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## Important News about 3SquaresVT!

3SquaresVT (formerly Food Stamps) is Vermont's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -- a nutrition program designed to help you stay healthy by allowing you to spend more money on healthy, nutritious food. 3SquaresVT can help you make ends meet, which is especially helpful in this challenging economy! It can help you stretch your food budget and put three square meals a day on your table, at the same time freeing up money for other living expenses.

**Families:** Now you can deduct all of your out-of-pocket child care costs when you apply for 3SquaresVT. *And*, if you are eligible for 3SquaresVT, your children are eligible for free school lunches.

**Seniors and People with Disabilities:** If you are elderly or disabled, special rules make it easier to qualify. If you are an eligible senior, you can get your benefit directly deposited as cash right into your bank account. *And*, if you have over \$35 a month in medical expenses, you could get a higher food benefit by including your out-of-pocket medical costs on your 3SquaresVT application.

People who qualify for 3SquaresVT can also get Lifeline (a monthly credit of at least \$13 per month to help households maintain phone service) and Link Up (a credit up to \$30 to pay half the cost of installing a phone line).

Don't assume that you earn too much to qualify. There are new rules to qualifying, and you can get 3SquaresVT even if you have a savings account or own your own home. You may be eligible for 3SquaresVT even if you were turned down for Food Stamps in the past.

You may be **automatically** eligible. People who receive Vermont Earned Income Tax Credit or SSI are categorically eligible for 3SquaresVT. That means that even if you receive a \$0 benefit, you are still 'eligible' and therefore are eligible for Lifeline, Link Up, free school meals, etc.

In addition, 3SquaresVT benefits are all federal dollars, so by applying for the program, you are bringing money into the state. Also, shopping locally or buying local products is a way to support your community and your local farmers. 3SquaresVT makes you eligible to receive coupons to the Farmer's Market when they become available in mid-June. *And* now you can use your 3SquaresVT card to buy seeds or plants to grow your own fruits and vegetables.

For more information about these changes and more, visit [www.vermontfoodhelp.com](http://www.vermontfoodhelp.com). Beginning in June, individuals may apply online. Or you can call SEVCA at 1-800-464-9951 or the Senior Helpline at 1-800-642-5119 if you are a senior, for help filling out a 3SquaresVT application.

-- Susan Howes, SEVCA Family Services