

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FORMERLY THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM)

PAPER COUPONS WERE DEOBLIGATED AS OF JUNE 17, 2009

Public Law 110-246, the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (otherwise known as the Farm Bill) renamed the Food Stamp Program as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as of October 1, 2008.

This change was made in recognition of the fact that program participants access their nutrition benefits with Electronic Benefit Transaction (EBT) cards – not stamps or coupons. The law also made several other Program changes that affect retailers and financial institutions with regard to the acceptance and redemption of paper food coupons. The law prohibited States from issuing paper coupons as of June 18, 2008 and required that EBT cards be the sole method of benefit delivery. The law also de-obligated paper coupons as legal tender one year from the date of enactment.

As of June 17, 2009, retailers may no longer accept paper coupons for food purchases from program recipients. Retailers had until July 17, 2009 to redeem any remaining paper coupons in their possession.

Financial institutions have until September 17, 2009 to submit properly redeemed paper coupons to the Federal Reserve for credit. Normal redemption procedures should be used: Redemption Certificates from retailers as well as Food Coupon Deposit Documents should be submitted to the Federal Reserve Bank.

Summary of key dates:

- **June 18, 2008 – States stopped issuing paper food coupons**
- **June 17, 2009 – Retailers stopped accepting paper food coupons from recipients**
- **July 17, 2009 – Banks stopped accepting Redemption Certificates (RCs) and paper food coupons from retailers**
- **September 17, 2009 – Federal Reserve Banks will stop accepting paper coupons, Redemption Certificates and Food Coupon Deposit Documents from banks**

If you have any questions, please see our website at www.fns.usda.gov/snap.