

NEWS RELEASE

Legal Services of New Jersey
100 Metroplex Drive at Plainfield Avenue
P.O. Box 1357
Edison, New Jersey 08818-1357

Contact: Harvey Fisher
Office Phone: 732-529-8430
Cell Phone: 908-616-9941
E-mail: hfisher@lsnj.org

FOR RELEASE AT WILL

April 2017

LATEST LEGAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER DETAILS INS AND OUTS FOR FOOD STAMP APPLICANTS

EDISON— How low-and moderate-income New Jerseyans may obtain food stamps is among the issues highlighted in the latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ).

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” is accessible at www.lsnjlaw.org by clicking on the “publications” tab. The newsletter also is available at all Legal Services offices in New Jersey.

In addition to food stamps — now officially known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP — the April LSNJ newsletter deals with the laws requiring that hospitals and health care providers make foreign language interpreters and translators available to patients not fluent in English. The publication also focuses on the free LSNJ online service designed to help people get their past criminal and juvenile records expunged.

One of the key points about food stamps is that many people are eligible but do not know it. In reality, many families or individuals qualify for the program even if they work, own a home or a car or other belongings. The law stipulates most people qualify if their household income is below 185 percent of federal poverty standards. That amounts, for example, to \$1,832 a month for a single person, \$2,470 for a family of two, and \$3,708 for a family of four. If that threshold is met, then various living expenses are taken into account in determining eligibility as

well as the amount of the food stamp stipend. The 185 percent maximum gross income limit may not apply in households where there are elderly or disabled people.

Food stamp applications are available online at www.njhelps.org.

The newsletter notes hospitals cannot require patients not fluent in English to bring their own interpreters. Such services must be provided under law by any hospitals or health care providers which receive federal funds. Additionally, patients cannot be charged extra for language assistance.

As noted in the newsletter, people who wish to clear their past arrest and criminal conviction records can get started by going to the LSNJ online program, Clearing your Record Online, where they can determine whether they are eligible and also get the forms they will need to file for expungement. Also available there are videos providing step-by-step information on the process.

Clearing Your Record Online is available in English and Spanish at www.lsnjlaw.org/pages/expunge.aspx and at <http://www.lsnjlaw.org/sp/Pages/antecedentes-penales.aspx#>

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of five independent non-profit corporations and is beginning its 50th year of providing free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people through offices in all 21 counties. Since its inception, LSNJ has provided representation in more than 2.4 million cases.

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