

Important Information About Your Food Stamp Or TANF Benefits



The amount of **Food Stamp** or **TANF** benefits you receive beginning October 2008 will change automatically and depending on the circumstances could either increase or decrease your benefits.

For households receiving Food Stamps changes include:

- higher income limits, higher maximum benefits amounts;
- different amounts for the telephone and utility standards, and child care deductions;
- a change in the standard deduction that is allowed for every household;
- new amounts for meal allowance for child care providers.

For households receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) changes include:

- a change in the standard deduction that is allowed in figuring net countable earnings;
- a change in the household's income limit for reporting changes.

If you disagree with the new amount of your benefits, you have the right to request a fair hearing. You may request a hearing on your **Food Stamp** case within the next 90 days (30 days for **TANF**) as long as the issue appealed is based on the improper computation of your benefits, or the misapplication or misinterpretation of federal law or regulations. If your benefits decreased, you have the right to continue to receive your previous amount until the hearing officer writes a final decision; however, you may have to repay benefits you are over issued if the hearing officer agrees with the action taken. You may request a hearing by contacting your worker at your local Social Services Agency or you may call 1-800-552-3431.

REMINDERS ABOUT YOUR REQUIREMENTS TO REPORT CHANGES

- Tell your **Food Stamp** or **TANF** worker if you move or your household's total income for the month is higher than the amounts on this chart. For each person over 8 people, add another \$390 to the chart.

1 person household	\$1,127	5 people \$2,687
2 people	\$1,517	6 people \$3,077
3 people	\$1,907	7 people \$3,467
4 people	\$2,297	8 people \$3,857

- Tell your **TANF** worker if you move or if your children leave your home.
- Tell your **Food Stamp** worker if you must participate in a work activity and the number of hours you work goes below 20 hours a week.
- If you have **Medicaid**, you must report all changes to your **Medicaid** worker within 10 days.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TANF DISREGARD CHECK

Effective October 2008, the first \$100 of child support or child and spousal support payments paid to a **TANF** household will not be counted in determining the **TANF** amount. This \$100 will be sent to the **TANF** parent when the non-custodial/absent parent has paid at least \$100 in current support during the month. If the absent parent does not pay at least \$100 during the month, whatever amount the parent does pay will be sent to the **TANF** household on the first day of the following month. An increased payment may cause a decrease in food stamp benefits.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The **Fuel Assistance Program** application period is October 14 through November 14. If you have not received a pre-printed application or pre-approval notice by the middle of October, you may request an application from your local department of social services or download one at: www.dss.virginia.gov.

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR SAVINGS ASSISTANCE

The **Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA)** Program can help individuals with earned income. Saving for your first home? Saving to start a business? Saving to continue your education? Enroll in the **VIDA** Program! To learn more, call

1 (888) VIDA-WIN or visit: www.dhcd.virginia.gov/VIDA.

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

EITC is a tax credit for low-to-middle income individuals and families. An individual or family making as little as \$1 could qualify, but you must file an income tax return to get it - even if the IRS doesn't require filing for your income level. An individual earning up to \$12,590 a year or a family earning up to \$39,783 per year might qualify and an **EITC** refund might be as much as \$4,716. Find out if you qualify by calling **1-800-829-3676**.

