apartment in an area not serviced by the office where they originally submitted the application, the family must report the change in living arrangements to the original office and then take the appropriate steps to get their case transferred.

**For more information, or to see if you qualify for food stamps
call the Illinois Hunger Coalition's Hunger Hotline:
1-800-359-2163.**