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A Quaker-affiliated, nonsectarian human care organization providing compassionate and practical solutions to the problems of poverty and health

Facts About Food Stamps

The Mercer Street Friends Food Stamp Outreach Project

Mercer Street Friends has developed a simple computerized questionnaire that quickly determines whether a low-income family or individual is eligible to receive food stamps. Call the Mercer Street Friends food stamp outreach worker at (609) 396-1506 if you need additional information or would like to be screened for food stamp eligibility by phone or in person.

What is the Food Stamp Program?

Food stamps help you buy food at grocery stores and supermarkets. You do not have to pay for food stamps. When you use food stamps, you have more money of your own for other needs. Food stamps are meant to supplement your net income. The higher your monthly expenses, the more food stamps you could receive.

You should also know:

- You can work and be eligible for food stamps.
- You can own a home and a car and be eligible food stamps.

Are food stamps cash? No, people in the program get a card that can be used at grocery stores or any place that accepts a Family First card to buy food.

How many assets can I have? Households with an elderly member (age 60 or older) or disabled member may have up to \$3,000 in countable assets. Other households may have up to \$2,000. Countable assets include money in checking or savings accounts, cash, stocks and bonds. Your house, belongings, burial plot and term life insurance policies do not count as assets.

Can legal noncitizens get food stamps? Yes, adult legal immigrants who have lived in the United States for at least five years can get food stamps. Legal immigrant children and legal immigrants who get health or cash benefits because they have a disability can get food stamps immediately. You are not required to tell the food stamp caseworker the immigration status or social security number of any person in your household who is not applying for food stamps. Getting food stamps will not affect your immigration status or your ability to become a U.S. citizen.

How to get food stamps:

- Call the Mercer County Food Stamp Office at (609) 989-4320 to set up a meeting with a food stamp intake worker.
- Visit the Food Stamp Office at the Mercer County Board of Social Services, 200 Wolverson Street, Trenton.
- **Hours of operation:** Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Know your rights:

- Receive a food stamp appointment when you ask for it.
- Receive food stamps (or be notified that you are not eligible for the program) within 30 days of applying.
- Receive emergency food stamps within seven days, in certain situations.
- Have a fair hearing if you disagree with any action taken on your case. The phone number for Food Stamp Fair Hearing is: (609) 989-4590.

To determine if you are eligible for food stamps, please call for a free screening in person or by phone in English or in Spanish. Contact Terry Kiely at (609) 396-1506, or e-mail tkiely@mercerstreefriends.org.