

Public Assistance Fraud: *Protect Yourself!*

Under Ohio law, recipients must provide caseworkers with all information needed to determine eligibility for public assistance benefits such as Ohio Works First, Food Assistance, Medicaid, Child Care, and Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC).

Individuals who intentionally provide false and/or misleading information during the public assistance application process have committed a crime.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PERSON IS FOUND GUILTY OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD?

A person found guilty of public assistance fraud can be 1) fined, 2) required to repay improperly issued benefits, 3) placed in jail, or 4) fined and placed in jail.

For example, a person found guilty of **Food Assistance** fraud is subject to penalties that may include termination of benefits for:

- ✓ 1st offense – 1 year.
- ✓ 2nd offense – 2 years.
- ✓ 3rd offense permanently.
- ✓ Trafficking \$500 or more – permanently
- ✓ Misrepresenting identity or residence to receive food assistance in multiple locations – 10 years

WHAT CAN I DO?

To avoid receiving improperly issued benefits and/or legal action, public assistance recipients are encouraged to answer the following questions to determine if they have reported all necessary information and changes.

1. Have you reported household income to your caseworker about to the following:

| | YES | NO |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|
| a. Your job, full or part-time | _____ | _____ |
| b. Your child's job | _____ | _____ |
| c. Your family | _____ | _____ |
| d. Roomers/boarders | _____ | _____ |
| e. Social Security | _____ | _____ |
| f. Workers' Compensation | _____ | _____ |
| g. Military allotment | _____ | _____ |
| h. V.A. benefits | _____ | _____ |
| i. Disability | _____ | _____ |
| j. Unemployment | _____ | _____ |
| k. Savings, checking account | _____ | _____ |
| l. Lump sum payments | _____ | _____ |
| m. Any other source | _____ | _____ |

2. Have you reported all the members of your household to your caseworker?

| | YES | NO |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| n. A husband | _____ | _____ |
| o. A wife | _____ | _____ |
| p. A child | _____ | _____ |
| q. A friend | _____ | _____ |
| r. Any other relative | _____ | _____ |
| s. Any other person | _____ | _____ |

3. Have you reported your assets and other resources to your caseworker?

| | YES | NO |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|
| a. A home | _____ | _____ |
| b. Lifetime rights to property | _____ | _____ |
| c. All cars | _____ | _____ |
| d. Stocks, bonds | _____ | _____ |
| Farmland and woodland | _____ | _____ |
| e. Bank accounts | _____ | _____ |

4. Have you reported your insurance policies to your caseworker?

| | YES | NO |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| a. Life | _____ | _____ |
| b. Pre-burial contract | _____ | _____ |
| c. Hospital | _____ | _____ |
| d. Accident | _____ | _____ |
| e. Any other type | _____ | _____ |

5. Have you moved recently or do you plan to move? If yes, have you told your caseworker about your new address?

6. Have you accurately reported the whereabouts or circumstances of the father or mother of your child(ren)?

If you answer "NO" to any of the above questions, visit or call your caseworker immediately to avoid fraud issues.

If you suspect public assistance fraud, report it online or by phone. The Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services' fraud online form can be found by visiting:

<http://jfs.franklincountyohio.gov/ReportFraud>

Report suspected fraud by phone at:

614-233-2000 (option #7)
614-233-2095

Protect Yourself!

- Know your reporting responsibilities for each benefit program
- Accurately report all required information and changes (including income, rent, address, phone number, or household members) to your caseworker.
- Report changes to your caseworker timely and verify that these changes are updated.