

FINAL FOR TAPING Draft #7 (LM)

Nov 17, 2009

ECHO Questions and Answers

15 Minute Conversation

“HUNGER RELIEF SERVICES”

HOSTS PLEASE BEGIN BY SAYING:

Our program is called “Hunger Relief Services” and we are talking about programs and services that offer nutritious food to individuals and families who for any reason are short of food. If you or someone you know needs food resources – regardless of immigration or employment status – please watch for phone numbers, internet addresses and places you can get more information.

HOSTS – Introduce guests.

1. What are food resources?

Sample Answer:

- They are services provided by the government or by community organizations.
- The government has the Food Support program – which used to be called “Food Stamps” – to help you buy groceries.
- Schools have free and reduced lunch and breakfasts for students.
- Many community organizations have food shelves – also called “Food Pantries” – where you get free groceries.
- Other programs, like Fare for All, provide groceries for a lower price.
- Some places, like Loaves and Fishes, provide free hot meals, usually dinner.

2. Why are food resources important?

Sample Answer:

- Without enough nutritious and culturally appropriate food, people can get sick or can’t perform their best at work.
- Children need plenty of healthy food to grow and to study their best in school.

3. Why do people use these resources?

Sample Answer:

- There are many reasons people need food services, including people who are short on money and need some temporary help to buy food.
- Some people have lost their jobs and need food while they look for work.
- Some people have jobs but don't make enough money to cover food costs.
- Seniors on a fixed income may not be able to afford healthy foods.

4. Who can use food programs or services?

Sample Answer:

- In general, there are two types of food programs and services: Government and Community Based
- Nearly everyone can use some or all community-based programs, such as food shelves or Loaves and Fishes.
 - Some serve only people with low incomes or people who live nearby, but others are open to everyone.
 - Documented and undocumented immigrants and refugees can use the programs.
 - Check the programs for details.
- Governmental programs – like Food Support – have more rules.
 - Users must have low incomes and limited savings.
 - Immigrants can apply for continuous Food Support.
 - County staff will determine the duration of benefits, which can vary from one month to unlimited.
 - Children can qualify for Food Support, and free and reduced school lunches even if parents are undocumented.

5. Some people need these programs, but don't use them. Why?

Sample Answer:

- Some people don't know the programs are available
- The programs can be confusing and the forms are too complicated.
- Some people are afraid they would be taking food from others who need it.
- Some people are too proud to ask for help
- Some think the food is not what they would like to eat.
- Some people don't know it is okay to use food resources just for a short time.

6. Do food shelves have food favored by our culture?

Sample Answer:

- Some do and some do not. It's important to ask. Most have basic canned and boxed foods like grains and vegetables.
- Some food shelves try to have fresh produce, dairy and meat.
- **Guest: Mention any culturally specific food shelves you know.**
- Talk to your food shelf about the food you need. Maybe they can get it.

7. Where does the food come from?

Sample Answer:

- The food is safe and good quality. It comes from inspected sources.
- Some food is donated by food companies, farmers or individuals
- Some food shelves raise money and then buy food.
- **IF YOU WANT TO DONATE FOOD....** Ask at a food shelf how to make a donation.

8. How do you sign up for Food Support?

Sample Answer:

- You sign up at your county human services office.
- You have to qualify for the programs and fill out a form. The forms come in five different languages.
If you can't read English, an interpreter will help you.
- The same form can also help you get cash assistance and health care.

9. Once I qualify for Food Support, how do I get the food?

Sample Answer:

- You get an EBT card (Electronic Benefit Transfer) and it works just like a credit or debit card.
- With the card, you can buy groceries in most stores.
- How much money you get for food varies, but the monthly average for a household is \$207.

10. Can refugees and immigrants get Food Support?

Sample Answer:

- Legal immigrants and permanent residents can apply.
- Undocumented immigrants do not qualify – except for one month of emergency Food Support but they can get help from community-based organizations.
- Children of undocumented parents can qualify for food support if they are citizens or permanent residents, at no risk to their parents.

11. What are some mistaken ideas that people have about Food Support?

Sample Answer:

- Getting food support will not hurt your chances to become a citizen.
- You do not need to pay back the money you used.
- It's important to be honest. If you don't really qualify for Food Support, then you may have to pay back the money.

12. Is there a number I can call to find out about food services?

Sample answer:

- **GUESTS READ:** You can find locations of food shelves and other services on the website for Hunger Solutions www.hungersolutions.org .
- The Minnesota Food Helpline at 1-888-711-1151 has various languages.
- **HOSTS READ:** For more information visit www.echominnesota.org.
- Also – go to your local cultural or community organization or public health or human service agency for more information.

13. Do you have anything else you'd like to add on this subject?

Sample answer:

- What's important is that people don't go hungry – that's why there are many programs to fit an individual or families' unique situations.
- No one needs to go hungry, whether you are documented or undocumented, or don't have a job or have a low income.
- Please pass this information to someone you know who may need it.
- There are too many programs to mention, so check our website.