

Rules limit food stamp applications

By Mark Pynes
Of the Emerald

Fall brings an annual horde of students to the state food stamp office, but many of the students don't meet eligibility requirements.

"We get swamped in the fall," says Julie Singer, food stamp supervisor for the Eugene branch of the Adult and Family Services Division.

Because of the large number of students returning to the area who apply for food stamps, it may take as long as five days — instead of the usual two days — to get an appointment.

Applicants are required to meet with a food stamp worker to review their application and to verify information by presenting documentation, including paycheck stubs, cancelled rent checks and utility bills.

The food stamp office determines eligibility on an individual basis according to the amount of income a person makes after certain allowable deductions.

Some of the deductions which are allowed would include items like rent or mortgages, utilities, certain medical costs, the cost of care for dependents, and telephone

service.

The number of months a person is eligible depends on "the stability of their income," Singer says.

A student applying for food stamps must not only meet the basic requirements, but also work a minimum of 20 hours per week at a wage earning job.

It is also possible for a student to qualify if they are currently employed in a workstudy job, or if they have dependents living in their home.

Handicapped students may also qualify for food stamps in many instances.

Those qualifying for food stamps may receive from \$10 to \$70 per month depending on their economic needs.

Food stamps can be used like cash to buy food — but only food. There is a long list of things that food stamps cannot be used for, including alcohol, tobacco or cigarettes, soaps, paper products, vitamins and pet foods.

"They get an X number per month," Singer says, "but we can't tell them how to spend them."

The Adult and Family Services Division has an extension

service that provides information on how to use food stamps more wisely.

The Eugene-Springfield area has three food stamp offices, including the main Eugene branch at 165 E. Seventh Ave., which serves people living west of Interstate-5 (for more information, call 686-7822).

Families without children under the age of 18 are served by the office located at 1790 W. 11th Ave. (686-7676).

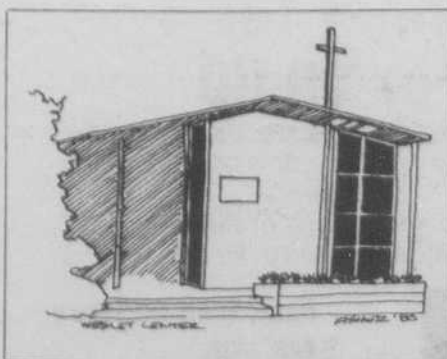
Families living east of Interstate-5 can use the Springfield office, which is located at 221 North B St. (726-3507).

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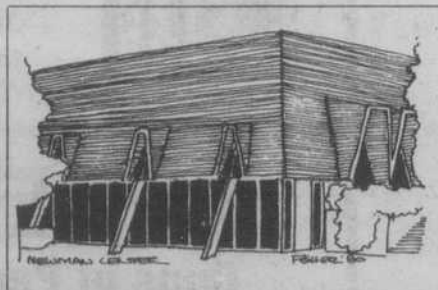


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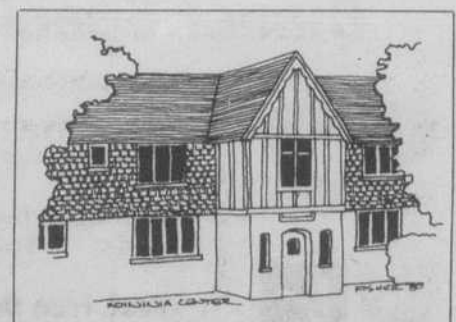
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