

Food Stamp Outreach & Access Toolkit

Appendix D: **Food Stamps and Immigrant Households**

The Food Stamp Program can only help immigrants with legal permanent residency. However, many immigrants do not know that they or their family members may be eligible even if they are not legal permanent residents. In the case of a mixed status household, where some members have legal-permanent or citizenship status and others do not, it is important to note that the standard income guidelines may not apply. Screening tools are available to help learn more about these differences. Go to: <http://www.myfoodstamps.org/screeningtool.html>.

A list of frequently asked questions regarding immigrant eligibility for and participation in the Food Stamp Program is below. For more information about immigrants' rights and responsibilities with regards to the Food Stamp Program, go to: http://www.myfoodstamps.org/pdf_files/immigrant_eligible_foodstamps.pdf.

Also see the websites of the National Immigrant Law Center (<http://www.nilc.org>), or the California Immigrant Policy Center, formerly the California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative (<http://www.caimmigrant.org>).

Will using benefits hurt my immigration status?

Participation in the Food Stamp Program will not necessarily affect your chances of obtaining a Green Card or reaching citizenship status.

English: http://www.myfoodstamps.org/pdf_files/ImmCIWCEnglish.pdf

Spanish: http://www.myfoodstamps.org/pdf_files/ImmCIWCSpanish.pdf

What is the US Citizenship and Immigration Services' official policy on public benefits?

Read the official letter from Citizenship and Immigration Services.

English: http://www.myfoodstamps.org/pdf_files/ImmLetterCIS.pdf

Spanish: http://www.myfoodstamps.org/pdf_files/ImmCISespanol.pdf.

How Can I Get Information About Food Stamps in Languages other Than English?

USDA Food and Nutrition Services offers free outreach information in many languages, available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm>. CAFB maintains a Spanish language outreach website at <http://www.misalimentos.org> and phone line 1-888-9-COMIDA.

What Rights do Limited English Speakers Have in the Food Stamp Program?

All county food stamp offices are required to provide translation services and information for people in their preferred languages. To learn more about the rights of Food Stamp Applicants, see the USDA guidelines at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/rights.htm.

Applicants who have been denied translation services or were asked to provide their own translation services, may file a complaint with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). CDSS has published a flyer about applicant and client rights and filing complaints in several languages. Download these at: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/civilrights/PG594.htm>