

## **SNAP Benefits (*Food Stamps*) Will be Less For Some Households, Starting October 1, 2012**

We are sending you this notice to tell you about a change that we have to make to your SNAP benefit.

When we figure out the amount of your SNAP benefit, you are allowed a deduction for heat, utilities and other fuel costs. **Federal law requires us to reduce everyone's deduction for those costs.** The deduction used to be \$683 a month. It now will drop to \$668 a month. This lower deduction means that we must count more of your income when we calculate your SNAP benefit. For some households, the monthly SNAP benefit will be less than it is now. Your benefit will go from \$\_\_\_\_\_ to \$\_\_\_\_\_ as of October 1, 2012.

### **This is a Federally-Required Change**

States are required by federal law, 7 C.F.R. § 273.9(d)(6)(iii)(B), to review the cost of heating and cooling homes and to update the deduction based on such costs.

Despite the recent increase in energy costs, **overall** heating and energy costs are **lower** now than they were in the summer of 2011, the last time they were reviewed. This requires us to reduce the amount that is deducted from your income. Because of this lower deduction for heat and energy costs, we must count more of your income, which means a lower SNAP benefit.

If you disagree with this decision, you may request a hearing within 90 days of this notice. You may ask for a hearing by telephone (1-800-462-0134) or by mailing or faxing the request to the DSS Office of Administrative Hearings, 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106, Fax Number 860-424-5729. At the hearing, you may speak for yourself or have someone else, such as a friend, relative or lawyer, speak for you. You may call Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 to ask about free legal help. Please note that a hearing decision cannot change the federal requirement to reduce the heating and fuel deduction.

You may continue to receive your current level of SNAP benefits pending the outcome of the hearing **only if**:

- you request a hearing within 10 days of the date on this notice; **AND**
- the reason for the request is a mistake in our computation of your SNAP benefits or a mistake in our application or interpretation of federal law.

If you want to continue receiving your benefits pending the outcome of the hearing, you will need to explain the basis for that request. If the hearing decision upholds

the Department's action, you will be required to pay back those benefits that you were not entitled to receive.

**Again, this is a federally required, across-the-board reduction that applies to all SNAP/Food Stamp households.** If you would like more information about this reduction, please contact Infoline at 2-1-1 or go to the DSS website.

THIS INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS. PHONE 800-842-1509 or TDD/TTY 800-842-4524