

## **PROGRAM INTEGRITY**

The Program Integrity Unit's task is investigation, establishment, and collection of overpayments, whether fraudulent or misrepresentative, within each eligibility program (such as Food & Nutrition, Medicaid, and Work First). The unit utilizes court action, both civil and criminal, wage garnishment, tax intercept, allotment reduction, and voluntary repayment methods of collections for overpayments of benefits. The unit has the responsibility to ensure that tax dollars are going to needy families and not to those who are abusing the system. Every case that is referred to Program Integrity is assessed for collection and, if necessary, disqualification or court action. The only strict financial guidelines are within the tax intercept policy where the requirement is an outstanding balance of \$50.00 or more and within the NC General Statutes where less than \$1,000.00 is a misdemeanor and more than \$1,000.00 is a felony.

Referrals can be made to the Program Integrity Unit by citizens or by caseworkers. Complaints from citizens can be made on a walk-in basis or by phone at 828-426-8249. **Persons making a complaint by phone do not have to identify themselves.**