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 http://www.fns.usda.gov/...
 FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

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 FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

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Pre-Screening Eligibility Tool



What is the Pre-Screening Tool?

This Pre-Screening Tool can be used to determine if you may be eligible to receive Food Stamp benefits. This Pre-Screening Tool is not an application for Food Stamps. An application for Food Stamps must be made at your local Food Stamp Office. Click [here](#) to find the office that serves your area.

Before you begin, you may want to look up the amounts of your earnings, rent or mortgage, utility bills, child support, day care expenses, medical bills (if you are 60 or older or disabled), child support payments or SSI, social security or VA payments.

How to Use the Tool

System Requirements

- Minimum hardware: 4 GB or higher
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher
- Other compatible browsers that support frames, JavaScript, and cookies.

DMR (Form) Number: 0964-0519

Expiration Date: 8/31/2008

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Office of Research, Nutrition and Analysis, Room 1114, Alexandria, VA 22302. Do not return the completed form to this address.

You may also be eligible to receive other government benefits besides Food Stamps. If you are interested in other programs, go to the [GoBenefits website](#). It is available [here](#).

[Disclaimer and Privacy Statement](#)



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State Selection

Which State or Territory do you live in?

Select a State/Territory

Who is using the tool?

Select a User

How did you hear about this tool?

Select an item

NOTE: Some states have special eligibility rules. If this pre-screening tool tells you you're not eligible, you **MIGHT STILL** be eligible in your state. Maybe your state has special rules that make you eligible. You should always check with your local food stamp office to know for sure.

Exit

This tool will skip vehicle pages for states that use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) rules because some states exclude all vehicles and most states exclude at least one vehicle. Because states policy varies widely, the screener does not take vehicle ownership into account for the vast majority of states. Therefore, you will need to check with your local Food Stamp Office to find out how vehicle ownership affects your eligibility.

Interview Icons / Help:

[Accessibility](#) | [Privacy](#) / [Security](#) / [Disclaimers](#) | [Non-](#)

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How many people are in your household?

Is any household member a seasonal or migrant farm worker? Yes No N/A

Is this household homeless or living in a shelter? Yes No N/A

Users must be 18 years of age or older to use this tool. For more information, contact the National Customer Support Center at 1-800-877-8339. For more information, contact the National Customer Support Center at 1-800-877-8339.

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FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

Household Members

Enter the first name and age of each household member. Also indicate if a member is a U.S. citizen and if a member is disabled according to Food Stamp program regulations.
 If a member of your family is not a citizen, the other family members should consider applying separately. For more information on non-citizen eligibility for food stamp benefits click here.

NOTE: If you host a roomer or boarder, that person is not in your household, unless he or she eats the same food that you do.

First Name	Age	Citizenship	Disabled?	Clear Row?
		Select a Status	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Select a Status	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Select a Status	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

⊕ Add More Rows (click plus icon on left)

Exit

See the following information about our website: Job Postings will be used as described. Add, delete, or modify records. For more information on household information collection will only be used to calculate your food stamp eligibility and to collect data.



FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

Assets

Select the first name of each member of your household that has a resource or asset, other than a motor vehicle. Select the type of resource or asset and then enter its dollar value. If a member has multiple assets, please list all of those assets, along with their dollar value.

If no household member has Assets, please click 'Continue' to proceed with the screening process.

NOTE: If you have a list of assets, this can disqualify you from food stamps, unless you are not eligible.

NOTE: If your whole household receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and SSI always give you Categorical Eligibility. So, if your whole household receives TANF or SSI, you may have Categorical Eligibility in your household.

Even if you don't get TANF or SSI, you may have Categorical Eligibility in your household.

Your assets do not count, you will still be eligible. So if you have many assets, your local food stamp office to make sure. You might still be eligible.

SECURITY INCOME (SSI), or other government benefits, you might be eligible for food stamp eligibility. The rules for Categorical Eligibility are different in each state. But O NOT fill in any assets on this page.

about this rule, click on the blue question mark to the right. ?

