



DEPARTMENT OF STATE SECRETARY TAHESHA WAY

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State Benefits Recipients Get Free or Discounted Admission at more than 85 New Jersey Arts and History Organizations

TRENTON, NJ – The Families First Discovery Pass (FFDP) is a new program in New Jersey designed to provide families and individuals enrolled in state assistance programs with greater access to arts and history events, venues and programs statewide. Residents who receive food assistance through SNAP, cash assistance through the WorkFirst NJ program or child care assistance through NJ Child Care Subsidy program or WIC are eligible for free or steeply discounted admission at museums, theatres, historic sites, workshops, festivals, and more.

The program is a joint venture between the NJ State Council on the Arts, the NJ Historical Commission, the NJ Department of Human Services (DHS), the NJ Department of Health (DOH) and many of the best arts and historical organizations across the state.

“We are proud to announce the Families First Discovery Pass because every New Jersey resident should have access to the rich history, arts, and cultural heritage of our state,” said Secretary of State Tahesha Way, who oversees the Department of State, including the State Arts Council and the Historical Commission. “These experiences improve our quality of life, strengthen our families and communities, and support lifelong learning.”

The inaugural group of participating arts and history organizations each has their own special FFDP offer. To receive the discount, patrons show their Families First card or WIC Identification Folder. For a full list of participating organizations, what they offer and how to access the discounts, visit www.FamiliesFirstDiscoveryPass.com.

“I encourage everyone to take advantage of this great initiative to expand access to New Jersey’s wonderful cultural organizations and events,” said Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson. “Human Services’ programs are here to provide opportunity and support to those in need and, with this initiative and partnership, our programs will now also open doors to our state’s history and culture. We thank the State Council on the Arts and the Historical Commission for their leadership in making this initiative possible.”

“The Department of Health is excited that New Jersey’s WIC families will have the opportunity to take advantage of this new program, which will foster greater interest in the arts and state history,” said New Jersey Health Commissioner Shereef Elnahal. “The WIC program supports participants’ health with nutritious foods, access to these programs will also enrich their lives.”

Organization sign-up is held three times a year. To offer a discount and be promoted during our next round (through January 2020), sign up by September 15th, 2019 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5KPS5QH>.

For more information on the program and for a full listing of participating organizations, visit www.FamiliesFirstDiscoveryPass.com.

About the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, created in 1966, is a division of the NJ Department of State. The Council was established to encourage and foster public interest in the arts; enlarge public and private resources devoted to the arts; promote freedom of expression in the arts; and facilitate the inclusion of art in every public building in New Jersey. The Council receives direct appropriations from the State of New Jersey through a dedicated, renewable Hotel/Motel Occupancy fee, as well as competitive grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. To learn more about the Council, please visit www.artscouncil.nj.gov.

About the New Jersey Historical Commission

The New Jersey Historical Commission is an agency in the Department of State, dedicated to the advancement of public knowledge and preservation of New Jersey history. Established by law in 1967, its work is founded on the fundamental belief that an understanding of our shared heritage is essential to sustaining a cohesive and robust democracy. The Commission receives funding primarily by legislative appropriation, and fulfills its mission through various initiatives, as well as an active grant program.

About the Department of Human Services and the Families First Card

Within the DHS, the Division of Family Development (DFD) provides leadership and supervision to the public and private agencies that deliver cash assistance and support services to individuals and families. DFD oversees a number of programs to support New Jersey residents. Among the programs are Work First New Jersey, the state's public assistance program; NJ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); child support services, and child care services.

The Families First card is New Jersey's Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. It is how program recipients receive their benefits. NJ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients use their Families First card at point of sale terminals to redeem food assistance benefits. Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) recipients who receive cash assistance can also access their benefits at a point of sale terminal or at an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM). Families who receive child care assistance use their Families First card to check their child(ren) in and out of care.

For more information and to pre-screen for NJ SNAP or WFNJ eligibility, visit www.NJHelps.org. To calculate your child care eligibility and estimated co-pay amount, visit www.ChildCareNJ.gov.

About the Department of Health and WIC

Family Health Services is a Division within the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) that administers programs that enhance the health, safety, and well-being of families and communities in New Jersey.

The New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children is commonly known as WIC. WIC is a successful public health nutrition program that provides wholesome food, nutrition education, and community support for income eligible women who are pregnant and post-partum, infants and children up to five years old.