

BUSTER!

A Product of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council

Children of Incarcerated Parents Series

MYTH: If parents become ineligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, their children also lose eligibility.

FACT: Children may be eligible for SNAP assistance even if their parents are not.

Children may be eligible to receive SNAP benefits (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program) even if other members of the household are ineligible, as long as the household meets the program's other eligibility criteria.

Some states have a lifetime or modified ban on SNAP eligibility that applies to individuals with past drug felony convictions. In such cases, ineligible family members may not receive benefits themselves but their income and resources will be considered in determining SNAP eligibility and the benefit amount for other members of the household.

If parents are ineligible for SNAP because they are incarcerated, their children may still be eligible for benefits. The children's guardians or caregivers can apply on behalf of the children or may include them as a part of their own SNAP household if they are also participating in the program.

For More Information:

The SNAP website:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap>

To contact local SNAP agencies:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact_info/hotlines.htm

For more information on states with bans on SNAP eligibility due to drug felony convictions see the Reentry Myth Buster on SNAP Benefits:

https://csgjusticecenter.org/documents/0000/1085/Reentry_Council_Mythbuster_SNAP.pdf

What is the Reentry Myth Buster/Children of Incarcerated Parents Series?

This Reentry Myth Buster is one in a series of fact sheets intended to clarify federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. On any given day, nearly two million children under 18 have a parent in prison – and many more have had an incarcerated parent at some point during their childhood. Children of incarcerated parents often face financial instability, changes in family structure, and social stigma from their community. This series is designed to help these children, their caregivers, and the service providers who work with them.