



Department of
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor
Michael B. Colbert, Director

Family Assistance Letter #100
February 3, 2011

To: Directors, County Department of Job and Family Services

From: Trudie J. Bormann, Deputy
Family Assistance, Office of Families and Children

Subject: **Ohio SNAP Retailer Information Security Letter**

USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has recently issued a communication regarding the importance of keeping Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as Food Assistance in Ohio) retailer information secure. In general, protected food assistance retailer information is about individual store owners/personnel and proprietary material that is store-specific. This includes retailer-specific food assistance redemption data.

Whether information is requested of FNS, or through a state or county agency to gather the information from its own system or the state Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) vendor system, all parties are subject to information sharing requirements in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 at 7 U.S.C. 2018 (c) and Title 7 Part 278 of the federal regulations at CFR 278.1 (q). EPPIC is the Ohio EBT system that contains protected information about cardholders and retailers.

Unless a request meets the requirements as spelled out in law and regulation, the information must be withheld. If the request is received under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), then protected information must be withheld under 5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(3) and (b)(4) of FOIA.

Under the Food and Nutrition Act, any person who publishes, divulges, discloses, or makes known in any manner or to any extent not authorized by Federal law (including a regulation) any protected food assistance information shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both. Inappropriate disclosures will be investigated by the Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General which could result in a referral to the U.S. Department of Justice.

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Protected retailer information can only be disclosed for purposes directly connected with the administration and enforcement of the Act and regulations, and to administer and enforce the laws and regulations of other approved state and federal government agencies.

If a state and/or county agency receives a request for retailer information, they should send it to the FNS Regional Office, who will handle these requests directly. The USDA Food & Nutrition Service Regional Offices can be located at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/Contacts/RegionContacts.htm#Midwest>

Please remember this applies to the EPPIC EBT system and all requests for retailer information should follow the aforementioned procedure. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Paul Scanlan, EBT Security Project Manager, at Paul.Scanlan@jfs.ohio.gov.

c: Michael Colbert, Director
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