



December 20, 2006

## Food Stamp Helpline

As you know, food assistance is especially important during the winter months. We at St. Clair County MSU Extension are all well aware of the adverse effects of winter on one's budget. While food assistance does not pay for the heating bill, food assistance does help to supplement one's budget. This is especially true during tough economic times. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the Department of Human Services (DHS) heat and utility standard (for food assistance program (FAP) recipients) increased as of March 2006. The monthly heat and utility standard increased from \$464 to \$588. Due to an even more recent update, the new heat and utility standard now stands at \$587.



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The implications of this increase were automatic for those who were already receiving food assistance benefits. However, you (or someone you know) may now be eligible for food assistance benefits due to the increased heat and utility standard. This may be true even if you have been denied benefits in the past.

We at St. Clair County MSU Extension urge all who have been denied food assistance benefits (previous to March 2006) due to excess income, as well as those who may have thought they would not be eligible, to call the Food Stamp Helpline at 1(800)481-4989 to find out how much assistance they may be able to receive.

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