



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

Economic Independence Section • 325 North Salisbury Street
2420 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2420
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker -Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

August 29, 2002

Re: Notification of September 2002 Food Stamp Notice

Dear County Director of Social Services:

**Attention: Food Stamp Supervisors
Work First Supervisors**

Attached to this letter is a sample of the notice that will be sent to Food Stamp recipients regarding the increase in the Food Stamp allotments, income limits, and the excess shelter deduction. The United States Department of Agriculture issued this cost-of-living adjustment effective October 1, 2002. We have also included information pertaining to LIEAP on how to get help with paying heating bills. In addition, we have included information on policy that has changed with the Farm Bill legislation being passed as it relates to the standard deduction, immigrants that are disabled and the increased resource limit for food stamp households that have an individual who is disabled.

Laser printed notices will be provided to all active food stamp benefit recipients with active cases as of September 5, 2002 and inserts will be provided in all notices of action sent to food stamps applicants September 6-30, 2002.

If you have any questions about this notice, please contact your Program Integrity Representative.

Sincerely,

Wilbert R. Morris, Chief
Economic Independence Section

SB/mw
Attachments
EI 25-2002

Case ID Number:
Date:

NOTICE TO FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS

The United States Department of Agriculture issued a cost-of-living increase in Food Stamp benefits effective October 1, 2002. The maximum gross and net income limits allowed and the excess shelter expense deduction for Food Stamp benefit recipients have increased. This means the amount of Food Stamp benefits you receive **may** increase depending on your household's situation.

Note: Please disregard this notice if your application has been denied.

Other Changes that may affect your eligibility effective October 1, 2002

The current fixed standard deduction in the amount of \$134 has been replaced with a deduction that varies according to household size. This year households with 5 individuals will receive a deduction of \$147 and households with 6 or more individuals will receive a deduction of \$168. The standard deduction for households of 4 or less individuals will remain the same. These amounts will be adjusted annually for cost-of-living increases.

The resource limit for households that contain an individual who is disabled has increased from \$2000.00 to \$3000.00.

Food Stamp eligibility is restored to certain qualified aliens who are blind or disabled and otherwise eligible regardless of their date of entry into the United States.

If you have questions about these changes, contact your local food stamp office. You have the right to request a fair hearing if you do not believe your benefits were determined correctly when this change was made.

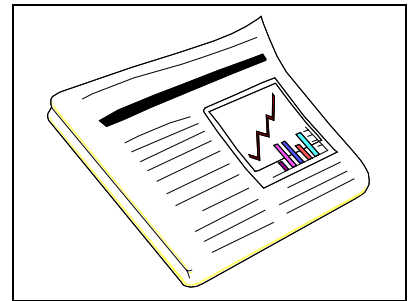
HOW TO GET A HEARING

You have the right to a fair hearing of your case if you do not agree with our decision. You can request a fair hearing by letting your local food stamp office or county department of social services know of your request. You may request the hearing in person, by telephone, or in writing. The hearing may be requested by any member of your food stamp unit or by your representative, including an attorney obtained at your own expense. Free legal advice may be available. Contact your nearest Legal Services Office.

You have 90 calendar days from the date this notice was mailed to ask for a hearing. Unless you ask for a hearing by this date, you cannot have one.

**SEE OTHER SIDE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HELP WITH
PAYING YOUR HEATING BILLS**

NOTIFICATION OF LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)



To help with heating bills, the Division of Social Services will make a one-time payment in February to all households who apply and meet the requirements.

Most households that received food stamp benefits for October may be eligible for an energy check. If you do not receive an approval notice from the County Department of Social Services in October, you must apply at the **COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES** if you **want to receive this benefit.**

The application period for the LIEAP program is November 4 through November 15. If you are elderly or disabled, you may:

- Send someone to apply for you; or
- Call the county department of social services and ask to apply.

To get more information, call your county department of social services or CARE-LINE, Information and Referral Services at 1-800-662-7030 (TTY/Voice/Spanish), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. except holidays.

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION