

Agriculture (USDA). The objectives are to expand the market for agricultural products and to increase the ability of low-income families to buy greater quantities of better quality food. All nineteen counties included in the WE and T Program were also participating in the Food Stamp Program at the time of this study; all applicants and participants were eligible to buy food stamps.

A variable scale is used by which low-income families can exchange the amount of money they supposedly spend on food for food stamps of a higher value in purchasing power. The lower the monetary income, the higher the value of the food stamps received. No distinction is made for ages of family members, only the total number is considered. This is illustrated in Chart 1, which shows the relationship between how much a family must pay for food stamps in cash, and the value of the food stamps received (both on the vertical axis), as it varies with monthly income, the horizontal axis. The relationship is shown for a family of six members.

From Chart 1, it is apparent that there is an economic incentive to buy food stamps at very low levels of income. However, as income rises, the incentive is dampened. Therefore, one might suspect that, as people entered the WE and T Program and increased their monthly incomes, their economic incentive to buy food stamps would decrease. However, this must be coupled with the stated policy of the WE and T Program to appraise all participants of their opportunities to participate in the Food Stamp Program.

Food stamps can be used to purchase almost any kind of food. However, several kinds of items commonly regarded as "groceries" are excluded, including soaps and cleaning materials; tobacco; and alcoholic beverages. Any imported food items are excluded as well.