First Name	Asset Type	Value	Check Box?
Select a Member	Select an Asset Type		Click
Select a Member	Select an Asset Type		Click
Select a Member	Select an Asset Type		Click

3 Add More Rows (click this icon on left)



Assets

Select the first name of each member of your household that has a resource or asset (something of value) other than a motor vehicle. Select the type of resource or asset and then enter its dollar value. If a member has multiple assets, please list all of those assets, along with their value.

If no household member has Assets, please click 'Continue' to proceed with the screening.

NOTE: If you have a lot of assets, this can disqualify you from food stamps. But some assets do not count. If your assets do not count, you will still be eligible. So if you have many assets, your results might not be right. If this pre-screening tool says you are not eligible, you should still check with your local food stamp office to make sure. You might still be eligible.

NOTE: If your whole household receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or other government benefits, you might be eligible for food stamps even if your assets are high. This is because, in that case, your assets don't count. This is called "Categorical Eligibility." The rules for Categorical Eligibility are different in each state. But TANF and SSI always give you Categorical Eligibility. So, if your whole household receives TANF or SSI, DO NOT fill in any assets on this page.

Even if you don't get TANF or SSI, you may have Categorical Eligibility in your state. For more information about this rule, click on the blue question mark to the right. ?

First Name	Type of Asset	Value	Print Asset?
Select Member	Select an Asset Type		Clear
Select Member	Select an Asset Type		Clear
Select Member	Select an Asset Type		Clear

Add More Rows (click plus icon on left)



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Earned Income

Select the first name of each member of your household who has earned income (income from a job or self-employment).

Select the type of earned income received. Enter the gross (before taxes) dollar amount received. Select how often the earned income is received.

If no household member has Earned Income, please click 'Continue' to proceed with the screening.

First Name	Type of Earned Income	Gross Amount Received	How Often?	Clear Row?
Select a Member	Select an Income Type	\$	Select How Often	
Select a Member	Select an Income Type	\$	Select How Often	
Select a Member	Select an Income Type	\$	Select How Often	

Exit

Any errors or unreported information on screens will only be used to calculate possible Food Stamp Eligibility. FNS will not be fined.

FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

Earned Income

Select the first name of each member of your household who has earned income (income from a job or self-employment).

Select the type of earned income received. Enter the gross (before taxes) dollar amount received. Select how often the earned income is received.

If no household member has earned income, please click 'Continue' to proceed with the screening.

First Name	Type of Earned Income	Gross Amount Received	How Often?	Next Step
Select a Member	Select an Income Type	\$	Select How Often	
Select a Member	Wages	\$	Select How Often	
Select a Member	Self-Employment	\$	Select How Often	
	Seasonal Income - Activity Managed	\$	Select How Often	
	Roomer			
	Job Training or Work Study			
	Strike Benefits			

Any member of the household is considered to be employed if the member has earned income from a job or self-employment.



Unearned Income

Select the first name of each member of your household who has unearned income. Select the type of unearned income received. Enter the dollar amount received. Select how often the unearned income is received.

If no household member has unearned income, please click 'Continue' to proceed with the screening.

First Name	Type of Unearned Income	Amount Received	How Often?	Clear Row?
Select a Member	Select an Income Type		Select How Often	
Select a Member	Select an Income Type		Select How Often	
Select a Member	Select an Income Type		Select How Often	

⊕ Add More Rows (click plus icon on left) ⊖

Ⓢ Add household members information collected will only be used to calculate household food stamp eligibility & will never share

FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

Unearned Income

Select the first name of each member of your household who has unearned income. Select the type of unearned income received. Enter the dollar amount received. Select how often the unearned income is received.

If no household member has unearned income, please click "Continue" to proceed with the screening.

First Name	Type of Unearned Income	Amount Received	How Often?	Clear Row?
Select a Member	Select an Income Type		Select How Often	
Select a Member	Select an Income Type		Select How Often	
Select a Member	Select an Income Type		Select How Often	

Add New Rows (click plus icon on left) |
 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF - state cash assistance) |
 Retirement Pension |
 Railroad Retirement |
 Veteran's Benefits |
 Worker's Compensation |
 Unemployment Compensation |
 Child Support |
 Alimony |
 Foster Care |
 Rental Income - Not actively managed |
 Annuities |
 Interest Income |
 Sheltered Workshop |
 Other Income

How much is your household's monthly rent/mortgage payment? *

Click here if you pay real estate taxes or insurance on your mortgage separately from your mortgage payments.

How much is your household's total monthly utility payment? *

Select the first item from the menu to the right that applies to your household. *

NOTE: Some states also have a "standard utility allowance" (SUA) you can deduct instead of your utility cost. The SUA is an estimate of how much a person might pay for utilities each month. Your SUA in your state may be more than what you pay for utilities. If so, you can specify the amount of deducting what you actually pay. This can help you because you can get a bigger deduction this way.
This programing tool does not calculate your SUA but uses your actual utility cost instead. So you need to check with your local office for more information on this option. For a list of state SUA values, click [HERE](#).

APR 14 2010 10:28 AM

Select the first name of each member of your household for whom childcare or adult dependent care expenses are paid. If no Dependent Care expenses are paid, please click "Continue" to proceed with the screening.

First Name	Amount	How Often?	Clear Row?
Select a Member	\$	Select How Often	
Select a Member	\$	Select How Often	
Select a Member	\$	Select How Often	

Add More Rows (click plus icon on left)

EXIT

Any format or character information otherwise will only be used to calculate credits from State eligibility and will not be saved.

Select the first name of each member of your household who pays court ordered child support. Enter the amount paid and how often it is paid.
(If no household member pays Child Support, please click 'Continue' to proceed with the screening.)

First Name	Amount	How Often?	Child Support Amount
Select a Member		Select How Often	
Select a Member		Select How Often	
Select a Member		Select How Often	

⊕ Add More Rows (click plus icon on left)



FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

Medical Expense Deductions

Select each household member who has a medical expense. (The list below contains only members who are age 60 or older or are disabled according to Food Stamp Program Regulations.) Enter an expense that is not covered by another source. Also enter the amount paid for each expense and select how often the expense occurs.

If you have any questions on what counts as a medical expense, click on the blue question mark next to the "Type of Medical Expense" box.

The only medical expenses that count as deductions for the Food Stamp Program are expenses for people over 60 or disabled people. That is why these are the only people in your household listed below. If you pay more than \$35 each month on medical expenses for these people, that money does not count as income or assets because it is a deduction.

If no household member has Medical Expenses, please click "Continue" to proceed with the screening.

First Name	Type of Medical Expense	Amount of Expense	How Often?	Check Row?
Select a Member			Select How Often	
Select a Member			Select How Often	
Select a Member			Select How Often	

⊕ Add More Rows (click plus icon on left)

ⓧ



FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

Screening Results

It appears that you may be eligible for Food Stamps. Based on the information you provided, you may be eligible for between \$908 to \$938 in Food Stamps per month.

Contact your local office for specific information and to fill out an application. You can also click here for a listing of State Food Stamp Information/toll free numbers.

For more information about the next step to filing your grocery bag through the Food Stamp Program, please click here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/foodstamp/recipient/letters.htm>.

NOTE: Please remember that the results you received today are only an ESTIMATE. The results might not be right. You might get more or less food stamps than the estimate shows. If these results say you are NOT eligible for food stamps, your COWO still get the. Every state's rules for food stamps are a little different.

Food stamp workers are the only people that can officially determine whether or not a person is eligible for food stamp benefits. To find out if you or others are eligible, complete a food stamp application form and apply at a local food stamp office.

You might be eligible to receive other benefits too, like these:

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Child Nutrition Diets for Food Programs

To find out about many other benefits you may be eligible for, you can use the Government's pre-screening tool. This tool is available here.

