

INCOME DETERMINATIONS (92.203)

- 1.1 INCOME LIMITS** – ESG funds can only be used to benefit low and very low income households. The income limits applicable are the current “Program Income Limits” (adjusted for family size) produced by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- 1.2 ANNUAL INCOME (GROSS INCOME)** – The State’s ESG program uses the income definitions of the Section 8 program to determine the annual income (gross income) used to classify a household for purposes of eligibility. Annual income means all amounts, monetary or not, which:
1. Go to, or on behalf of, the family head or spouse (even if temporarily absent) or to any other family member;
 2. Are anticipated to be received from a source outside the family during the 12-month period following admission or annual reexamination effective date. In other words, it is the household’s *future or expected* ability to pay rather than its past earnings that is used to determine program eligibility. If it is not feasible to anticipate a level of income over a 12-month period, the income anticipated for a shorter period may be annualized, subject to a redetermination at the end of the shorter period; and
 3. Which are not specifically excluded in paragraph 1.8 (Income Exclusions) below.
 4. Annual income also means amounts derived (during the 12-month period) from assets to which any member of the family has access.
 5. **MONTHLY GROSS INCOME** – Monthly gross income is Annual Gross Income divided by 12 months.
- 1.3 ASSETS** – In general terms, an asset is a cash or noncash item that can be converted to cash. There is no asset limitation for participation in the ESG program. Income from assets is, however, recognized as part of Annual Gross Income. Assets have both a market value and a cash value.
1. **MARKET VALUE** – The market value of an asset is simply its dollar value on the open market. For example, a stock’s market value is the price quoted on a stock exchange on a particular day, and a property’s market value is the amount it would sell for on the open market. This may be determined by comparing the property with similar, recently sold properties.
 2. **CASH VALUE** – The cash value of an asset is the market value less reasonable expenses required to convert the asset to cash, including:
 - a. Penalties or fees for converting financial holdings. Any penalties, fees, or transaction charges levied when an asset is converted to cash are deducted from the market value to determine its cash value (e.g., penalties charged for premature withdrawal of a certificate of deposit, the transaction fee for converting mutual funds, or broker fees for converting stocks to cash); and/or

- b. Costs for selling real property. Settlement costs, real estate transaction fees, payment of mortgages/liens against the property, and any legal fees associated with the sale of real property are deducted from the market value to determine equity in the real estate.
- c. Under Section 8 rules, only the cash value (rather than market value) of an item is counted as an asset.

1.4 INCOME FROM ASSETS – The income counted is the actual income generated by the asset (e.g., interest on a savings or checking account.) The income is counted even if the household elects not to receive it. For example, although a household may elect to reinvest the interest of dividends from an asset, the interest or dividends is still counted as income.

1. The income from assets included in Annual Gross Income is the income that is anticipated to be received during the coming 12 months.
 - a. To obtain the anticipated interest on a savings account, the current account balance can be multiplied by the current interest rate applicable to the account; or
 - b. If the value of the account is not anticipated to change in the near future and interest rates have been stable, a copy of the IRS 1099 form showing past interest earned can be used.
 - c. Checking account balances (as well as savings account balances) are considered an asset. This is a recognition that some households keep assets in their checking accounts, and is not intended to count monthly income as an asset. Grantees should use the average monthly balance over a 6-month period as the cash value of the checking account.
2. When an Asset Produces Little or No Income:
 - a. If the family's assets are \$5,000 or less, actual income from assets (e.g., interest on a checking account) is not counted as annual income. For example, if a family has \$600 in a non-interest bearing checking account, no actual income would be counted because the family has no actual income from assets and the total amount of all assets is less than \$5,000.
 - b. If the family's assets are greater than \$5,000, income from assets is computed as the greater of:
 - i. actual income from assets, or
 - ii. imputed income from assets based on a passbook rate applied to the cash value of all assets. For example, if a family has \$3,000 in a non-interest bearing checking account and \$5,500 in an interest-bearing savings account, the two amounts are added together. Use the standard passbook rate to determine the annual income from assets for this family.
3. Applicants who dispose of assets for less than fair market value (i.e., value on the open market in an "arm's length" transaction) have, in essence, voluntarily reduced their ability to afford housing. Section 8 rules require, therefore, that any asset disposed of for less than

fair market value during the 2 years preceding the income determination be counted as if the household still owned the asset.

- a. The value to be included as an asset is the difference between the cash value of the asset and the amount that was actually received (if any) in the disposition of the asset (less any fees associated with disposal of property, such as a brokerage fee).
- b. Each applicant must certify whether an asset has been disposed of for less than fair market value. Assets disposed of for less than fair market value as a result of foreclosure, bankruptcy, divorce or separation is not included in this calculation.
- c. These procedures are followed to eliminate the need for an assets limitation and to penalize people who give away assets for the purpose of receiving assistance or paying a lower rent.

