# Food Stamps Manual Policy Changes

## Introduction

With the signing of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act by President Clinton in August of 1996, a great deal of policies regarding the Food Stamps (FS) Program changed. In order to capture PRWORA and subsequent policy changes as they relate to Wisconsin, this table concisely displays new and revised policies incorporated into the Wisconsin Food Stamp Manual since September 1996.

## Background

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development periodically publishes “updates” to the Food Stamps Manual that specify additions and revisions to the previous edition. This table begins documenting policy changes starting with the FS manual as updated through 97-01 and continues to the present. Updates include only the pages that are to be substituted or added to the manual. Pages that are removed from the Manual contain obsolete policies, while new pages contain the revised or added text.

## Methodology

In order to document policies that have changed, each Manual update is compared with the most recent version of the Food Stamps Manual. (For example, policy changes announced in Update 98-03 were compared with the Food Stamps Manual as modified through Update 98-02.) All significant changes are then documented onto the following table. Significant changes are defined as those which affect eligibility, sanctioning, allotment levels, and work requirements.

An attempt was made to reference each policy change found in an Update with a corresponding Bureau of Welfare Initiatives’ Operations (OPS) Memo. OPS memos typically precede the release of an update (though not all policy changes will have a corresponding OPS memo). OPS memos announce the policy change and the day in which workers are to implement the particular change.

## Resources

All materials referred to in the following table are stored at IRP in Room 3470. The most updated version of the Food Stamps Manual is kept along with its former pages. In addition, supplementary resources are shelved including all OPS memos from 1996 to the present and administrator’s memos from 1998 to the present.

## Using the Table

**WEB POST DATE**: the day in which a policy was first posted to the IRP website.

**POLICY**: For the ease of use, policy changes are listed here in their most concise form. More complete descriptions of these changes can be found by referencing the manual and appropriate memos.

**POLICY TYPE**: Policies are classified into three categories:

1. **New**: The policy is an entirely new policy, an addition to a former policy, or a significant revision of a former policy.

2. **Clarification**: When a policy is “clarified,” usually a word change or a phrase is added to the current policy. Only those clarifications deemed significant are included.

3. **Routine**: Changes in policy that have been made to reflect inflation (i.e. deduction levels).
KEY WORDS: The table attempts to categorize policies for searchability. In the future, key words will be particularly helpful when this information is available in database format.

RELEASE DATE: the day in which a policy is announced to workers by the department.

EFFECTIVE DATE: the day in which a policy is supposed to be implemented by agency workers.

ACTUAL DATE: the day in which a policy was actually implemented by agency workers.

NOTE:
- This category is difficult to pinpoint. It assumes that there may be delay between some effective dates and the day in which workers actually carry out a change. In the absence of reliable information regarding the “actual date,” the effective date is typically accurate.
- When no supplementary resources are found regarding a policy change, the date of the Update in which the policy appeared is used as the effective/release date. These are signified with an (*).

UPDATE NUMBER: this specifies in which Update the policy change appeared.

MANUAL SECTION: This specifies where one can find the policy in the Food Stamps Manual. The numbering code reflects the same categorization method and chapter titles used in the manual.

FORMER POLICY: This provides the location of the former policy relating to the entry. By comparing the new policy to the former policy, the exact specification of the change may be better understood.

REFERENCE: This column gives information on where to find supplementary information regarding a policy change. Typically this information is found in OPS memos.

SEE UPDATED POLICY: In cases where a policy change in the table has been updated by a more recent policy also listed in the table, the location of the more recent policy change is listed in this column.

- **Abbreviations Used in Table**

  ABAWD: Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents  
  AFDC: Aid to Families with Dependent Children  
  CSJ: Community Service Job (under Wisconsin Works Program)  
  FS: Food Stamps Program  
  FSET: Food Stamps Employment Training Program  
  JOBS: Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program  
  SSI: Supplemental Security Income  
  TANF: Temporary Aid to Needy Families  
  W-2: Wisconsin Works  
  W-2 T: Wisconsin Works Transitions placement