

# FOOD GRANT INFORMATION SHEET

## You are entitled to a food grant if ...

Special Needs Grant Programme, cls 4.1, 6, 7, 8.4, 9.12 to 9.18, 11.2

- You meet the residence and means criteria listed over the page.
- You need to buy food now but do not have enough money.
- You spent your food money on something essential (anything that is necessary and important) for you or your family.

## Food grant myth busters:

- **You're still entitled when you've used up your "normal allowance" as there is no limit** if you have an "exceptional" situation (anything that is unusual or not normal for you).
- **You don't need an unexpected or emergency situation** as the law does not require either so MSD cannot insist on it.
- **It shouldn't matter you didn't save up for what you needed** as your need for food is most important, especially if you couldn't save up.
- **The amount granted shouldn't be less than** the amount in the next column that applies to you, or more if you need more.
- **If you're declined or not given enough** politely insist on speaking to a manager. If you must, accept the amount given and ask for a review of decision. Contact your local Community Law for help.

## Minimum amounts of food grant

University of Otago Food Costs Survey, [2016] NZSSAA 11 and 32.

- The following amounts (for each person in your family) are the **minimum** amounts MSD ought to grant for one week.
- MSD **must** consider your individual needs and give you more if needed. It is against the law not to consider your individual needs.
  - Adult male: \$71.
  - Adult female: \$60.
  - Teenage boy: \$74.
  - Teenage girl: \$61.
  - Ten year old: \$52.
  - Five year old: \$44.
  - One year old: \$29.
  - Plus any essential non-food items.

## How to apply for a food grant

Social Security Act 2018, s 298; [2018] NZSSAA 12.

- If you receive any benefit, try to apply via **MyMSD**.
- If that doesn't work then call **0800 559 009 (0800 889 990 for students)** or visit your local MSD office. In law, you cannot be "turned away" with no interview arranged. Ask for a manager and a review of decision if that happens as it is declining you.

## Suggestions to help you when applying:

- **First, say** “I need a food grant of \$X as I spent my money on ....”
- **If you’re told you have “no entitlement” left, or similar** say “that is OK because the law lets you make a grant over the normal limit in exceptional situations. This is exceptional because ....”
- **If you’re told an emergency or unexpected situation is needed** say “the law doesn’t say I need this so you can’t insist on it either.”
- **If you’re told you should have done budgeted or saved up for what you needed or similar** say “it was not **reasonable** for me to do because ....,” **and/or** “I have tried to improve my situation, by ....”
- **If you’re told “you can’t keep asking for grants” (or similar)** say “the law does not say that, I am entitled as long as I meet the criteria.”

## Residence and means criteria for food grants

Social Security Act 2018 s 205, sch 5; Special Needs Grant Programme cl 3, 4, 6, 7, 9.11-18

- You are a New Zealand citizen, or resident or permanent resident.
- You must consider New Zealand your permanent home.
- You must not have a benefit sanction imposed (if on a benefit) or a thirteen-week non-entitlement to a benefit for leaving your job.
- You should (but do not have to) have done budgeting if required.
- Your income in the week you apply must be less than the amount in the next column (**before** tax, **not including** benefits, WFF tax credits, or Child Support paid to you by a formula assessment).

- Single 16 or 17 old without children:	\$500.23.
- Single aged 18 or over without children:	\$574.91.
- Couple with or without children:	\$835.04.
- Sole parent with one child:	\$697.63.
- Sole parent with more than one child:	\$734.99.

## Food grant eligibility flowchart:

