

Introduction

The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is the Nation's largest nutrition assistance program. About 1 of every 11 Americans participated in 2006. The program and its benefits are available to almost all eligible households whose income and assets fall below national eligibility thresholds. The participation rate among people eligible for benefits has increased in recent years (to 65 percent in 2005). However, many low-income people do not receive the nutrition assistance benefits to which they are entitled.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is committed to making sure that all those eligible for food stamp benefits are able to access the program. To help meet that goal, over the last several fiscal years, FNS has awarded a series of grants to local organizations that, in turn, conduct outreach activities to educate potentially eligible individuals about the FSP and to facilitate their access.

FNS awarded nearly \$2 million to 16 food stamp outreach projects in fiscal years 2004 and 2005. These projects are the focus of this report.¹ The report describes the project goals and strategies, provides a general description of each grantee, and gives a synopsis of project performance. Performance is based on grantees' self-evaluation.

Project Objectives, Strategies and Approaches

Objectives: As before, the 2004-05 projects were intended to improve FSP access among those eligible. Objectives were to increase awareness of the Program and to educate eligible persons about application procedures and benefits.

¹ A national evaluation of the 2002 outreach projects was recently completed (Zedlewski et al., 2005).

Selection of Grantees: Grantees had to meet several basic criteria, such as propose a sustainability plan, agreement with local food stamp office, demonstrate willingness to partner with others to carry out the project, and commit to use FNS outreach materials.²

Each grantee also had to choose a primary outreach strategy from the following options:

- Community events and education campaigns,
- Services at other sites or programs used by low-income persons,
- Partnerships with other FNS programs,
- Partnerships with employers, or
- Partnerships with food retailers.

Grantee Profile

Grantee Snapshot: The grantees represent a variety of local government and nonprofit organizations that provide food, legal, employment, housing, and/or other services to needy individuals. Local food stamp offices were not eligible to apply for these funds. The grants averaged about \$124,000, and the projects lasted from 12 to 24 months (see Exhibit 1).

Previous Outreach Experience: The grantees had varying degrees of outreach experience. One-fourth had some prior experience with the FSP. Another one-third had outreach experience, largely with other kinds of food assistance, but not with the FSP. The remainder reported no previous outreach experience.

Grantee Strategies

The community events strategy was the most widely used. Almost half of the grantees used this strategy (see Table 1 and Exhibit 2). These grantees often participated in local events (such

² In addition, grantees could not be a State, nor have received a FSP outreach grant before.

as health fairs, seniors' day, and county fairs) where they distributed literature and answered questions about the program. Grantees sometimes prescreened clients for eligibility at these events.

More than one-third of the grantees used out-stationing and site visits. These grantees often set up food stamp workstations in locations where eligible individuals are likely to congregate. Some examples of these places are senior centers, soup kitchens, low-income housing complexes, and low-cost supermarkets. Here they often distributed literature about the FSP, prescreened clients and assisted them with completing the application.

Table 1

<i>Outreach Strategies</i>	<i>Number of Grantees</i>	<i>Population(s) Served</i>
<i>Community Events and Education Campaigns</i>	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Immigrants • Elderly • Minorities • Refugees
<i>Out-stationed Services</i>	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Immigrants • Elderly • Public housing residents • Unemployed
<i>Partnerships with other FNS Programs</i>	1	
<i>Partnerships with Employers</i>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Single adults
<i>Partnerships with Food Retailers</i>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Immigrants

Approaches: The grantees took one or more of three main approaches to execute their strategies: information dissemination, eligibility prescreening, and/or application assistance (see Table 2 and Exhibit 2).

All grantees conveyed information to potential participants – usually in multiple ways. The most frequently used methods were the

distribution of written materials about the FSP and delivery of educational sessions. Three grantees pursued both of these methods, along with media campaigns.

Grantees typically targeted populations with low food stamp participation rates – the working poor, immigrants and elderly (See Table 1 and Exhibit 3). Others chose to focus on broader low-income audiences, such as residents of subsidized housing and customers of low-priced supermarkets.

Table 2

<i>Outreach Approaches</i>	<i>Number of Grantees</i>
Information Dissemination	
• Distribute written materials	14
• Educational sessions	10
-with potential FSP participants	6
-with partners	4
• Media campaign	3
Eligibility Prescreening	15
Application Assistance	13
• <i>Submit applications</i>	5
• <i>Without follow-up</i>	11
• <i>With follow-up</i>	2

Fifteen grantees reported that they conducted eligibility prescreening, most of which was done electronically. Details such as the amount of client information requested are not available.

Application assistance was offered in 13 projects. This took the form of helping directly to complete the application, answering questions about the application and identifying documents needed for verification. Among these grantees, 5 submitted applications to the local food stamp office. In one of these, the application was submitted online.

