

# Program Information and Rights and Responsibilities

## **Changes You Must Report and How to Report Them**

1. Your caseworker will give you a Change Report Form for your household's situation and explain it to you.
2. This form will tell you all the changes you must report to us and when to report them.
3. When you have a change, fill out the form and mail it to us. You may also call your caseworker or come in to our office to report changes.
4. Your caseworker will contact you about the change.

## **Information About Social Security Numbers**

1. You must provide the Social Security Number (SSN) used by each person in your household that you apply for. If you need help getting a SSN, ask your caseworker for help. **We will only give Food and Nutrition Services to the eligible people who give us their SSN.** Eligible household members who apply will be able to get benefits even though some people in the household are not applying for benefits.
2. We will use the SSN's you give us to do computer matches and check what you told us with State and Federal Agencies.

## **Information About U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Status**

1. You must be a United States (U.S.) citizen **or** an eligible alien to get Food and Nutrition Services. You must also meet other Food and Nutrition Services rules.
2. You must provide the US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) documents used by each person in your household that you apply for. **We will only give Food and Nutrition Services to the eligible people who give us their legal USCIS documents.** Eligible household members who apply will be able to get benefits even though some people in the household are not applying for benefits.
3. We will only contact USCIS to check the immigration status of the people who give us their immigrant documents.

## **Food and Nutrition Services Rules**

The following rules apply for getting and using Food and Nutrition Services:

1. **Don't** hide or give wrong information on purpose to get Food and Nutrition Services benefits.
2. **Don't** use Food and Nutrition Services to buy non-food items like alcohol or tobacco.
3. **Don't** trade or sell your Food and Nutrition Services.
4. **Don't** use someone else's Food and Nutrition Services for yourself.
5. **Don't** use your Food and Nutrition Services for someone else.
6. **Don't** use your Food and Nutrition Services to pay on any kind of credit account even if it is for eligible Food and Nutrition Services items.
7. **DO** cooperate with state and federal personnel in a Quality Control review.

## **Penalties for Breaking the Rules of the Food and Nutrition Services Program**

If you intentionally break any of the rules above you may not be able to get any more Food and Nutrition Services from one year to permanently, and may be fined up to \$250,000 and/or jailed up to twenty years.

Giving wrong information may also mean we will reduce your benefits, or you may be required to repay benefits.

If a court finds you guilty of buying, selling, or trading more than \$500 in Food and Nutrition Services, you may lose Food and Nutrition Services forever.

If a court finds you guilty of trading Food and Nutrition Services for firearms, ammunition, or explosives you will lose Food and Nutrition Services forever.

If a court finds you guilty of trading Food and Nutrition Services for controlled substances, you will lose Food and Nutrition Services for two years the first time and forever the second time.

You will not get Food and Nutrition Services for 10 years if you are found guilty of getting or trying to get Food and Nutrition Services in more than one household at a time. This penalty happens if you give wrong information about who you are or where you live.

## **Information About Hearings**

1. If you do not agree with our decision about your Food and Nutrition Services, you or the person helping you may ask for a hearing.
2. You may call or write us to ask for the hearing. You have up to 90 days from the date of the decision to ask for the hearing.
3. A friend, relative, or lawyer may speak for you at your hearing.

## **Information About Work and Training Rules**

Some people have to work or attend training to get Food and Nutrition Services. If this is true for you or for other people in your household, we will tell you. You will have to follow the rules about work and training to get Food and Nutrition Services.

## **We Check What You Tell Us**

The information you give us may be checked by federal, state, and local officials to make sure it is true. If any information you give us is not correct, we may deny Food and Nutrition Services.

If law enforcement officials contact us for information to help catch persons fleeing to avoid the law, we will give them your information.

If you have a Food and Nutrition Services overpayment we will give your answers to federal and state agencies, as well as private claims collection agencies, to collect the overpayment.

## **We Must Obtain Data**

We are required to request racial and ethnic data on participating households. The information is voluntary; neither your eligibility nor Food and Nutrition Services amount will be affected if you choose not to provide it.

## **You Will Not Be Discriminated Against**

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## **Getting Help With Your Telephone Bill**

If you receive SSI, Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid, Sec. 8 Housing Assistance, Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) or Work First Family Assistance benefits you may be eligible for a local telephone service discount.

The Lifeline Program allows recipients to receive a credit on their monthly telephone bill.

The Link-Up Program allows recipients who are Native Americans residing on federally recognized tribal lands a discount toward the cost of hooking up local telephone service.

Households interested in these services must contact their telephone company to apply for these programs.

## **Are You Registered to Vote in North Carolina?**

Registering to vote is easy in North Carolina. State law requires voters to register 25 days before an election. DSS can help you with registration paperwork. If you would like to register to vote in North Carolina, ask your caseworker for a voter registration form, and if you need help, to assist you in completing the form.