

## **Ways to Prove Your Income When Applying For or Renewing Your Food Stamps, Cash Assistance, or other Public Assistance Program Benefits**

Your ISD caseworker is supposed to help you prove your eligibility for benefits if you need help. These are the steps your caseworker should take to find out how much money you make to see what kind of benefits you can get:

1. **Documentary Evidence.** This type of proof will be the first thing a caseworker will look for to find out how much money your household makes. This type of evidence can be:

- Paychecks, pay stubs or receipts that show how much you are paid
- Letter or work agreement from an employer that states who they are and how much they pay you per hour, day, week or month
- Tax forms

2. **Collateral Contact.** If you can't get any documentary evidence, you can choose someone to be a "collateral contact." This is a person that a caseworker can call to ask where you work and how much money you earn. Your collateral contact cannot be someone who lives with you. In general, ISD needs your permission to talk to anyone about your case and how much you earn. These are some of the kinds of people who can be your collateral contact:

- Employers
- Co-workers
- Landlords
- Social service agency workers
- Neighbors

3. **Sworn Statements.** If there is no one that your caseworker can talk to about your income, you can write a letter, signed "under penalty of perjury," that says how much you earn. You have to give a good explanation why there is no one your caseworker can talk to that can tell them how much money you make. Some explanations might be:

- Your employer doesn't want to talk to anyone about it
- You are afraid you will lose your job
- No one knows how much you make except for you

If you need help writing this letter, look for the form called "Sworn Statement" under "Center Resources" on our website at [www.nmpovertylaw.org](http://www.nmpovertylaw.org)

**If your benefits get taken away or reduced because the caseworker didn't help you prove your income by taking these steps, ask for a Fair Hearing and contact the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty at (505) 255-2840.**