In two projects, the grantee followed up on the status of application submission and approval. The purpose was to ensure that an application was filed and to resolve any issues that arose during the application review process.

Project Partners and Volunteers

A diverse group of partners was identified in project proposals. They included universities, churches, food pantries, State governments, local employers, and housing authority organizations.

Information on the partner roles was provided in the grantees' proposals. These proposed roles typically included providing space for food stamp outreach activities such as food stamp outreach training, prescreening and application assistance. Relatively little information on partner roles was provided in the actual project evaluation reports.

Half of the grantees used volunteers in their organization as project support staff (see Exhibit 3). Volunteers served predominantly as food stamp outreach workers, providing information about the FSP and prescreening for eligibility.

Role of Local Food Stamp Offices: Even at the planning stage, local FSP offices were expected to play a limited role in the outreach projects. About three-fourths of the grantees planned to have local program offices accept applications directly from project staff and/or provide data on the number of applications originating with the project (see Exhibit 3).

Five grantees proposed having local FSP staff provide information and training to grantees. Two grantees engaged program staff in outreach activities, such as prescreening or material distribution at project locations.

The local food stamp offices agreed during the planning stages to be directly involved and supportive of the projects. However, sparse resources and personnel cutbacks often limited their ability to do so.

Challenges and Sustainability

Challenges: The four most common challenges reported by grantees were (1) difficulty getting the anticipated support from local food stamp offices, (2) effort to get partners to fulfill their role in the project, (3) client barriers to

participation in the program, and (4) project setbacks such as staff turn over (see Exhibit 4). In addition, many grantees indicated that the time and effort required to set up and operate their project exceeded initial estimates.

While grantees faced multiple challenges, many were addressed before the end of the implementation period. For example, one grantee in a rural area had difficulties with on-site prescreening via the Internet. In lieu of electronic prescreening, the grantee often used paper and pencil. Staff would later key in the data and then follow-up with the results.

Other grantees reported strong resistance to food stamp participation among the elderly. Often this was because they expected to receive only the minimum \$10 benefit. The belief continues despite the fact that the average monthly benefit for an elderly food stamp participant was \$67 in Fiscal Year 2005.

Grantees reported multiple ways to reach out to the elderly. Common approaches included conducting outreach activities where the elderly spend time (e.g., day centers and their homes); emphasizing the nutrition benefits of the FSP; and explaining the cumulative advantages of even the minimum benefit. Exhibit 4 describes the variety of steps taken to resolve problems.

Some ongoing challenges were unique to particular projects. For example, one grantee designed a project with the intention of submitting electronic applications to the local food stamp office. However, the State did not transition to electronic applications as planned. This delayed project implementation and altered the approach. Unforeseen events, such as hurricanes, affected a few projects.

Sustainability Plans: The grantees were asked to include sustainability plans in their proposals. Most stated that they would maintain project services through collaboration with partners and integration with their existing services.

By the end of the project, the most common plan was to incorporate the project into ongoing grantee activities. Most grantees stated that

additional funding would be needed to make this possible. Without additional resources the level of services would be reduced. For example, a minimum level of service might be to provide computers for online applications but without staff assistance. Alternatively, outreach might be limited to simply making FSP literature available.

Some grantees took more proactive steps to sustain their projects. For example, some provided regular training and information for their partners to prepare them for ongoing involvement after the grant period. Several grantees reported that they planned to seek additional funding to sustain their project. In contrast, three grantees had no sustainability plans.

General Outcomes

Grantees reported on the frequency of key outcomes such as the number of individuals reached and prescreened, along with applications submitted and approved (see Table 3). There is, however, some variation across projects in operational definitions, as well as availability of complete information.

Reach: Some grantees defined individuals reached as those with whom they had direct contact. Others counted both direct and indirect contacts. The latter include anyone who received information through a public service announcement on the radio, a bus wrap or brochure.

Using the numbers reported, grantees reached almost 313,000 persons. There was great variation across projects – with the number of contacts ranging from about 2,000 to 90,000. Certain strategies, for example, community events and education campaigns, usually led to a high number of contacts.

Prescreening: Among those reached, grantees reported prescreening just over 18,600 households for food stamp eligibility. In most projects, the number of families prescreened was much smaller than the total number of contacts. Two exceptions are identified in Table 3. The

Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee and Harbor Interfaith Services, Inc. prescreened 100 and 68 percent of persons contacted, respectively.

Applications Submitted: Grantees reported approximately 12,000 food stamp applications were submitted in conjunction with their services. It is the assumption that the actual count would have been much higher because some grantees were only able to track applications submitted directly by outreach workers.

As expected, the total number of applications is much smaller than the number of contacts. There is, in addition, no clear positive relationship between the rank order of project participants reached and applications submitted. Grantees with a high number of contacts did not consistently submit more applications.