[Print this window](#)

[Click for Details](#)

[Important warnings and disclaimers](#)

Important warnings and disclaimers

Filing out information in this pre-screening tool is NOT an application for Food Stamps. The amount you actually receive may be different from the amount listed in this pre-screening tool. Only your local Food Stamp office can determine your actual eligibility and the amount of Food Stamps, if any, you will receive. An application for Food Stamp benefits must be made at your local Food Stamp office. Your State has specific eligibility requirements, benefits and exclusion criteria.

Contact your local office for specific information and to fill out an application.
You can also click [here](#) for a listing of State Food Stamp Information/Hotline Numbers.

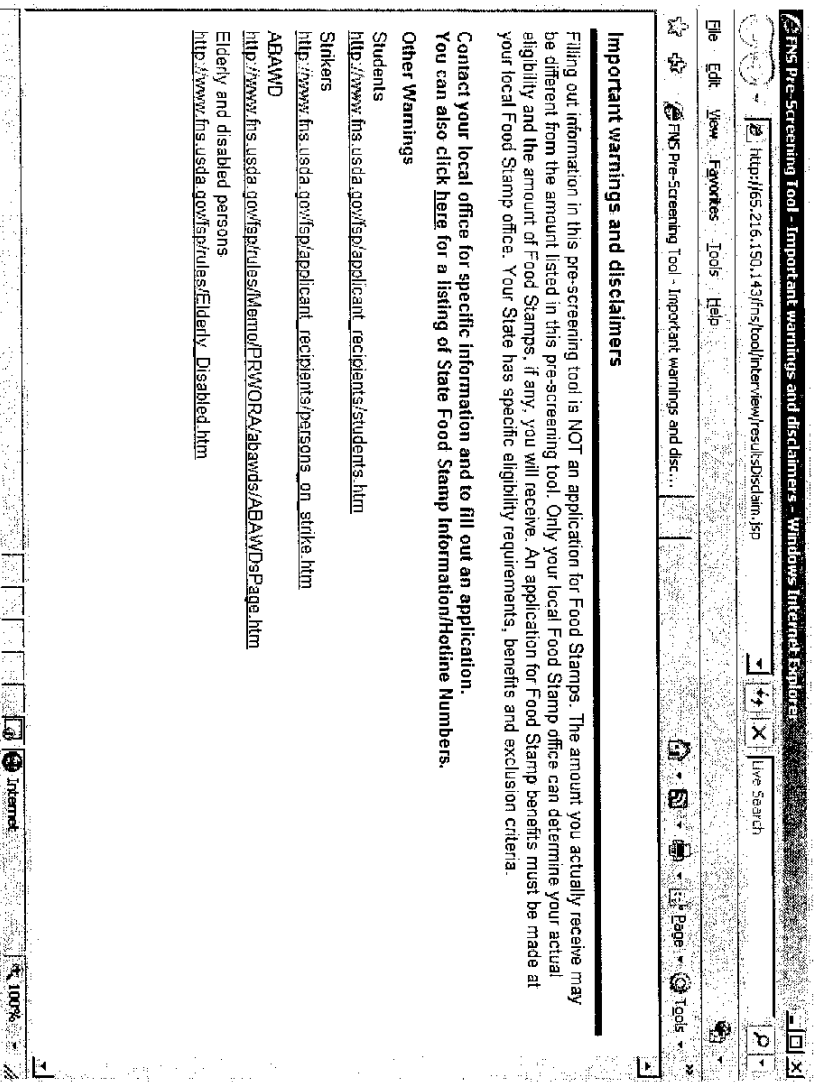
Other Warnings

Students
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/students.htm

Stickers
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/persons_on_strike.htm

ABAWD
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/rules/Memo/PWORA/abawds/ABAWDPage.htm>

Elderly and disabled persons
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/rules/Elderly_Disabled.htm





FNS Food Stamp Program Eligibility Screening Tool

General FNS and Tool Survey

We would like to thank you for using the Food and Nutrition Services' Pre-Screening Tool. Below are a few optional questions about the applicant and about the usability of the pre-screening tool.

