

MYTH: An individual cannot apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits without a mailing address or a valid State-issued identification card.

FACT: A person can get SNAP benefits even if he or she does not have a mailing address or a valid State ID.

Mailing Address: SNAP applicants are required to provide an address where they can receive case-related notices – such as interview appointment requests and reapplication forms – but individuals and families who do not have a mailing address can still receive SNAP benefits. Applicants without a fixed address should notify an eligibility worker at their local SNAP office to find out how they can receive program-related correspondence. Local offices can help ensure that clients without a mailing address receive notices in several ways:

- Holding notices at the local SNAP office for pickup;
- Using the address of a local shelter (with the shelter's permission);
- Using the address of a trusted friend or family member (with resident's permission);
- Sending notices to a local post office as general delivery mail.

Establishing a procedure for applicants without a fixed address to receive timely correspondence helps ensure that they receive all the SNAP benefits for which they are eligible.

State Identification (ID): SNAP regulations require applicants to verify their identities to receive program benefits. While a valid State-issued ID is commonly used as proof of identity, other documents are also acceptable. Local SNAP offices must accept any document that reasonably establishes an applicant's identity, including the following:

- A birth certificate
- An ID card for health benefits or another assistance program
- A school or work ID card
- Wage stubs containing the applicant's name

The local SNAP office must provide assistance if applicants cannot obtain sufficient verification on their own. The local SNAP office can accept a statement from a collateral contact – someone who knows about the applicant's situation and can confirm information on the application – to verify the applicant's identity. Possible collateral contacts include current or former employers, landlords, probation or parole officers, or staff members from other social service agencies.

For More Information: Visit the SNAP website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap> for information on application and eligibility requirements.

What is a REENTRY MYTH BUSTER?

This Myth Buster is one in a series of fact sheets primarily intended to clarify federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Each year, more than 600,000 individuals are released from state and federal prisons. Another 11.4 million cycle through local jails. When reentry fails, the social and economic costs are high -- more crime, more victims, more family distress, and more pressure on already-strained state and municipal budgets.

Because reentry intersects with health and housing, education and employment, family, faith, and community well-being, many federal agencies are focusing on initiatives for the reentry population. Under the auspices of the Cabinet-level interagency Reentry Council, federal agencies are working together to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens, and save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

For more information about the Reentry Council, go to: <http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrc/projects/firc/>