

# More Months of Food Assistance Benefits for Households without Minor Children

## **Who will get more months of Food Assistance?**

Many adults age 18-49 who do not live with minor children have been able to receive Food Assistance Program (Food Stamp) benefits for only 3 out of 36 months. This group of adults will benefit from a "waiver" to the 3-month rule that the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) has received from the federal government. The waiver allows DHS to provide food assistance to these adults for up to 12 months. The waiver is effective March 1, 2004 through February 28, 2005.

## **How do I know if I'm eligible for more months of Food Assistance?**

If you receive food assistance benefits now, DHS should mail you a letter explaining whether you qualify for more months of benefits. If you qualify, your benefits should continue as long as Michigan has a waiver and you are otherwise eligible. Of course, if your household situation changes, you will be responsible to let your caseworker know.

## **How long will I be able to receive Food Assistance?**

You may be able to receive food assistance for at least another 12 months as long as you meet the other eligibility conditions. You must also provide DHS required updates about your income and household. If the waiver is renewed in 2005, you may be eligible for more months.

## **What if I am volunteering at an agency or participating in an Employment and Training Program?**

Volunteering in the community or participating in an employment program offered by DHS can help you find employment. You may want to continue in either program. However, your eligibility for food assistance will no longer depend on such participation through at least February 2005.

## **What if I'm not receiving Food Assistance now?**

If you are not receiving food stamps now but think you are eligible, you can apply at your nearest DHS office. If you had no income in the past month, you may be eligible for expedited (within 7 days) food assistance. Ask DHS for expedited food assistance when you apply. Your Food Assistance will start March 1<sup>st</sup> or the date you apply, whichever is later.

**Questions or problems?** If you have questions about Food Assistance/Food Stamps, call the free Food Stamp Helpline offered by the Center for Civil Justice: **1-800-481-4989**