Applications Approved: About 6,900 applications associated with project services were approved. The proportion of approved applications varies substantially across projects. Approved applications ranged from 29 to 99 percent of the number submitted.³ Since not all applications and their disposition could be validated, it is not possible to assess the accuracy of approval rates.

Grantees observed that food stamp applicants struggle to provide the necessary documentation. Many applicants who did not complete the application process failed to do so because they did not provide all the required documentation to the local food stamp office. These experiences helped create an impression among grantees that requirements for documentation are excessive. They also suggest the importance of addressing verification requirements as part of application assistance follow-up.

³ Percent of applications approved are based only on sites that provided data on applications submitted and approved.

Table 3. Project Outcomes

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Individuals Reached⁴</i>	<i>Individuals Prescreened</i>	<i>Applications Submitted⁵</i>	<i>Applications Approved⁶</i>
<i>1. Alamo Area Development</i>	1,940	380	246	240
<i>2. City of Oakland</i>	15,000	572	1,129	--
<i>3. Community Food Bank, Inc.</i>	10,166	808	808	756
<i>4. Congreso de Latinos Unidos</i>	2,710 ⁷	196	187	153
<i>5. Food Bank of Northern Nevada</i>	44,650 ⁸	3,409	1,580	1,024
<i>6. Food Change</i>	13,451	1,383	1,083	314
<i>7. Good Faith Funding</i>	90,000	- ⁹	851	766
<i>8. Harbor Interfaith Services, Inc.</i>	2,360	1,609	1,517	759
<i>9. Hispanic Health Council</i>	28,657	426	236	160
<i>10. Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee</i>	6,269	6,269	664	660
<i>11. Jewish Vocational Services</i>	20,270	297	166	--
<i>12. Legal Aid of Nebraska</i>	22,312	--	1,003	592
<i>13. Lone Star Legal Aid</i>	8,232	571	288	158
<i>14. Shared Harvest Food Bank</i>	3,746	773	552	182
<i>15. The Outreach Center</i>	25,757	875	567	524
<i>16. Worcester Community Action</i>	17,204	1,034	1,034	596
Total	312,724	18,602	11,911	6,878

⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, the number reached includes both direct and indirect contacts through events, material distribution and media campaigns.

⁵ In many cases, the number of applications submitted is limited to those filed by outreach workers.

⁶ The total shown in this column is understated because not all grantees tracked the outcome of all applications submitted in association with outreach services.

⁷ Number does not include those reached via radio or newspaper.

⁸ Number does not include those reached via television.

⁹ Grantee had difficulty accessing the Internet from remote sites, which limited their ability to conduct prescreenings. No data on the number of prescreening that were done is available.

Acknowledgements

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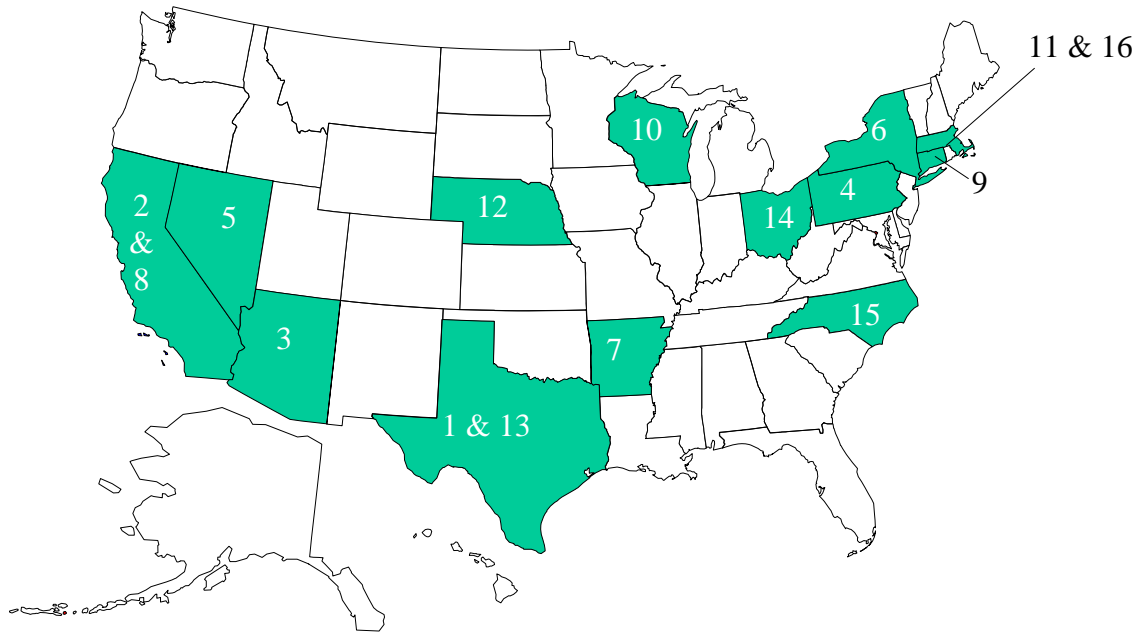
Exhibit 1. Grantee Profile