1.5 ASSETS INCLUDE:

1. Amounts in savings accounts and six month average balance for checking accounts.
2. Stocks, bonds, savings certificates, money market funds and other investment accounts.
3. Equity in real property or other capital investments. Equity if the estimated current market value of the asset less the unpaid balance on all loans secured by the asset and reasonable costs (such as broker fees) that would be incurred in selling the asset. *DO NOT INCLUDE EQUITY OF PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE AS AN ASSET FOR HOMEOWNER REHABILITATION PROGRAMS.*
4. The cash value of trusts that are available to the household.
5. IRA, Keogh and similar retirement savings accounts, even though withdrawal would result in penalty.
6. Contributions to company retirement/pension funds that can be withdrawn without retiring or terminating employment.
7. Assets which, although owned by more than one person, allow unrestricted access by the applicant.
8. Lump sum receipts such as inheritances, capital gains, lottery winnings, insurance settlements, and other claims.
9. Personal property held as an investment such as gems, jewelry, coin collections, antique cars, etc.
10. Cash value of life insurance policies.
11. Assets disposed of for less than fair market value during two years preceding certification or recertification.

1.6 ASSETS DO NOT INCLUDE:

1. Necessary personal property, except as noted under paragraph 6.5(9) (Assets Include) above
2. Interest in Indian Trust lands
3. Assets that are part of an active business or farming operation.

NOTE: Rental properties are considered personal assets held as an investment rather than business assets unless real estate is the applicant/tenant's main occupation.

4. Assets not accessible to the family and which provide no income to the family.
5. Vehicles especially equipped for the handicapped.
6. Equity in owner-occupied cooperatives and manufactured homes in which the family lives.

1.7 INCOME INCLUSIONS – The following are used to determine the annual income (gross income) of an applicant's household for purposes of eligibility:

1. The full amount, before any payroll deductions, of wages and salaries, over-time pay, commissions, fees, tips and bonuses, and other compensation for personal services.
2. The net income for the operation of a business or profession. Expenditures for business expansion or amortization of capital indebtedness cannot be used as deductions in determining net income; however, an allowance for depreciation of assets used in a business or profession may be deducted, based on straight line depreciation, as provided in Internal Revenue Service regulations. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from the operation of a business or profession is included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested in the operation by the family.
3. Interest, dividends, and other net income of any kind from real or personal property. Expenditures for amortization of capital indebtedness cannot be used as a deduction in determining net income. An allowance for depreciation is permitted only as authorized in paragraph (2) above. Any withdrawal of cash or assets from an investment will be included in income, except to the extent the withdrawal is reimbursement of cash or assets invested by the family. Where the family has net family assets in excess of \$5,000, annual income includes the greater of the actual income derived from net family assets or a percentage of the value of such assets based on the current passbook saving rate, as determined by HUD.
4. The full amount of periodic payments received from Social Security, annuities, insurance policies, retirement funds, pensions, disability or death benefits and other similar types of periodic receipts, including a lump-sum amount or prospective monthly amounts for the delayed start of a periodic amount (except Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security).
5. Payments in lieu of earnings, such as unemployment and disability compensation, worker's compensation and severance pay (but see paragraph (3) under Income Exclusions).
6. Welfare Assistance. If the welfare assistance payment includes an amount specifically designated for shelter and utilities that is subject to adjustment by the welfare assistance

agency in accordance with the actual cost of shelter and utilities, the amount of welfare assistance income to be included as income consists of:

- a. The amount of the allowance or grant exclusive of the amount specifically designated for shelter or utilities; **plus**
 - b. The maximum amount that the welfare assistance agency could in fact allow the family for shelter and utilities. If the family welfare assistance is ratably reduced from the standard of need by applying a percentage, the amount calculated under this paragraph is the amount resulting from one application of the percentage.
7. Periodic and determinable allowances, such as alimony and child support payments, and regular contributions or gifts received from persons not residing in the dwelling.
 8. All regular pay, special pay and allowances of a member of the Armed Forces (see paragraph (8) under Income Exclusions).

1.8 INCOME EXCLUSIONS – The following are excluded from a household’s income for purposes of determining eligibility:

1. Income from employment of children (including foster children) under the age of 18 years.
2. Payments received for the care of foster children or foster adults (usually individuals with disabilities, unrelated to the tenant family, who are unable to live alone).
3. Lump-sum additions to family assets, such as inheritances, insurance payments (including payments under health and accident insurance and worker’s compensation), capital gains and settlement for personal or property losses (except for payments in lieu of earnings – see paragraph (5) of Income Inclusions).
4. Amounts received by the family that are specifically for, or in reimbursement of, the cost of medical expenses for any family member.
5. Income of a live-in aide.
6. Certain increases in income of a disabled member of the family residing in HOME assisted housing or receiving HOME tenant-based rental assistance (see 6.12 (7) under Determining Whose Income to Count).
7. The full amount of student financial assistance paid directly to the student or to the educational institution;
8. The special pay to a family member serving in the Armed Forces who is exposed to hostile fire;
9.
 - a. Amounts received under training programs funded by HUD.
 - b. Amounts received by a person with a disability that are disregarded for a limited time for purposes of Supplemental Security Income eligibility and benefits because they are set aside for use under a Plan to Attain Self-Sufficiency (PASS).

- c. Amounts received by a participant in other publicly assisted programs which are specifically for or in reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred (special equipment, clothing, transportation, child care etc.) which are made solely to allow participation in a specific program.
 - d. Amount received under a resident's service stipend. A resident service stipend is a modest amount (not to exceed \$200 per month) received by a resident for performing a service for the owner or manager on a part-time basis, that enhances the quality of life in the development. Such services may include, but are not limited to, fire patrol, hall monitoring, lawn maintenance, resident initiatives coordination and serving as a member of the governing board. No resident may receive more than one such stipend during the same period of time.
 - e. Incremental earnings and benefits resulting to any family member from participation in qualifying state or local employment training programs (including training not affiliated with a local government) and training of a family member as resident management staff. Amounts excluded must be received under employment training programs with clearly defined goals and objectives, are excluded only for the period during which the family member participates in the employment training program.
10. Temporary, nonrecurring or sporadic income (including gifts).
 11. Reparation payments paid by a foreign government pursuant to claims filed under the laws of that government by persons who were persecuted during the Nazi era.
 12. Earnings in excess of \$480 for each full-time student 18 years old or older (excluding the head of household and spouse).
 13. Adoption assistance payments in excess of \$480 per adopted child.
 14. For public housing only, the earnings and benefits to any family member resulting from participation in a program providing employment training and supportive services in accordance with the Family Support Act of 1988, Section 22 of the 1937 Act, or any comparable federal, state or local law during the exclusion period.
 15. Deferred periodic amounts from supplemental security income and social security benefits that are received in a lump sum amount or in prospective monthly amounts.
 16. Amounts received by the family in the form of refunds or rebates under state or local law for property taxes paid on the dwelling unit.
 17. Amounts paid by a state agency to a family with member who has a developmental disability and is living at home to offset the cost of services and equipment needed to keep the developmentally disabled family member at home.
 18. Amounts specifically excluded by any other Federal statute from consideration as income for purposes of determining eligibility or benefits under a category of assistance programs that includes assistance under any program to which exclusions set forth in 24 CFR 5.609I apply. The following is a list of types of income that qualify for that exclusion (9/27/89 regulations):

- a. The value of the allotment provided to an eligible household under the Food Stamp Act of 1977;
- b. Payments to volunteers under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (employment through VISTA; Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Foster Grandparents Program, youthful offenders incarceration alternatives, senior companions);
- c. Payments received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1626(a));
- d. Income derived from certain sub-marginal land of the United States that is held in trust for certain Indian tribes (25 U.S.C. 259e);
- e. Payments or allowances made under the department of Health and Human Services' Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. 8624(f));
- f. Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Job Training Partnership Act;
- g. Income derived from the disposition of funds of the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians;
- h. The first \$2,000 of per capita shares received from judgment funds awarded by the Indian Claims Commission or the Court of Claims (25 U.S.C. 1407-1408) or from funds held in trust for an Indian tribe by the Secretary of Interior (25 U.S.C. 117);
- i. Amounts of scholarships funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 including awards under the Federal work-study program or under the Bureau of Indian Affairs student assistance programs (20 U.S.C. 1087uu);
- j. Payments received from programs funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056(f));
- k. Any earned income tax credit refund payments received on or after January 1, 1991, including advanced earned income credit payments;
- l. Payments received after January 1, 1989 from the Agent Orange Settlement Fund or any other funds established pursuant to the settlement in the In Re Agent Orange product liability litigation MDL No. 381 (E.D.N.Y.)
- m. The value of any child care provided or arranged (or any amount received as payment for such care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care) under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858q)
- n. Payments received under the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act of 1980.
- o. Payments received under programs funded in whole or in part under the Job Training Partnership Act (employment and training programs for Native Americans and migrant and seasonal farm workers, Job corps, veterans

employment programs, state job training programs and career intern programs, Americorps);

- p. Payments made by the Indian Claims Commission to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakima Indian Nation or the Apache Tribe of Mescalero Reservation;
- q. Allowances, earnings, and payments to Americorps participants under the National and Community Service Act of 1990;
- r. Any allowance paid under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 1805 to a child suffering from spina bifida who is the child of a Vietnam veteran;
- s. Any amount of crime victim compensation (under the Victims of Crime Act) received through crime victim assistance (or payment or reimbursement of the cost of such assistance); and
- t. Allowances, earnings and payments to individuals participating in programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.