

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1853

S. P. 531

In Senate, June 6, 1977

Reported by Senator Snowe of Androscoggin from Committee on Health and Institutional Services. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed under Joint Rules No. 2.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-SEVEN

**AN ACT to Provide for the Immediate Issuance of
Food Stamps for Needy Families.**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

22 MRSA § 3104, as last amended by PL 1975, c. 293, § 4, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

§ 3104. Statewide food stamp program

1. Program required. The department shall:

A. Administer a statewide program in accordance with the related requirements and regulations of the United States Departments of Agriculture and Health, Education and Welfare; and

B. Cooperate with and participate in the administration of food distribution programs in conformity with regulations promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

2. Costs. The state shall pay $\frac{2}{3}$ and each county shall pay $\frac{1}{3}$ of the administrative costs for the operation of the program in the county, exclusive of the direct costs of issuance of stamps.

The department is authorized to determine the costs of administration for the counties and to enter into any necessary contracts or agreements with the counties for the purposes of this section.

The counties shall pay their share of the costs of their program by making advance quarterly payments to the Department of Human Services.

3. Authorization of emergency food stamp benefits prior to full verification. Whenever an applicant for food stamps states to the department that he is in need of immediate food assistance, the department shall, pending verification, issue and mail a card authorizing the applicant to purchase food stamps at the time of the department's initial interview with the applicant or within one working day of the interview, provided that all of the following conditions are met:

A. As a result of the initial interview with the applicant, the department shall have determined that the household of the applicant will probably be eligible for food stamps after full certification is completed;

B. Where possible, the applicant shall submit to the department, at the time of the initial interview, the adequate documentation to verify that he is in need of immediate food assistance;

C. When adequate documentation is not available at the time of the initial interview, the department shall contact at least one other person for the purpose of obtaining information to confirm the applicant's statements about his need for immediate food assistance; and

D. In no case:

(1) Shall the authorization to purchase food stamps under this section exceed 30 days from the date that the applicant receives the authorizing card; and

(2) Shall there be further food stamp issuance to the applicant's household until full verification has been obtained which confirms the eligibility of the household.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The primary purpose of this new draft is to require the Department to speed up the process of food stamp issuance when persons with a need for immediate food assistance apply for food stamps.

The draft, in § 3104, sub-§ 3, provides that the Department must, prior to full verification, issue a card authorizing the purchase of food stamps to a person who states that he is in need of immediate food assistance not later than one working day after the Department and the person have had an initial interview, if the following conditions are met:

1. The Department must have determined that the applicant will probably be eligible for food stamps after full verification has been completed.

2. The applicant, where possible, must provide the Department with documentation to verify his immediate need for food assistance.

3. If such documentation is not available, the Department must contact at least one person to confirm the applicant's statements about his immediate need.

4. No person can continue to receive food assistance for longer than 30 days, unless the person's eligibility has been verified.

In addition, the new draft, in § 3104, sub-§§ 1 and 2, rewrites and clarifies present law. No substantive changes are made in this clarification of present law.

The Department has stated that, prior to the effective date of the new draft, a new and improved computer process will be under way, with respect to food stamp issuance. This new process will enable the Department to issue emergency authorization cards within the one working day period specified in the draft. The Department will not have to spend any more money to implement this legislation than it has already planned to spend to implement the new computer process.