

FACT SHEET:

Food Stamps vs. Cash Assistance

What can Food Stamps (SNAP) currently purchase?

Foods for the household to eat, such as:

- Breads and cereals
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meats, fish and poultry
- Dairy products
- Seeds and plants that produce food for the household to eat.
- In some areas, restaurants can be authorized to accept SNAP benefits from qualified homeless, elderly, or disabled people in exchange for low-cost meals.

What can't Food Stamps purchase (must be purchased with cash assistance)?

Any nonfood items, such as:

- Pet foods
- Soaps
- Paper products
- Household supplies
- Vitamins and medicines
- Food that will be eaten in the store
- Hot foods
- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco

What the Public Assistance Integrity Act does

1. Prohibits the use of Public Assistance to purchase alcoholic beverages, tobacco or lottery tickets.
2. Prohibits the withdrawal of Public Assistance at certain locations - liquor stores, casinos, and establishments providing adult-oriented entertainment.

Federal Mandate

P.L. 112-96, the “Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.”

Title IV - TANF Extension Section 4004: Spending Policies for Assistance Under State TANF Programs.

“A State to which a grant is made under section 403 shall maintain policies and practices as necessary to prevent assistance provided under the State program funded under this part from being used in any electronic benefit transfer transaction in - any liquor store; any casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment; or any retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment”

States must report to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on the status of establishing policies and procedures to prevent EBT access at certain locations in two years.

The penalty for not complying would be the federal government reducing the TANF block grant by 5% or \$120 Million.