What is your gender? Male Female

What is your zip code?

Are you currently receiving Food Stamps? Yes No

Have you ever received Food Stamps in the past? Yes No

Will you apply for Food Stamps? Yes No

Did the results of the Pre-Screening Tool change the likelihood that you will apply for benefits? Much Less Less Likely No Change More Likely Somewhat

Was the Pre-Screening Tool easy to use? Yes No Somewhat

- c Retirement accounts such as 401 K, Railroad Retirement, or others
- c Any asset that you cannot change into cash

Some examples of assets:

1. **Cash on Hand**
Money that any household member carries with him or her, or keeps in the house.
2. **Checking Account or Savings Account**
This account may be accessed through the bank or credit union by writing a check, using an automated teller machine ATM, or through debit cards. Savings accounts usually collect interest.
3. **Certificate of Deposit (CD)**
An account in a bank or financial institution that has a set "maturity" date. At that time the money is paid back to you. CDs usually pay interest.
4. **Stock**
An ownership share in a corporation. You can buy "shares" of stock in a corporation. Their value might go up or down depending on how well the corporation does.
5. **Savings Bonds**
Money that you lend to the federal government. You might have a bond deduction where you work. You get paid back for the bond later, with "interest" paid back to you as the reward for the loan.
6. **Mutual Funds**
Mutual funds are accounts set up with money deposited by a group of people. You can become one of them by investing. Usually, a minimum deposit of money is required, such as \$500. The money in the fund is used by a manager to invest in things the company thinks will make money.
7. **Keogh Plans**
A pension or profit-sharing plan for self-employed people and their employees.
8. **Pension Funds**
A retirement plan funded by an employer. Payments are made to retired employees for past services.
9. **Real Estate (besides your home)**
If you own any land or buildings that you don't live in, these count as assets. But if you use the land to get income, that land doesn't count as an asset. However, the income you get from that land counts as income.

Assets are important for determining if you can get food stamps. If you have a lot of assets, you are probably not eligible. For most households the limit is \$2,000 in assets. But if you have a disabled person or a person over age 60 in your household, the limit is \$3,000 for assets.

But if the assets you have don't count, you are still eligible. So if this pre-screening tool says you aren't eligible, you should still check with your local office to make sure. Maybe some of your assets don't count. Then you would be eligible.

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2) First Pre-Screening Tool and General Frequently Asked Questions - Windows Internet Explorer

25. <http://us216.143.hs-n.net/foodstamps/faq.html>
an application at a food bank, church, or senior center. After the office gets your application, they give you an appointment for an interview.

If you get the food stamps, your first set of benefits starts with the day the office gets your application. So you want to hand the application in as soon as you can. If you can't fill out the whole application, just fill out the first page. You just need to fill out your name and address, and sign the application. The office will still give you an interview when they get the application. So you don't need to fill out the other pages to get the interview.

I tried the pre-screening tool, it told me I might be eligible. Can you send me the application right now?
No, we are sorry, but we can't do that. Each state has its own application form. So you have to call or visit your local food stamp office to get your application form. Also, some food banks, senior centers, and other community groups might have application forms available. You might also be able to find the application on your state web site.

Can I apply for food stamps online (on the internet)?
Probably not. The only states that let you do that are Washington State and Pennsylvania. Some other states are working on setting up a web site so you can apply for food stamps online. But only Washington and Pennsylvania have web sites ready right now.

How do you decide how much I will receive in food stamp benefits?
It depends on how much money you have. The Thrift Food Plan (TFP) is a model for how much money a household should spend on food. The amount of food stamps you get is the TFP amount for your household minus 30% of your net income. So if you spend 30% of your net income on food, you can't spend much more on food. If you have to eat before you get all the food stamps, it is because you are spending more on food. For a household of three people, this is usually \$366 each month. The TFP amounts are a little higher in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. This is because it costs a little more to live there.

What is the average benefit from the Food Stamp Program?
In 2002, the average benefit each month was about \$80 per person. It was about \$188 per household. The household number is bigger because most households have more than one person in them.