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Amount of Award</i>	<i>Grantee Location</i>	<i>Grant Period</i>	<i>Prior Outreach Experience</i>
<i>1. Alamo Development Corporation</i>	\$125,000	San Antonio, TX	12 months	None
<i>2. City of Oakland</i>	\$125,000	Oakland, CA	12 months	Yes, directly with the FSP
<i>3. Community Food Bank, Inc.</i>	\$125,000	Tucson, AZ	24 months	Yes, directly with food assistance but not the FSP
<i>4. Congreso de Latinos Unidos</i>	\$125,000	Philadelphia, PA	12 months	Yes, but not with the FSP
<i>5. Food Bank of Northern Nevada</i>	\$125,000	Sparks, NV	24 months	Yes, directly with food assistance but not the FSP
<i>6. Food Change</i>	\$125,000	New York, NY	24 months	Yes, directly with the FSP
<i>7. Good Faith Fund</i>	\$125,000	Pine Bluff, AR	24 months	None
<i>8. Harbor Interfaith Services, Inc.</i>	\$121,687	San Pedro, CA	24 months	Yes, directly with food assistance but not the FSP
<i>9. Hispanic Health Council</i>	\$125,000	Hartford, CT	12 months	None
<i>10. Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee</i>	\$125,000	Milwaukee, WI	24 months	Yes, but only from promoting EBT in the FSP
<i>11. Jewish Vocational Service</i>	\$125,000	Boston, MA	18 months	None
<i>12. Legal Aid of Nebraska</i>	\$118,252	Omaha, NE	24 months	None
<i>13. Lone Star Legal Aid</i>	\$117,732	Houston, TX	12 months	Yes, directly with the FSP
<i>14. Shared Harvest Food Bank</i>	\$124,648	Fairfield, OH	12 months	Yes, directly with food assistance but not the FSP
<i>15. The Outreach Center</i>	\$125,000	Morgantown, NC	24 months	None
<i>16. Worcester Community Action</i>	\$125,000	Worcester, MA	16 months	None

Grantee locations are shown on the U.S. map that follows.

Exhibit 1 (continued)

State Distribution of Grantees



Two grants were awarded in California, Texas and Massachusetts

Exhibit 2. Grantee Strategies and Approaches

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Primary Strategy</i>	<i>Approaches</i>
1. Alamo Development Corporation	Partnership with employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Educational sessions with partners/Trained partners to conduct outreach • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
2. City of Oakland	Community events and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
3. Community Food Bank, Inc.	partnership with other FNS programs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
4. Congreso de Latinos Unidos	Community events and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Media campaign • Educational sessions with potential FSP participants • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
5. *Food Bank of Northern Nevada	Outstationing and site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational sessions with partners/Trained partners to conduct outreach • Eligibility prescreening
6. Food Change	Partnership with food retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance with follow-up
7. Good Faith Fund	Community events and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Media campaign • Educational sessions with partners/Trained partners to conduct outreach • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
8. Harbor Interfaith Services, Inc.	Community events and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Educational sessions with partners • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
9. Hispanic Health Council	Community events and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Media campaign • Educational sessions with potential FSP participants • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
10. Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee	Outstationing and site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance

Exhibit 2. (continued)
Grantee Strategies and Approaches

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Approaches</i>
<i>11. Jewish Vocational Service</i>	Partnership with employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Educational sessions with potential FSP participants • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
<i>12. Legal Aid of Nebraska</i>	Community events and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Educational sessions (with potential participants via telephone)
<i>13. Lone Star Legal Aid</i>	Community events and education campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance
<i>14. Shared Harvest Food Bank</i>	Outstationing and site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance with follow-up
<i>15. *The Outreach Center</i>	Outstationing and site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of food stamp literature • Educational sessions with potential FSP participants • Eligibility prescreening
<i>16. Worcester Community Action</i>	Outstationing and site visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational sessions with potential FSP participants • Eligibility prescreening • Application assistance

*These grantees implemented projects according to a strategy other than community events and education but did carry out activities that align with that strategy.

