

## FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

# Facts and Figures

■ The Food Stamp Program is the nation's single most important program in the fight against hunger. The program is designed to improve the nutrition level and food purchasing power of people with low incomes.

■ The current program benefits average \$1 per meal per person, just \$3 a day. The minimum monthly benefit is a mere \$10. The small amount of allotments forces families to make difficult food choices and often results in less nutritious meals, since fruits and vegetables can be the most expensive.

■ Food stamp households in FY 2005:

- More than half of food stamp recipients are children, and eight percent are over age 60;
- Three out of ten food stamp recipients have earnings;
- Over two-thirds of food stamp households have no countable resources;
- Approximately 40 percent of food stamp households have gross incomes at or below half of the poverty line. The 2007 poverty line for an individual is approximately \$850 a month and \$10,200 a year.

■ Eligibility in the Food Stamp Program includes work requirements. All non-elderly adults receiving benefits who are able to work are required to be employed or to register for employment. Many participate in work training and job search programs.

■ The majority of individuals and families utilize the Food Stamp Program in order to get themselves back on their feet. The average time a household is on the Food Stamp Program is nine months.

■ In addition to helping families make ends meet, the Food Stamp Program also gives back to a state's economy. For every \$5 in food stamps that are used in grocery stores or at local farmer's markets, close to \$10 is generated in local economic activity.



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Project supported by the  
Annie E. Casey Foundation



■ Millions of Americans have received food stamps. It could be your next door neighbor, your child's classmate or the person sitting next to you on the Metro. The Food Stamp Program gives people the help they need during difficult times.

# The Faces of Food Stamps

However, benefits are very low – making it difficult for families to afford a nutritious diet on a consistent basis. Indeed, the \$10 minimum monthly benefit has been frozen since 1977.

Inside are profiles of personal situations of food stamp eligible people, highlighting the importance of the program in their lives.

## Joe Smith, Disabled Veteran

Joe Smith served his country in the U.S. Army, but was injured in combat. He is no longer able to work due to his disability and depends on public assistance.



- Joe's checking account balance: \$150
- He receives \$510 per month in disability assistance
- Joe spends \$150 per month on out-of-pocket medical expenses
- He lives alone in public housing, and pays \$300 per month for rent and utilities
- **Monthly Food Stamp Benefit: \$127**

## Edith Jones, Senior

Edith Jones is 78 years old and has lived on her own since her husband passed away three years ago. She has no children.



- Edith's checking account balance: \$280
- She receives \$790 per month in Social Security benefits
- Rent and utility costs come to \$500 per month
- Edith spends approximately \$35 on out-of-pocket medical expenses
- **Monthly Food Stamp Benefit: \$10**

## Jane Sawyer, Single Parent, Employed

Jane Sawyer is a full-time working mom, with a 11 year old daughter, Sara, and 9 year old son, John.



- Jane's checking account balance: \$800
- She spends \$300 per month on childcare
- Jane earns \$1700 per month, working full time as a waitress
- Rent costs her \$1000 for a two-bedroom apartment, with an additional \$200-300 per month for utilities
- **Monthly Food Stamp Benefit: \$217**