How do you stop people from cheating the program?
The USDA tries very hard to prevent cheating in all of its programs. The Food Stamp Program is very important because it is so big and so many people use it. But because it is so big, some people may try to cheat.

People who lie about their economic situation, or deliberately withhold information to get benefits they don't qualify for, can be taken off the program, required to repay benefits, and even jailed. Retailers who break the rules can face heavy fines, removal from the program, or jail. People who sell their food stamps instead of using them can be taken off of the program.

Most food stamps now come on electronic cards, not paper coupons. These cards are called Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. They work like bank debit cards. Because of the EBT cards, it is much harder to cheat the system. This is because a way that someone uses an EBT card, the transaction is recorded.

As of October 2002, 45 states use EBT cards for food stamps. Some states also use them for other programs. These include the USDA Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.

How do you stop people who are not eligible from getting food stamps?
The USDA and State agencies check to make sure that local offices give out the correct amount of food stamps. Food stamp workers check each application to make sure that the right number of benefits is given.

How do you stop people who are not eligible from getting food stamps?

The USDA and State agencies check to make sure their local offices give out the correct amount of food stamps. Food stamp workers check each application to make sure that the right number of benefits is given out. They require you to prove the things you say on the application, and then match your answers with information from other sources. A state that makes too many mistakes in giving out benefits can get fined by the USDA.

How do I get more information about food stamps? About food stamp rules and policies?

You can always check with your local food stamp office. There you can learn about eligibility rules and apply for food stamps. The USDA has a toll-free information hotline at (1-800-221-5889). For more information about any of the 15 USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) nutrition assistance programs, you can contact FNS. Call the communications staff at (703-505-4285). Or send mail to 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302. You can also email to ESP@USDA.gov. You can also look at the FNS website at www.fns.usda.gov.

How do I answer the questions on the Pre-Screening Tool?

You answer questions about your household by first clicking on each question with the mouse. Then you can type an answer with the keyboard, or sometimes click on an answer with the mouse. If you do not know how to use a mouse or a keyboard, or the Internet, go to the Internet Basics Tutorial. To find it, click on "Internet Basics" at the bottom of the first page of the tool. You can also find it after you have started using the tool. Use the mouse to click on the word "Tutorial" at the upper right corner of the tool. A little window will pop up on the computer screen. Then click on "Internet Basics Tutorial" in the window. There are also two other tutorials to help you use the tool. You can find both of them in the pop-up window. The "Pre-screening Tool Tutorial" explains what each question is asking. You can also find it at the bottom of the first page of the tool. Just click on "How to Use the Tool" at the bottom of that page. The "Changing Information Tutorial" shows you how to use the computer to give an answer to each question. There is also a help page that explains other things the pre-screening tool asks you. To find it, start the tool, and then click on "Help System" in the upper right corner of the page.

Do you keep my information private and secure when I use the pre-screening tool?

Yes. The tool is secure and private. The questions never ask you to identify yourself. So all the information you give is anonymous. For a full list of privacy policies, and disclaimers, click [HERE](#).

Does my state have special rules for vehicles? How do I find out?

You can click [HERE](#) for the State Vehicle Chart. Some states count vehicles as assets or resources, and some do not. Some states have other rules about vehicles. The State Vehicle Chart will tell you what the vehicle rules are for your state.

I don't understand a question. What do I do?

The pre-screening tool has three tutorials to show you how to use it. It also has a help page. To learn what each question is asking, click on "How to Use the Tool" at the bottom of the first page of the pre-screening tool. To learn how to use the computer to answer the questions, click on "Internet Basics" at the bottom of that page.

After you have started to use the tool, you can still use these tutorials and other assistance pages as well. On the upper right corner of any page, you can click on "Tutorials". Then a window will pop up. If you click on "Internet Basics Tutorial" in that window, you go to the Internet Basics Tutorial. If you click on "Pre-Screening Tool Tutorial", you go to the tutorial on how to use the tool. If you click on "Changing Information",