Exhibit 3. Grantee Target Populations and Partnerships

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Use of Volunteers</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Intended Food Stamp Program Role</i>
1. <i>Alamo Development Corporation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working poor Single adults 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers of low-income workers-provided space for the grantee to conduct eligibility prescreening and application assistance, trained human resource staff on food stamp benefits and eligibility procedures to develop an ongoing internal system of food stamp awareness among the employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training to project staff by reviewing applications submitted by project staff in the early stages of the project to ensure that the applications were completed correctly. Answer difficult questions posed by project staff Provide training for the project staff
2. <i>City of Oakland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrants 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alameda County Social Services Agency-provided training on food stamp application procedures, eligibility requirements and prescreening for project staff and CBOs. United Way of the Bay Area-provided space for prescreening and application assistance during the Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept food stamp applications directly from the project staff
3. <i>Community Food Bank, Inc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working poor Immigrants Elderly All eligible persons not receiving food stamps 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food pantries Health clinics Churches Senior centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with the project to provide data pertaining to the applications received from the project.
4. <i>Congresso de Latinos Unidos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working poor Immigrants Elderly 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nueva Esperanza and Calle Americana Career Link-provided space for the grantee to conduct eligibility prescreening and application assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted food stamp applications directly from the project staff

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Use of Volunteers</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Role of Food Stamp Program</i>
5. Food Bank of Northern Nevada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families • Immigrants • Elderly 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local churches, food pantries and commodity food distributors -provided space for the grantee to conduct eligibility prescreening and application assistance • Local medical centers-staff received training to conduct outreach and eligibility prescreening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept food stamp applications directly from the project staff
6. Food Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Immigrants 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathmark Stores, Inc.-provided space for the grantee to conduct eligibility prescreening and application assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept food stamp applications directly from the project staff • Provided data pertaining to the applications received from the project
7. Good Faith Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Elderly 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services • University of Arkansas Extension Service • University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept food stamp applications directly from the project staff
8. Harbor Interfaith Services, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Immigrants • Elderly 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Public Social Services-conducted eligibility prescreening and completed applications at outstationed sites • FISH/The Emergency Food and Advocacy, Project HOPE, and Families First -provided space for food stamp education sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct prescreening and complete applications at the project site • Take completed applications directly from the project site to the food stamp office • Provided data pertaining to the applications received from the project
9. Hispanic Health Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Immigrants 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End Hunger Connecticut • State of Connecticut Department of Social Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with the distribution of materials • Provided data pertaining to the applications received from the project
10. Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Elderly • Residents in public housing • Applicants for Section 8 rent assistance 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services-provided Mobil Benefit Van equipped with all the amenities to conduct eligibility prescreening, complete food stamp application and process the application on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Mobil Benefit Van that allows for onsite eligibility prescreening, applications and approval

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Use of Volunteers</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Role of Food Stamp Program</i>
11. Jewish Vocational Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working poor 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools-conducted food stamp presentations in classrooms and at staff meetings Employers of low-wage workers-enclosed literature about the FSP with pay stubs and posted food stamp flyers in staff lounges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information about the FSP to project staff Provided data pertaining to the applications received from the project on a quarterly basis. Provide a sample EBT card for use in the food stamp educational module Assume responsibility for educating other food stamp offices about the project Provide the project staff with food stamp brochures
12. Legal Aid of Nebraska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working poor Immigrants Elderly Refugees Minorities 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nebraska Health and Human Service System Community Action of Nebraska 	No information is provided
13. Lone Star Legal Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrants Elderly 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions, Inc. Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans, Inc. Housing Authority of the City of Houston 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided training for the project
14. Shared Harvest Food Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working poor Hispanic families Elderly 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ohio State University Extension Office The FEED Alliance Butler County Family Children First Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept food stamp applications directly from the project staff
15. The Outreach Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working poor Immigrants Elderly 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burke United Christian Ministries-provided food stamp education and materials to their clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical assistance during the development of the project Provide training for project staff and volunteers Provided data pertaining to the applications received from the project Assist with the analysis and reporting of the data

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Use of Volunteers</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Role of Food Stamp Program</i>
16. Worcester Community Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working poor • Immigrants 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worcester Public Schools, Diocese of Worcester, and Worcester Ecumenical Council- distributed flyers about the project to their constituents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform project staff of the requirements and the FSP application process. • Accept food stamp applications directly from the project staff. • Provide the project with counts of food stamp applications received from the project participant and staff.

