



STATE OF MICHIGAN
FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY
LANSING



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News Release

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Improved Internet program helps residents better determine possible eligibility for assistance programs

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LANSING – Family Independence Agency (FIA) Director Marianne Udow announced today that determining potential eligibility for FIA-administered cash assistance programs just got a lot easier, thanks to a recent change to the Michigan Assistance and Referral Service (MARS). MARS is a pre-screening tool that helps individuals find out if they might be eligible for state assistance with medical, food, day care, or cash expenses. MARS can be found online at www.michigan.gov/mars.

“In just a few easy steps, Michigan residents can use the Internet to see if they might qualify for benefits,” Udow said. “The new system is user-friendly, takes just minutes to complete, and is in keeping with our commitment to improving customer service.”

The new MARS system has six easy steps. The steps include requests for information about: household composition, family relationships, medical information, income, expenses, etc. Users will find this system is easy to navigate and results are easy to obtain. The system offers a bilingual option where users are able to switch between English and Spanish at any time during the self-screening process.

“We are very excited about the new MARS system,” Udow said. “Customers will be able to determine whether it is worthwhile to file an application for assistance. It should save them time and eliminate some unnecessary applications.”

These changes are the first phase of improvements to the MARS system. Users can look forward to even more enhancements next year. Under the current MARS system, once a user determines he or she may be eligible for assistance, he or she still needs to visit an FIA county office to complete and turn in an application. The FIA also plans to eventually allow users to submit a pre-filled application electronically to their local FIA office through MARS.

For more information about the FIA, visit the FIA Web site at www.michigan.gov/fia

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