

REENTRY MYTH

BUSTER!

A Product of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council

MYTH: Individuals convicted of a felony can never receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) benefits.

FACT: This ban applies only to convicted drug felons, and only thirteen States have kept the ban in place in its entirety. Most States have modified or eliminated the ban.

Section 115 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 prohibited States from providing Food Stamps (now the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP) to convicted **drug** felons unless the State passes legislation to extend benefits to these individuals.

Only the following 13 States have kept the welfare ban entirely in place: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, South Carolina, Texas and West Virginia. All other states have modified the ban or have eliminated it entirely.

The following 18 States and the District of Columbia have eliminated the ban entirely: Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.

The following 19 States have amended the ban to allow some individuals to regain eligibility by meeting certain additional requirements, like receiving or completing drug or alcohol treatment, to regain eligibility for benefits: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota,

Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin.

For More Information:

Visit the SNAP website at www.fns.usda.gov/snap for information on application and eligibility requirements.

What is a REENTRY MYTH BUSTER?

This Myth Buster is one in a series of fact sheets intended to clarify existing federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Each year, more than 700,000 individuals are released from state and federal prisons. Another 9 million cycle through local jails. When reentry fails, the social and economic costs are high -- more crime, more victims, more family distress, and more pressure on already-strained state and municipal budgets.

Because reentry intersects with health and housing, education and employment, family, faith, and community well-being, many federal agencies are focusing on initiatives for the reentry population. Under the auspices of the Cabinet-level interagency Reentry Council, federal agencies are working together to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens, and save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

For more information about the Reentry Council, go to: www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/reentry-council-meeting

MYTH: I cannot apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) benefits without a mailing address.

FACT: You can get SNAP even if you do not have a mailing address.

The SNAP application process requires applicants to provide an address where they can receive case related notices. Some common documents that clients receive by mail include:

- Electronic Benefit Card (EBT) that clients use to access their benefits at authorized stores
- Reapplication forms
- Eligibility interview appointment information

Individuals and families who do not have a mailing address can still receive SNAP benefits. Applicants without a fixed address should notify an eligibility worker at their local SNAP office about their situation to find out how they can receive program-related correspondence. Some common ways local offices ensure that clients without a mailing address receive notices include:

- Holding correspondence at the local office for pick up
- Using the address of a local shelter (with the shelter's permission)
- Use the address of a trusted friend or family member (with resident's permission)
- Send correspondence to a local post office as general delivery mail

Establishing a procedure for applicants without a fixed address to receive timely correspondence helps to ensure that they continue to receive all the SNAP benefits for which they are eligible.

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MYTH: I cannot apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) benefits without a valid State-issued identification card.

FACT: You can get SNAP even if you do not have a valid State ID.

SNAP regulations require an applicant to verify his or her identity in order to receive program benefits. A valid State-issued ID is a common document used to prove an applicant's identity, but it is not the only acceptable form of proof. SNAP regulations require that local SNAP offices offer applicants flexibility about the type of documents they can provide to verify their information. A local office is required to accept any document that reasonably establishes the applicant's identity and cannot accept only one type of verification. Other examples of acceptable documents that verify an applicant's identity are:

- A birth certificate
- An ID card for health benefits or another assistance program
- A school or work ID card
- Wage stubs containing the applicant's name

If an applicant cannot obtain sufficient verification on his or her own, the local office is required to provide assistance and, if sufficient proof of identity cannot be obtained, the local office can accept a statement from a collateral contact who can confirm the applicant's identity. A collateral contact is a person who is knowledgeable about the applicant's situation and can corroborate information given on the

application. Possible collateral contacts include current or former employers, landlords, probation officers or staff members from other social service agencies.

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