Exhibit 4. Key Challenges and Resolutions

<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Response to Challenges</i>
<p><u>Client Barriers</u> – language; perceived low benefit levels among the elderly; misunderstanding about eligibility requirements, especially among immigrants; and the perception that the application process is complex and requires an excessive amount of documentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide interpreters for diverse languages • Have bi/multilingual staff on board • Provide education about the FSP through multiple means – education sessions, printed materials, radio and television PSAs, etc.
<p><u>Implementation Set-backs</u> – for example, project start-up took longer than expected because of difficulty in filling staff positions and project design was built upon a state’s plan to implement online application, which did not take place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readjust project timelines with the approval of FNS • Modify outreach approach with the approval of FNS • Continue with other aspects of the outreach until the setback is resolved
<p><u>General Partner Issues</u> –difficulty scheduling project activities, such as training, on-site outreach and meetings with partners and partners’ gradual decrease in interest and participation in the projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit additional partners that have the capacity to fill the role that the original partners should have filled • Convene regular meetings with the partners to keep them informed about the project and encourage collaboration • Try to reach the partners via multiple means, for example, email, formal letter, phone calls, personal visits, etc. • Work at making the prescreening process as effortless as possible
<p><u>Partnerships with Local Food Stamp Offices</u> – limited resources and staff cut-backs hindered participation in the projects at expected levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend FSP Road Shows that are offered by the local food stamp offices and use that opportunity to educate the food stamp staff about the project • Visit the local food stamp offices to educate them about the project • Stamp a project-specific identifier on applications in an attempt to track them • Develop a system with the local food stamp office to regularly follow-up with the contact person at the local food stamp office • Form a good working relationship with at least the main contact person in the local food stamp office
<p><u>Project Staff Turnover</u> –due to short employment tenure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the work hours of existing staff until position vacancies are filled • Exercise an aggressive approach to staff recruitment • Delay in commencement of full outreach activities and usage of full program expenditure
<p><u>Project Participants Fewer than Anticipated</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend project services through evening and weekend hours • Extract ideas from the promising practices posted on the FNS outreach website - for example, train and employ members of the community to perform food stamp outreach. • Modify outreach strategies – for example, the Milwaukee housing Authority Services opted to use the county-provided Mobil Benefit Van instead of working solely from county housing offices.

Appendix 1: Project Profile

The information that comprises the project profiles were drawn from self reports made by each grantee. The project profiles are very similar to those of previous years. Like previous years, most of the grantees had no previous food stamp outreach experience, and only a few organizations had previous outreach experience with other social service programs.

The grantees are predominantly nonprofit organizations that provide self- and family-sufficiency services to include job training/placement, education, health care, child care, emergency food and shelter, civil rights services, and other support services. A few are food banks, two are legal aid law firms, and two are city governments.

Grantee: Alamo Development Corporation
Award: \$125,000

Alamo Development Corporation (ADC) provided services in rural San Antonio, Texas, Atascosa and Wilson Counties. Their target population was the working poor and single adults. Their primary partnerships were with employers of low-income workers. The direct outreach services that they provided to increase the awareness of the program were the distribution of informational materials, prescreening, application assistance, and training for the human resource staff at the partnering places of employment. Additionally, ADC conducted community outreach by providing food stamp information and prescreening individuals at food banks, health fairs, senior centers, and low-income housing authorities. To help sustain the project, the grantee helped to establish food stamp prescreening as a service that employers offer onsite.

ADC exceeded all their objectives. They set out to reach 750 potential applicants and they reached 1,940. Their goal was to establish 10 partnerships with employers and they established 18. Their goal was to prescreen 300 participants and they prescreened 380. All prescreened participants were referred to the food stamp office, 65 percent (n=246) of these referrals applied for benefits and 98 percent (n=240) were approved.

Grantee: City of Oakland
Award: \$125,000

The City of Oakland targeted immigrants. This project, “Immigrant Food Stamp Promotion Project”, was a partnership between the City of Oakland, the Alameda County Community Food Bank, Lao Family Community Development, Inc. (LFCD), and the United Way of the Bay Area. The Food Bank and LFCD recruited 20 other community-based organizations to form a network. The Food Bank provided training, pre-screening tools and technical assistance to the network participants. Through this model, pre-screening and one-on-one application assistance was provided to non-English speaking immigrants at community-based locations.

Upon initial use of their outreach tools, the grantee found that they were not linguistically and culturally accurate. This led them to refine their outreach tools to make them more linguistically and culturally appropriate for immigrant populations. In addition, they hired a full-time Chinese-speaking project coordinator to help coordinate the project activities in the City of Oakland’s immigrant communities.

They reached an estimated 15,000 Oakland immigrants and submitted 1,129 applications for approval.

Grantee: Community Food Bank, Inc.
Award: \$125,000

The Community Food Bank established a Food Stamp Outreach office to coordinate a county-wide effort to identify potential food stamp recipients and help them apply for benefits. The food stamp outreach office was equipped with office space for client interviews, literature display, staff and computers to complete online prescreening and applications. They also conducted weekly educational sessions and prescreening at partner agencies such as pantries, churches, and health clinics.

The grantee reported that they faced challenges in reaching the elderly and immigrants. Many potential elderly participants refused to complete the application process stating that the demands of the application process are not worth the small benefits they expect to receive. Immigrants report unhelpful treatment that includes confusing and conflicting information at the local food stamp offices.

The grantee reached over 10,000 potential participants. They submitted 808 applications of which 756 were approved.

Grantee: Congreso de Latinos Unidos
Award: \$125,000

Congreso de Latino worked within its existing CareerLink and Family Social Services (FSS) programs to identify and educate individuals during their intake process. Individuals were prescreened and if eligible, were referred to FSS where they received assistance in completing the food stamp application online. FSS then conducted follow-up calls to ensure that the clients follow through with the process. The grantee also conducted educational workshops throughout the community where they performed prescreening and refer eligible individuals to FSS.

