



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition Service

Columbia  
Field Office  
(821)

S Thurmond Fed Bldg  
1835 Assembly Street  
Room 825  
Columbia, SC  
29201-2424

Phone  
803-765-5717

Dear Retailer:

Thank you for your interest in the Food Stamp Program!

To participate, you must review the enclosed materials and submit a complete application form, including all required documentation. **Incomplete applications will be returned and will delay your participation in the Food Stamp Program.**

To complete your application, you must:

- Meet the basic eligibility criteria (refer to *Retail Store Eligibility* sheet),
- Completely fill out an application form, and
- Provide the required documentation (refer to *Application Checklist*).

Your field office has 45 days to approve or deny your application, once your application is complete. As part of the approval process, you may be required to review training materials provided by your field office. **You cannot accept Food Stamp benefits until your store has been approved under your ownership.**

As part of the approval process, a USDA representative or private contractor may visit your store to make sure the store is eligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program. The USDA representative or contractor should present photo identification and will look around your store. Private contractors must ask for written consent before looking at your store. The representative or contractor may take pictures, sketch the layout of the store, and look at your inventory. If your application is denied because your store does not meet the eligibility criteria, you must wait six months before you can submit a new application.

Follow the instructions on the next page to turn in your application to your field office. If you have any questions, please contact us or get more information from the USDA website at [www.fns.usda.gov/fsp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp) by clicking on "Retailers."

We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Ernest J. Williams, Jr.  
Field Office OIC

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. To file a complaint of Discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410

-OVER-

**PLEASE NOTE:** You may submit your application for a Food Stamp Permit in two different ways:

1. You can attend a training meeting conducted by Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) staff and **bring your completed application and required documents with you.** [If you operate a route business such as a produce, meat, or seafood route, you must bring your route vehicle, fully stocked, to the meeting so that our representative can evaluate your stock];  
**OR,**
2. You can mail your completed application and required documents to the FNS Field Office location shown on the left side of the cover letter. If your application is approved, a training video and guide will be mailed to you with your Food Stamp Permit.

**We strongly encourage you to attend a training meeting before getting your Food Stamp permit – for the benefit of both you and your employees.** You also can choose to attend a training meeting after you receive your Food Stamp permit. Please call our office to obtain future training meeting dates beyond the ones shown below.

**Following is information you will need if you choose to attend a training meeting.**

<b>LOCATION: 1835 Assembly Street, Columbia, South 29201</b>					
<b>DAY: TUESDAY, 11:00 AM</b>					
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>ROOM #</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>ROOM #</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ROOM #</b>
JAN 06, 2004	871				
JAN 20, 2004	871	MAY 18, 2004	871	SEP 21, 2004	871
FEB 03, 2004	1576				
FEB 17, 2004	871	JUN 15, 2004	871	OCT 19, 2004	871
MAR 02, 2004	871				
MAR 16, 2004	871	JUL 20, 2004	871	NOV 16, 2004	871
APR 06, 2004	1576				
APR 20, 2004	871	AUG 17, 2004	871	DEC 21, 2004	871

You, as the owner of the store, should come in person to the Grocer Education Meeting. If you are unable to do so, you should designate in writing a person of your choosing who has the authority to act in your behalf. The meeting will start promptly at the scheduled time and will last approximately two hours. If you cannot be at the meeting site by the specified time, we suggest you arrange to come to the next scheduled meeting. **If you operate a Route Business such as a produce, meat, or seafood route, you must bring your route vehicle, fully stocked, to the meeting so that our representative can inspect your stock.** Parking is available in the Mathew J. Perry Parking Garage on Richland Street (across the street from STFB). You may park on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. Parking cost is \$5, and must be paid as you exit the garage. If you need additional information, please contact our office at (803) 765-5717.

**DIRECTIONS**

From I-26 West  
(Spartanburg, SC)

1. I-26 East to I-126 to Elmwood Avenue
  2. Take Elmwood Avenue to Assembly Street
  3. Turn right onto Assembly Street
- Building located between Richland & Laurel Streets

From I-20 West  
Augusta, GA

1. I-20 East to I-26 East
2. Follow directions from I-26 West (Spartanburg)

From I-26 East  
(Charleston, SC)

1. I-26 West until you bear right onto I-126
2. I-126 to Elmwood Avenue
3. Follow directions 2 through 4 above.

From I-20 East  
(Florence, SC)

1. I-20 West to Exit 73 (Highway 277)
  2. Highway 277 to Bull Street
  3. Take Bull Street to Richland Street
  4. Turn right on Richland Street
  5. Take Richland Street to Assembly Street
  6. Turn Left onto Assembly Street
- Building located between Richland & Laurel Streets

From I-77 North

(Charlotte, NC)

1. I-77 South to Highway 277 towards Columbia
2. Follow 277 to Bull Street
3. Take Bull Street to Richland Street  
Follow directions from I-20 East (Florence)