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COMMISSIONER

Apply for Food Stamps:
www.compass.ga.gov

Renew Your Benefits:
www.compass.ga.gov

DFCS LEADERSHIP:

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SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FOOD STAMPS)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as the Food Stamp Program, is a federally funded program that provides monthly benefits to low-income households to help pay for the cost of food. In Georgia, the Food Stamp Program is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Last year, food stamp benefits added over 2 billion dollars to Georgia's economy

HOW DOES A FAMILY APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS?

Applications can be submitted online via www.compass.ga.gov or paper applications can be filed to any local DFCS office by mail, fax or in person. If you have difficulty completing the application, someone will be available to assist you. A phone interview will be required and you may need to verify your income and other household information.

Benefits are issued using an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card and Personal Identification Number (PIN). Food stamp recipients use their EBT cards at authorized retailer stores to purchase food items. Benefits are issued monthly based on a schedule according to the last 2 digits of the client ID number assigned.

WHO CAN RECEIVE FOOD STAMPS?

Households whose gross income (total income including taxes) is no more than 130 percent of the federal poverty level may qualify for food stamp benefits. Elderly (age sixty or older) and/or disabled households are not subject to a gross income test.

WHAT DO FOOD STAMPS BUY?

Food Stamp benefits can be used at stores to buy any kind of food, but they cannot be used to buy alcohol, tobacco, soap, paper products or any other non-food item except vegetable garden seeds. It is illegal for recipients to use benefits for anything other than purchasing food. DHS' Office of Inspector General investigates cases of Food Stamp fraud and misuse or overpayment in benefits.

HOW LONG CAN A FAMILY RECEIVE FOOD STAMPS?

There is no time limit for receiving Food Stamps; however, households are certified for 6 or 12 month periods depending on the circumstances of the case.

HOW DO I RENEW MY BENEFITS?

A renewal letter will be mailed to each family or recipient that gives instructions on the renewal process. Households can renew their benefits on-line at www.compass.ga.gov or request a paper form. In order to use the online renewal process, households must know the client id number of the head of the household and must use it to create an online account prior to going to the 'renew my benefits' section. A phone interview may be required along with verification of income.

2011 STATISTICS:

- People receiving Food Stamps in January 2012.....1,891,017
- Households receiving food stamps in January 2012.....866, 679
- Average size of household receiving food stamps.....2.40 people

Average number of households and individuals receiving food stamps each year:

SFY	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Households	385,932	463,027	497,345	590,396	812,078
People	947,146	987,850	1,202,181	1,389,936	1,839,222

- Total value of Food Stamps issued in SFY 2011.....\$2,203,890,446 (federal funds only)
- Average monthly food stamp benefit per family.....\$208
- Maximum monthly benefit for household of three\$526