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Myths and Facts about Food Stamp Benefits and Immigrants

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MYTH: You have to be a U.S. citizen to get food stamps.

FACT: Some legal immigrants can get food stamps. If you are an “eligible immigrant,” you may qualify. Ask your local food stamp office.

2

MYTH: Getting food stamps hurts your chances of becoming a citizen.

FACT: If you are a legal immigrant and you get food stamps, it will not hurt your chances of becoming a citizen.

3

MYTH: If you don’t have legal status, you can’t get food stamps.

FACT: Undocumented people can’t get food stamps. But citizens and some legal immigrants who live with them can get food stamps, including children.

4

MYTH: Children of undocumented immigrants can’t get food stamps.

FACT: Children of undocumented immigrants can get food stamps if they are citizens or legal permanent residents.

5

MYTH: Undocumented people who ask about the Food Stamp Program or live with people who get food stamps are reported to United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS).

FACT: Food Stamp Program information is confidential. But, the food stamp office checks the immigration documents you give them with USCIS. If you are not documented, you won’t be asked for your immigration documents. Other members of the household can still apply and may be eligible.

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MYTH: If USCIS finds out you get food stamps, you have to pay them back.

FACT: People who get food stamps in the right amount do not have to pay them back. Make sure the information you give when you apply is correct. If you get food stamps because of wrong information, you will have to pay them back.

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MYTH: It hurts your sponsor if you get food stamps.

FACT: A sponsor's income and resources are usually counted when you apply for food stamps. But there are some exceptions. Ask your local food stamp office. If you do not get benefits, the rest of your household may still be eligible.

8

MYTH: You can't get food stamps even if you have a green card and work.

FACT: Many legal immigrants are eligible. Generally, if you have been in the U.S. legally for 5 years, or are a child under 18, get a disability-related benefit, or have enough work history in the U.S, you may be able to get food stamps.

9

MYTH: You can't apply for food stamps if you don't speak English.

FACT: Anyone can apply for food stamps. Local food stamp offices have applications in many languages. Food stamp workers can find interpreters to help you. Or a friend or family member who speaks English can apply for you.

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MYTH: You have to bring your own interpreter to apply for food stamps.

FACT: If there are a large number of people who speak the same language, the local food stamp office must provide translation services.



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For more information, call 1-800-221-5689
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