The grantee conducted 59 outreach events which included eligibility information, prescreenings and application assistance, reaching almost 3,000 (n=2,710) potential participants. They conducted 10 radio shows in Spanish. Each radio show reached approximately 15,000 people. The number of incoming calls requesting food stamp information increased by about 10 percent after each show. Also, the grantee placed advertisements in a weekly Spanish newspaper, reaching an approximate 20,000 individuals each week.

Grantee: Food Bank of Northern Nevada
Award: \$125,000

The Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN) collaborated with local churches (including Hispanic congregations), food pantries, homeless shelters, youth programs and a local medical center's Take-Care-A-Van. They offered FSP information and pre-screening in communities with high rates of minorities, as well as train volunteers to do the same. The state of Nevada's food stamp office provided training to FBNN outreach staff, and the project coordinator trained and supported outreach workers at community organizations in 12 rural counties. Project activities and information about the FSP were advertised via English and Spanish television public service announcements.

The grantee reached over 40,000 (n=44,650) potential participants and prescreened 3,409 individuals. Well over 1,000 (n=1,580) potential participants submitted applications, 1,024 (64%) were approved.

Grantee: Food Change
Award: \$125,000

Food Change partnered with Pathmark Stores and developed educational materials in multiple languages for distribution at stores in or near low-income areas of New York City. They provided FSP information, pre-screening, and one-on-one application assistance to potentially eligible customers at designated Pathmark locations at three or more events per week. The grantee followed-up by telephone with the clients who received prescreening services at two, four, and six week intervals to determine the progress of the application process and to provide further assistance, if needed. The Project Coordinator held office hours one day per week to provide follow-up services to clients by phone.

The project staff made person-to-person contact with well over 10,000 (n=13,451) potential participants. They prescreened over 1,000 (n=1,383) individuals and submitted over 1,000 (n=1,083) applications to the food stamp office. Twenty-nine percent (n=314) of those applications were approved.

Grantee: Good Faith Fund
Award: \$125,000

Good Faith Fund (GFF) implemented the “Arkansas Delta Food Stamp Program Awareness Campaign”. They used billboards, bus sides, radio, and direct advertising in a community education campaign. They also provided food stamp information, pre-screening and application assistance at community events and two specifically designed food stamp informational events. Using the “No Wrong Doors” concept, other community and faith-based groups were trained to conduct food stamp outreach. The project is a collaborative effort between GFF, the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, and the University of Arkansas Extension Service.

GFF was challenged by the common belief among potential participants that the level of benefit they will receive is not worth the effort required. In response to this barrier, they created a script that explains how even a small benefit can help with food and to explain the overall nutritional benefits of the program. An additional challenge they faced was the inability to access the Internet at remote sites, which limited the number of prescreenings they could complete at these sites.

They submitted over 800 (n=851) applications, of which 90 percent (n=766) were approved for benefits.

Grantee: Harbor Interfaith Services, Inc.
Award: \$121,687

Harbor Interfaith Services through their “Stop Hunger Now” project, trained volunteers to conduct outreach at a weekly farmers’ market, monthly community fairs, annual food-related charity events, and at community service agencies, such as senior centers and health clinics. Outreach activities include literature distribution, prescreening and application assistance.

The grantee prescreened 1,609 potential participants and submitted 1,517 applications of which 50 percent were approved.

Grantee: Hispanic Health Council
Award: \$125,000

Through the Community Food Action Project, the Hispanic Health Council (HHC) participated in a number of community events, and implemented a social marketing campaign. The social marketing campaign entailed bilingual bus ads, banners, and two radio public service announcements (one in Spanish and the other targeted to the African-American community). They also conducted educational sessions and made presentations on site and at a number of collaborating community-based organizations, such as homeless shelters, food pantries and soup kitchens. In addition, they conducted a monthly radio show that provided information about their project and the FSP, and attended health fairs where they distributed informational materials, conducted prescreening and offered application assistance.

HHC surpassed their goal of 10,000 individuals, reaching a total of 28,657. Project information and brochures about the FSP were distributed through two vehicles: 1) direct outreach at health fairs and community agencies, reaching 15,500 individuals; and 2) inclusion of FSP educational materials as part of the nutrition education packets distributed by the HHC's Food Stamp Nutrition Education program at schools, community agencies and health fairs, reaching 13,157 families. The combination of these two outreach strategies yielded total of 28,657 contacts, almost three times the target of 10,000. Sixty-eight percent (n=160) of applications submitted were approved for benefits.

Grantee: Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Award: \$125,000

Through this project, food stamp information, pre-screening, and application assistance were provided at housing application assistance meetings and housing recertification meetings. Staff from the local food stamp office trained HACM staff to provide information about the benefits of receiving food stamps. After exhausting the potential pool of FSP participants among HACM's clients, HACM used a county-donated Mobil Benefits Van to reach potential participants all across the county, providing eligibility prescreening, application assistance and processing, and onsite reporting on the outcome of the applications.

The grantee reached over 6,000 (n=6,269) potential participants and prescreened all of them. Over 600 (n=664) applications were completed and submitted electronically on the Mobil Benefits Van. Of the 664 applications, 660 (99%) were approved.

Grantee: Jewish Vocational Service
Award: \$125,000

The "Building Employer Programs for Low-Wage Workers", sponsored by Jewish Vocational Service (JVS), assisted the working poor in accessing food stamp benefits and helped employers build processes to sustain project services. The JVS developed a 30-minute food stamp education module that was delivered at work sites. The approach was customized for each employer. JVS staff provided personal assistance to help the employees determine potential eligibility and assisted with the application process. Through a train-the-trainer component, project staff sustained the project by teaching human resource staff at participating employers to deliver the module.

JVS worked with 40 employer partners and reached approximately 20,000 employees (including those attending community events). About 300 persons (n=297) were prescreened, and applications were submitted for 55 percent (n=166) of those prescreened.

Grantee: Legal Aid of Nebraska
Award: \$118,252

Through the “Nebraska Statewide Food Stamp Outreach Project”, Nebraska Legal Services (NLS) used their existing AccessLine, a statewide, toll-free number that provides legal services and health and social services referrals, to provide information on food stamp eligibility, nutrition benefits, and application procedures. In addition, NLS distributed informational materials in multiple languages to AccessLine callers and clinic participants. NLS also surveyed the callers to whom they sent food stamp applications to determine if they completed and submitted the applications and their outcome.

The grantee reached 22,312 potential participants throughout the life of the project. They mailed applications to 2,798 potential participants. A little more than 1,000 potential participants submitted an application and 592 (59%) were approved for benefits.

Grantee: Lone Star Legal Aid
Award: \$117,732

Lone Star Legal Aid (LSLA) targeted seniors and immigrants in 13 Texas counties. They conducted a two-phase community outreach campaign. Phase one was an extensive 7-week education campaign, during which LSLA hosted two community events each week in the target area. The outreach activities included information dissemination about food stamp eligibility and benefits, the application process, prescreening and application assistance. During phase two, LSLA supported four monthly events. Each event included an educational component, as well as pre-screening.

The project was interrupted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Although the grantee did provide assistance with obtaining food stamp benefits during their disaster work, their efforts mainly dealt with emergency food stamps.

Electronic submission of food stamp applications was an essential part of their project plan. However, the state did not convert its system to accept electronic applications as planned. The grantee therefore continued to conduct geographically targeted community education sessions focused on the benefits of the FSP. They also provided eligibility prescreening and application assistance after each education session.

Grantee: Shared Harvest Food Bank
Award: \$124,648

Through the “Outreach through Choice Pantries and Their Partners” project, sponsored by Shared Harvest Food Bank, three outreach workers worked at five “choice pantries” and on the “mobile pantry” to provide pre-screening and application assistance to customers. To further extend services, outreach workers established relationships with staff in pantries providing other social services. Saturday and evening hours and bi-lingual informational materials were made available to the clients.

The project reached well over 3,000 (n=3,746) potential participants. Over 500 (n=552) applications were submitted of which 33 percent were approved for benefits.

Grantee: The Outreach Center
Award: \$125,000

The Outreach Center (TOC) implemented the “Burke Food Stamp Program Outreach Project.” They used volunteers to make direct contact with every family receiving food assistance from The Outreach Center and prescreened them for food stamp eligibility. Weekly group briefings were held on-site and food stamp information was provided during weekly public food distribution. FSP information was provided in three languages and was printed on grocery bags. TOC’s partner, Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM), used social workers to provide FSP literature, education, and pre-screening to participants in BUCM social service programs. Spanish and Hmong interpretation was available.

TOC had an application approval rate of 92 percent. They submitted 567 applications, and 524 were approved.

Grantee: Worcester Community Action
Award: \$125,000

Project staff recruited and trained representatives of the target populations, who then conducted outreach throughout their communities. Project staff also made presentations about the FSP and disseminated information to households that receive fuel assistance, participate in Head Start and/or other support programs. The Worcester Public Schools, Diocese of Worcester and the Worcester Ecumenical Council also work with WCA to disseminate information. Community leaders visit food pantries and farmers markets to conduct direct outreach and train additional workers. All phone inquiries and applications were processed through a single point of access – WCA, in concert with the Department of Transportation Assistance (DTA), staffed this service two days per week.

WCA made direct contact with over 17,000 individuals (n=17,204), 1,034 individuals were prescreened, 1,034 applications were submitted and 58 percent of them were approved for benefits.

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