



Department of Human Resources
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FIA INFORMATION MEMO

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

FROM: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RE: TIPS FOR FOOD STAMP SHOPPERS FACT SHEET

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS

Attached is a fact sheet that may answer the questions new customers may have about using their food stamps. Local departments should give all new customers a fact sheet when they come in to get an Independence Card.

We will send you an initial supply of the fact sheet. You will be able to request additional copies through the warehouse.

INQUIRIES

Please direct questions to Kay Finegan at 410-767-7939.

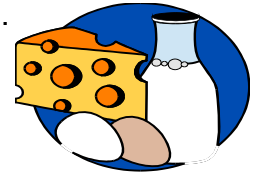
Attachment

cc: FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
DHR Help Desk

TIPS FOR FOOD STAMP SHOPPERS

You may be using food stamps for the first time. It's important that you understand that both persons using food stamps and grocers must follow certain rules.

Listed below is some information that you may find helpful:



- ✓ You may only buy food with food stamps.
- ✓ Most grocery stores accept food stamps. Stores authorized to accept them usually have signs posted in the store.
- ✓ Your check out at the grocery store will be easier if you separate the foods you will buy with food stamps from the other items that you will buy with cash.
- ✓ You may buy infant formula with food stamps.
- ✓ You may buy ice and drinking water with food stamps.
- ✓ You **cannot** purchase non-food items (diapers, soap, medicine, paper goods, pet food, etc.) with food stamps
- ✓ You **cannot** buy alcoholic drinks, cigarettes, or other tobacco products with food stamps.
- ✓ If you are eligible, you will get an Independence Card, which is used like a debit card.
- ✓ You do not have to use all of your food stamps on the day you receive them. You can use them to shop for food over the entire month.
- ✓ You also do not have to use all of your food stamps in the month you get them. You can use them to buy food the next month. However, you should use the benefits within 45 days of when they go into your account.
- ✓ To find out about buying and eating healthier, more nutritious foods you can check out the Food and Nutrition Service Internet website at www.fns.usda.gov.
- ✓ If you have any questions about the schedule for benefits in your Independence Card account, please call 1-800-332-6347.

