

FOOD STAMP
OUTREACH
TOOLKIT



Food Stamps Make America Stronger



FOR FOOD STAMP
PARTNERS

FOREWORD

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Please refer to www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach.htm for the latest statistics and program updates. The toolkit is also available online at this web site and will be updated as needed.

COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

U.S. Department of Agriculture
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PARTNER TOOLKIT

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HOW TO MILK THIS
TOOLKIT
FOR ALL IT'S WORTH!



INTRODUCTION

THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is an investment in our future. It offers nutrition benefits to participating clients, supports work, and provides economic benefits to communities. However, too many low-income people who are eligible for the program do not participate and thus forgo nutrition assistance that could stretch their food dollars at the grocery store. Their communities lose out on the benefits provided by new food stamp dollars flowing into local economies.

In fiscal year 2005, only 65 percent¹ (*All footnotes are research citations. You can find them in the “Resource” section at the end of this toolkit.*) of those eligible for food stamp benefits participated. The most common reason eligible people do not participate is because they do not realize they may be eligible. Others choose not to apply because of myths or misunderstandings about food stamp benefits or because of stigma that continues to persist. Others make a cost-benefit decision that the time involved in applying for benefits is not worth the expected return. Some do not want to accept government assistance. For specific populations, there may be additional compounding factors, such as language barriers for legal immigrants, or time and transportation barriers for the working poor. Seniors may not understand the nature of the program and choose not to apply for benefits, thinking children or families need the help more.

Outreach and education are powerful tools in overcoming barriers to food stamp participation. Even a small increase in food stamp participation can have a substantial impact. If the national participation rate rose 5 percentage points, 1.9 million more low-income people would have an additional \$1.3 billion in benefits per year to use to purchase healthy food and \$2.5 billion total in new economic activity would be generated nationwide.

Why does increasing participation in the FSP make sense for your community?

THE FSP GENERATES ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

The FSP brings Federal dollars into communities in the form of benefits which are redeemed by food stamp participants at local stores. These benefits ripple throughout the economies of the community, State, and Nation. For example:

- Every \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates a total of \$9.20 in community spending.²
- Every additional dollar's worth of food stamp benefits generates 17 to 47 cents of new spending on food.³
- On average, \$1 billion of retail food demand by food stamp recipients generates 3,300 farm jobs.⁴

“*Food stamps are the first line of defense against hunger in our community. Making sure low-income people receive food stamps accomplishes many things. First and most importantly, people get fed. Second, community and faith-based organizations such as ours are relieved of having to provide a higher level of food assistance. Third, the local grocers do business with customers that they may not have otherwise. And fourth, we are all healthier and happier.*”

BILL BOLLING
Executive Director
 Atlanta Community Food Bank
 Atlanta, Georgia



“ A successful [food stamp] redemption program probably means that we are successfully servicing the needs of our community. By being able to meet our customers’ needs during a particular time in their lives, we are often able to establish a relationship that outlives the time a person is eligible for food stamps. In that case we benefit from that customer both now and in the future. Food stamp redemption is a way to get your best customer in the front door and to establish a long-term relationship with that customer. ”

GEORGE MATICS
Purchasing Director
Cardenas Markets, Inc.
Ontario, California

“ To reach common ground, we need to go to higher ground. Together with our business and government leaders, we can build community and economic prosperity for all. ”

DANIELLA LEVINE
Executive Director
Human Service Coalition
Miami, Florida

In fiscal year 2006, the average monthly food stamp benefit per household was approximately \$214.⁵ These benefits, funded by Federal dollars, create business when they are redeemed at your local food retailers. Eighty-six percent of benefits, totaling \$25 billion, were redeemed at the nation’s 35,000 supermarkets. The remaining benefits, totaling \$3.6 billion, contribute to the viability of 121,000 other firms which include grocery stores, convenience stores, combination stores, farmer’s markets, and other retail food stores; plus wholesalers and meal services.⁶

Food stamp benefits are positively and significantly related to household food expenditures.⁷ Although estimates of the impact vary, studies have shown that a \$1 increase in the value of food stamp benefits of a typical recipient household leads to additional food expenditures of between 17 and 47 cents.⁸ Food stamp recipients spend more dollars on food at local retailers in communities than eligible nonparticipants.

Food stamp benefits can be used at authorized farmers markets that sell local produce. This provides additional customers for local farmers and provides food stamp recipients access to healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables that might otherwise be unavailable to them.

THE FSP SUPPORTS WORK AND HELPS LOW-INCOME PEOPLE MAKE THE TRANSITION TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

Nearly 30 percent of participating food stamp households have earnings.⁹ Employees whose nutrition needs are met at home may be healthier and thus may take fewer sick days for themselves or their children. Employees may stay longer with companies that care about them by sharing information about food stamp benefits and its importance as a work support.

The FSP helps families become financially stable and make the transition to self-sufficiency, getting them through the tough times. Half of all new participants will leave the program within nine months.¹⁰

Food stamp benefits are a work support. Food stamp benefits help those leaving the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and transitioning to work by supplementing their food budgets so that they can stay independent and work toward self-sufficiency.¹¹ Since food stamp benefits decrease only by 24 to 36 cents for every additional dollar of earnings, food stamp recipients have incentives to work since they will be better off working rather than receiving food stamp benefits alone.¹²



THE FSP HELPS LOW-INCOME FAMILIES MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES AND PUT MORE NUTRITIOUS FOOD ON THE TABLE.

Dietary patterns among low-income people, as well as those of the general public, indicate an excessive consumption of calories, unhealthy fats and sugars, while fruit, vegetable and whole grain intakes are modest.¹³ These poor eating habits contribute to making overweight and obesity a national health problem. In addition to the toll on personal health, this “epidemic” of obesity has economic implications as well. Obesity-attributable medical expenditures in the United States reached \$75 billion in 2003. Taxpayers financed about half of these costs through Medicare and Medicaid.¹⁴

However, research shows that low-income households participating in the FSP have access to more food energy, protein, and a broad array of essential vitamins and minerals in their home food supply compared to eligible nonparticipants.¹⁵ Nationwide, if there were a 5 percentage point increase in the food stamp participation rate, an additional 1.9 million low-income people would reap the nutrition benefits of the FSP. The FSP also helps participants manage their food resources more wisely through food stamp nutrition education. States may exercise the option to provide targeted nutrition education activities or social marketing campaigns designed to help persons eligible for the FSP make healthier food choices and pursue active lifestyles.

Because food stamp benefits are available to most low-income households with few resources, regardless of age, disability status, or family structure, food stamp households are a diverse group. Nine percent of food stamp recipients are aged 60 or older.¹⁶ For the elderly, a particularly vulnerable and underserved population, participation in the FSP and other food assistance programs can help improve nutritional status and well-being and increase independence. Nearly half of food stamp participants are children.¹⁷ Children who are well nourished may have better attendance at school and, once there, may be more focused on learning.

COMBINED EFFORTS ARE NEEDED

The FSP is the cornerstone of the Nation’s nutrition safety net, providing assistance to those who qualify. It helps relieve pressure on emergency food providers, enabling them to provide more assistance to those who do not qualify for food stamp benefits. Because of the nutrition benefits to participants and the economic benefits to the Nation and to States and communities, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has made increasing participation in the FSP a priority. Increasing participation in the FSP requires the combined efforts of National, State, and local public leaders as well as nonprofit community agencies, employers, and anyone else who touches the lives of potentially eligible people.

The rest of this “Introduction” section provides an explanation of the Toolkit, an overview of the Food Stamp Program, food stamp question-and-answer sheets (Q&As), talking points, information about nutrition education providers, and other background materials.

“ The additional support which food stamps provide to needy individuals is readily seen in our stores that serve customers in low-income areas. This benefit not only helps those who require some additional assistance in making ends meet, but is also an aid to the supermarkets making a commitment to serving economically challenged communities. Our partnership with nonprofit organizations in outreaching to potential participants speaks to Pathmark’s commitment to this important program. ”

RICH SAVNER
Director of
Public Affairs and
Government Relations
 Pathmark Stores, Inc.
 Carteret, New Jersey



ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

Why was this toolkit developed?

We all have a common goal: to improve the ability of low-income people to access nutritious food by participating in the Food Stamp Program (FSP). The information and materials in this toolkit will help you share information about food stamp benefits with those who are eligible but not participating. They will also help you let potential partners, government officials, and the public know how food stamp participation helps the local economy and addresses the national health problem of obesity.

What is food stamp outreach?

Food stamp outreach is providing information or assistance to someone who might be eligible for the Food Stamp Program. The goals of food stamp outreach are to help people make an informed decision about whether to apply for the program, and ultimately to increase participation by eligible individuals and families.

What is in the toolkit?

This toolkit includes information on:

- The Food Stamp Program
- Maximizing your outreach efforts through developing partnerships and working with your local food stamp office
- Publicizing your outreach through media relations
- Placing public service announcements (PSAs)
- Resources

Each section features easy-to-follow instructions, helpful hints, and useful materials (such as PSA scripts, frequently asked questions, and suggested responses). We also have included samples and templates (for letters, calendar listings, etc.) that you can customize with local and State specifics and enhance with information about your organization.

How do I use the toolkit?

The materials in this toolkit show a number of outreach possibilities and offer your organization the flexibility to pick and choose pieces that work for your specific needs. Throughout the toolkit there are tip sheets that you can duplicate for yourself and your colleagues. Do not worry if your organization has limited resources and staff. You do not have to conduct every one of these activities or invest a lot of time in each one. Do what works best for you and your community.

TARGET POPULATIONS

Findings show that, in addition to the general low-income audience, there are distinct groups that are significantly underrepresented in accessing food stamp benefits. The national outreach campaign is focused on reaching:

GENERAL LOW-INCOME:

Eligible, nonparticipating individuals and families;

WORKING POOR: Employed individuals and families who may not understand that even though they work, they still might qualify;

ELDERLY: People 60 years old or older who may have misunderstandings about the process and potential benefits; and

LEGAL IMMIGRANTS*:

Immigrants may misunderstand eligibility requirements related to citizenship.

** There are other immigrant groups that could benefit from this educational effort. You may want to connect with local food stamp eligibility workers in your community to identify other distinct groups to target. Some FNS outreach materials are available in 35 languages and can be downloaded from the FNS web site. Refer to the "Resources" section of this toolkit.*



How do I get started with outreach?

The best way to begin is to ask other organizations in your community if they are currently conducting a food stamp outreach project or if they have a resource guide, task force, or advisory group. Your local food stamp office is a good starting point for such a discussion. That office can share State and local information and may also have informational materials to add to your effort. By working together, you will be able to further your goals and avoid duplication.

As you start your project, be sure to keep local food stamp offices informed of your activities. Explore ways of working together to reduce application barriers — the best outreach efforts will not work if people run into barriers at the food stamp office. Extended office hours, child care areas in waiting rooms, and shorter applications are some examples of how food stamp offices can increase accessibility. Potential roadblocks such as crowded offices, long waiting lines, or repeated visits to the food stamp office may counter your efforts to educate potential applicants about the FSP and prepare them for certification interviews.

Are funds available to help pay for my outreach project?

One potential way to pay for part of your outreach project is to contact your State food stamp agency about an optional State outreach plan. Outreach is an allowable administrative cost for the Food Stamp Program for State food stamp agencies. States can receive 50 percent reimbursement from the Federal Government for necessary, reasonable, and allowable outreach expenditures. Your State agency has the option of contracting outreach activities to community and faith-based organizations under a State outreach plan. If a State chooses to do this, State contracting rules apply.

Before contacting your State agency, prepare your business case as to why outreach activities should be contracted to your organization. Be ready to provide your State agency with the following information, at a minimum:

- Background information about your organization
- Target group(s) for the outreach project
- Need in your community for the project
- Services that you will provide
- Funding you will contribute, if any
- Donated time

To learn more about FSP outreach activities that can be contracted by States, review the FNS guidance to States. This guidance includes examples of allowable and nonallowable outreach activities and the fiscal policies for State plans. Also outlined in the guidance are the provisions under which waivers are granted to States to use private, third-party donations as their share of the cost. This information is located at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/stateplan.htm.



Can I provide nutrition education too?

Similar to outreach, nutrition education is an allowable administrative cost for the Food Stamp Program. States can receive 50 percent reimbursement from the Federal Government for necessary, reasonable, and allowable FSP nutrition education expenditures. Almost all States have optional nutrition education plans in place. If you are interested in offering nutrition education to your clients, a good first step is to make your interest known to State FSP officials and the nutrition education cooperators who are participating in the nutrition education plan for your State. For a list of nutrition education cooperators, go to the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection web site at www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/Stategates/index.html.

What outreach is happening on a national level and how do we fit in?

USDA has a nationwide effort to educate and inform eligible nonparticipants — with special emphasis on working poor, elderly, and immigrants — about the Food Stamp Program (FSP).

The primary goals of the campaign are to increase enrollment in the FSP and to reinforce its role as a nutrition assistance program. The objectives of the education effort were developed with advice and input from many local food stamp offices and partners. These objectives are to:

- Expand awareness of the FSP as a nutrition assistance and work support program;
- Inform eligible, unenrolled people about where and how they can apply; and
- Ensure that people who are eligible to enroll have reasonable access and can participate with dignity and respect.

This effort, designed to raise awareness of and change beliefs about the FSP, includes promotion of a national toll-free information line (1-800-221-5689) through a variety of paid radio advertisements in English and Spanish. These advertisements run on stations in major population centers, and in areas with particularly large numbers of eligible but unenrolled populations. In 2007, there was an increase of more than 200 percent in the average monthly requests for information packets via the national toll-free number during the advertising months as compared to the non-advertising months. (Calls could not be tracked in the areas where the ads offer a local toll-free number rather than the national one.)

What if I have more questions?

If you have any questions about this toolkit, or about how to conduct outreach to increase local enrollment in the FSP, please e-mail us at fspoutreach@fns.usda.gov or refer to the FNS web site, www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach.htm.

You may also wish to tap the Food Stamp Outreach Coalition, a web-based network of national antihunger advocacy groups and partner organizations, for helpful insight about ways to reach FSP target audiences. Details about this group can be found in the “Resources” section under “General Food Stamp Outreach Resources”, or by visiting www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/coalition/about.htm.

Whether you work at a food bank, at a community or faith-based organization, or with the State or county government, you are an important part of this national effort to inform low-income people across the country about how they and their families can eat right, even when money's tight. The outreach you conduct on a local level is a vital part of the national campaign.



OVERVIEW OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

NUTRITION ASSISTANCE



The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is the cornerstone of the Federal nutrition assistance safety net, serving as the first line of defense against hunger. The FSP provides much-needed nutrition support to millions of low-income people. Nearly half of them are children.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS



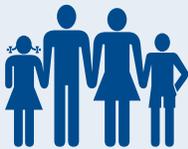
Not only do food stamps help individuals and families when money's tight, but your State and local community also benefit. The average food stamp benefit per person is about \$94 per month (fiscal year 2006 data), which is spent in local grocery stores. In fact, every \$5 in new Federal food stamp benefits generates almost double the amount in local economic activity. Also, every additional dollar in food stamp benefits generates 17 to 47 cents of new spending on food.

ELECTRONIC ISSUANCE



In June 2004, the FSP completed a transformation from paper coupons to an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card. Participants receive a plastic EBT card (similar to a bank debit card) with the dollar amount for which they are eligible each month. There is evidence that EBT also decreases fraudulent use of food stamps.

UNDERSERVED POPULATION



Millions of low-income people are not accessing the nutrition benefits for which they qualify. To be effective, it is important that our national and local outreach efforts counter myths about the FSP among those who think they are not eligible or have beliefs that discourage them from enrolling.



MYTH	TRUTH
FOUR COMMON FOOD STAMP MYTHS HEARD FROM POTENTIAL APPLICANTS	
<i>“The Food Stamp Program is a welfare program.”</i>	The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program designed to help individuals and families buy nutritious food when money’s tight.
<i>“Some people receive only \$10 a month in food stamp benefits.”</i>	While some receive \$10, the average food stamp benefit per person is about \$94 per month (fiscal year 2006 data).
<i>“You cannot get food stamp benefits if you have a job.”</i>	Individuals may work and still have income low enough to receive food stamp benefits. In fact, nearly 30 percent of food stamp households had earnings in 2006.
<i>“Other people need food stamps more than I do.”</i>	By receiving food stamp benefits, you are not taking benefits away from another person. Everyone who applies and is determined to be eligible by the State/local eligibility worker will get food stamp benefits.

FOUR COMMON FOOD STAMP MYTHS HEARD FROM ELIGIBILTY WORKERS	
<i>“Outreach could mean more quality control errors.”</i>	The number of low-income people participating in the FSP is growing; however, the error rate is at an all-time low.
<i>“Community workers cannot prescreen for eligibility or help gather verification documents.”</i>	Community groups can prescreen clients using the FNS prescreening tool known as “Step 1” (or the State prescreening tool, if one exists). Additionally, they can help fill out application forms, gather verification information, etc. However, the responsibility for the actual certification of households for program benefits remains with FSP staff.
<i>“Certification interviews must be held at local FSP offices.”</i>	Local FSP offices can take applications or certify households for benefits at remote locations such as food bank and grocery stores. Local offices may offer telephone interviews when appropriate.
<i>“Outreach will increase my workload.”</i>	Community workers help potential applicants gather appropriate verification documents so that clients are better prepared for the interview and bring the proper paperwork.



FOOD STAMP PROGRAM FACT SHEET

The Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense against hunger. On average, it helps more than 26 million (fiscal year 2006 data) low-income people buy nutritious food each month and make healthy food choices within a limited budget. Eating healthier foods helps low-income people and their families stay well and have the energy they need for today's active lifestyles.

To apply for Food Stamp Program benefits, a person must go through the local food stamp office. If it is not possible to get to the office, a person may apply by telephone or make an appointment for another time or place. Any knowledgeable adult in the family can initiate an application, or the household may designate an "authorized representative" to apply for them.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must have INCOMES under certain levels, based on household size. A household is defined as people who live together and eat meals together.

Applicants may have RESOURCES, but they must be less than a certain level:

- \$2,000 for most households
- \$3,000 for a household with an elderly person (age 60 or older) or disabled person
- Most States exempt one or more vehicles from household resources
- A household's home does not count as a resource

An immigrant is eligible to apply for food stamp benefits if he/she:

- Has been in the United States as a legal resident for five years
- Is a legal immigrant child (not born in the United States)
- Has earned, or can be credited with, 40 quarters of work
- Is a refugee or asylee
- Has a military connection
- Is a member of certain Indian tribes

NOTE: A child born in the United States or a legal immigrant child is eligible for food stamps, even if other household members are not eligible because of their immigration status.

Please check with your local food stamp office for more information about these eligibility requirements.



The amount of the Food Stamp Program benefit for each household takes into account the household's income, current living expenses, and resources.

Food Stamp Program outreach is critical to reaching those low-income people who are not aware that they may be eligible for, or do not know how to apply for, program benefits. The Food and Nutrition Service has several efforts under way to help with local outreach:

TOOLS AVAILABLE

A prescreening eligibility tool, written at the 6th grade level in both English and Spanish, is available for anyone with Internet access. The tool helps people learn if they are eligible and how much they might receive in monthly benefits. It can be found at www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov.

A toll-free information line (1-800-221-5689) is available in Spanish and English.

Free educational posters and flyers in Spanish and English can be ordered at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm>.

Five basic documents in 35 languages can be found online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm.

A national Food Stamp Outreach Coalition (FSOC) brings together national and local organizations interested in food stamp outreach and helps to empower these groups to do more and better outreach.

The FSOC listserv was developed to be a communication mechanism for those interested in outreach at the local, State, and national levels, and to share ideas among groups. To join, send an e-mail to fsoc@fns.usda.gov.

Certified households receive their benefits through a debit card called an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. EBT cardholder accounts are credited monthly, and food stamp recipients spend their benefits by using the card to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores. Only food and certain food preparation items can be purchased with food stamp benefits.



FOOD STAMP PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is the Food Stamp Program?

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program that helps low-income families and individuals purchase nutritious, healthy food. It is the cornerstone of the Nation's nutrition assistance safety net. The U.S. Department of Agriculture oversees the Food Stamp Program at the Federal level through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). State agencies administer the program at State and local levels. Their responsibilities include determining eligibility and distributing benefits.

Who is eligible to receive food stamp benefits?

Anyone who meets the eligibility requirements can get food stamp benefits. Household income and other resources have to be under certain limits and are reviewed. The program allows for certain deductions like housing costs, child support, medical expenses, or child-care costs. A household may also have up to \$2000 in assets. Households with a member age 60 or older—or a disabled member—may have up to \$3000 in assets. Assets that do not count toward eligibility requirements include: a home, a vehicle to carry a physically disabled member of a household, the fair market value of one vehicle (up to \$4,650; higher limits in most States), and the resources of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. Specific details are outlined in the FNS-313 brochure at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/general.htm.

Where can I go to find out if I'm eligible to receive food stamp benefits?

If you have access to a computer, you can quickly find out if you might qualify for food stamp benefits through the prescreening tool available on the USDA web site, www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov. Local food stamp offices can provide information about eligibility, and USDA operates a toll-free number (1-800-221-5689) for people to call if they want to receive information about the Food Stamp Program by mail. Most States also have a toll-free information/hotline number that can be found at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/contact_info/hotlines.htm.

Some community organizations work closely with food stamp offices and can provide information on the application process.

WHAT IS THE EBT CARD?

All 50 States have made the transition from paper coupons to the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. The EBT card is like a debit card and can be used at USDA-authorized grocery stores across the country. At the cash register, the customer or cashier swipes the EBT card through the card reader at the point of sale and the customer enters a personal identification number to secure the transaction. The system deducts the exact dollar amount of the purchase from the customer's EBT account and deposits it into the retailer's bank account. Once the food stamp EBT transaction is complete, a receipt shows the amount of the food stamp purchase and the amount of food stamp benefits remaining in the EBT account.



What are some of the Food Stamp Program's benefits?

Food stamp benefits provide much-needed help so that low-income people can put good, healthy food on the table. Food stamp benefits help with the grocery bill. Households can use benefits to purchase breads, cereals, fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, and dairy products. Many States offer free nutrition education materials and programs for food stamp benefit recipients. [Localize here if your State offers materials and/or classes.]

Food stamp benefits also help the local community. Each \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates almost twice that amount in economic activity for the community. Plus, food stamp benefits are funded with Federal dollars — so when everyone who is eligible for the program receives benefits, State and local economies also benefit.

Why is there a national Food Stamp Program outreach effort?

Currently, only about 65 percent of those eligible for food stamp benefits are enrolled. The goal of this national Food Stamp Program outreach effort is to raise awareness of food stamp eligibility and benefits. The campaign includes promoting a national toll-free information line (1-800-221-5689) (or State toll-free lines where available) through a variety of English and Spanish radio advertisements in major population centers and in areas with large numbers of eligible but unenrolled people.

Who is involved in food stamp outreach?

Food stamp outreach is a community-wide effort enlisting the help of State and local food stamp offices, faith-based groups, food banks, and others. Together, these groups play an important role in helping low-income families learn about and access the Food Stamp Program. Community groups can help in many ways. For example, they can distribute informational materials, conduct prescreening for program eligibility, provide application assistance and forms, and help gather verification documents.

A core group of national antihunger advocacy groups and other organizations are part of a group called the Food Stamp Outreach Coalition. The Coalition members also collaborate to promote the nutrition benefits of the Food Stamp Program through outreach to local antihunger projects.



FOOD STAMP PROGRAM TALKING POINTS AND MESSAGES

Following are suggested talking points regarding the Food Stamp Program. You are encouraged to localize this information with State or local Food Stamp Program data, or promote State-specific resources such as a toll-free food stamp information line or prescreening tool.

The Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense against hunger.

- ✦ Food stamp benefits provide much-needed temporary help with the grocery bill so that low-income people can put nutritious, healthy food on the table.
- ✦ Nearly half of those who receive food stamp benefits are children.

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition program that helps low-income families and individuals purchase nutritious, healthy food. It is the cornerstone of the Nation's nutrition assistance safety net.

- ✦ Low-income people get financial support to help with their grocery bills so they can buy fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods, dairy products, and other healthy foods. In addition, many Food Stamp Program participants are offered free nutrition education materials and classes to help them make good purchasing choices and stretch their food dollars.

The Food Stamp Program has made some fundamental changes in recent years that make it easier to:

- ✦ Find out about the program
 - * Individuals can call 1-800-221-5689 for a free information packet to learn more about the Food Stamp Program and how to apply. Information is available in English and Spanish.
 - * Individuals can go to a web site featuring a prescreening tool and, by answering a few simple questions, determine if they are eligible for food stamp benefits and how much they might receive. The web site address is www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov.
- ✦ Apply for benefits
 - * FNS and States are working to simplify the application process.

✦ Shop for healthy food

- * There are no more paper coupons. Now, benefits are delivered with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card that works like a debit card at the grocery store.

The Food Stamp Program is a win-win for low-income people, local retailers, and local communities.

- ✦ Each \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates almost twice that amount in economic activity for the community.
- ✦ The average benefit per person is about \$94 a month (fiscal year 2006 data). That translates into money spent at local grocery stores.
- ✦ Food Stamp benefits are funded with Federal dollars. When everyone who is eligible for the program receives benefits, State and local economies also benefit.
- ✦ Research shows that low-income households participating in the Food Stamp Program have access to more food energy, protein, and an array of essential vitamins and minerals in their home food supply compared to eligible nonparticipants.
- ✦ Since food stamp benefits help defray the costs of buying healthy foods, low-income people are less likely to have to make hard choices between eating right and paying for other essentials.

USDA and the antihunger community are working as partners to ensure that everyone who is eligible for the Food Stamp Program knows about it and is able to access benefits.

- ✦ Many low-income people are not aware of their eligibility and how to apply, particularly those who are working, seniors, or legal immigrants.
- ✦ To ensure that everyone who is eligible knows about the benefits of the program, USDA is conducting a national media campaign.



FOOD STAMP PROGRAM QUESTIONS & SUGGESTED ANSWERS FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS AND SPOKESPERSONS

Why are Questions and Answers (Q&As) important? Q&As are anticipated questions and suggested answers that program administrators and outreach spokespeople can study to help get ready for media interviews or other public speaking. You might receive these questions from the media, the public, or others.

Here are some examples of Q&As about food stamp outreach:

Why are you encouraging people to enroll in the Food Stamp Program?

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program that helps low-income people put healthy food on the table. The Food Stamp Program supplements the food budgets of low-income people who are having a tough time paying for food for themselves or their families. Children have important nutritional needs and they make up about half of those currently receiving food stamp benefits. We want everyone who is eligible to have the opportunity to apply for benefits so that they can have access to healthier diets. Our outreach efforts are specially targeted to people who are least likely to understand that they may be eligible: elderly persons, immigrants, and working poor.

Why are you encouraging the use of food stamp benefits when application numbers are increasing already?

Yes, enrollment numbers are increasing. However, there are still many people who need help. Currently, about 35 percent of the eligible households are NOT receiving food stamp benefits. This is usually because they do not think they qualify, or think there are people in greater need of the benefits. We want to reach out to those people, encourage them to get prescreened, and, if appropriate, apply for food stamp benefits so they can get help with their grocery bills. Food stamp benefits are not only good for low-income people; they also help the local economy.

Are the financial benefits worth the effort to enroll?

Food stamp benefits are not intended to be the only means of paying the grocery bill, but they do help low-income people purchase healthier food items, such as fruits and vegetables. Monthly benefits vary based on income and household size. On average, an eligible person receives around \$94 per month (fiscal year 2006 data). This additional support will help low-income households purchase nutritious foods for a healthy diet.

Can people purchase whatever they want with their food stamps?

Food stamp benefits are intended to supplement a households' grocery budgets and help them purchase healthier foods. Households can use food stamp benefits to purchase a wide range of food items. Participants are encouraged to use their food stamps wisely to maximize their nutrition impact and economic value. To that end, they are encouraged to buy nutrient-dense foods such as whole-grain bread and cereals; fruits and vegetables; lowfat meats, fish, and poultry and milk products. Other items that can be purchased with food stamp benefits are seeds and plants that produce food. Nonfood items cannot be bought with food stamp benefits.



I have heard that enrolling in the Food Stamp Program is difficult. What does it involve?

USDA and State and local agencies that administer the Food Stamp Program are working to improve the application process by simplifying forms, offering extended office hours, and, in some instances, allowing online applications. Anyone can check to see if they might qualify for benefits through an online prescreening process at www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov.

Anyone interested in finding out more about how to apply should call 1-800-221-5689 for information. [Localize this information if your State or community has a toll-free number.]

How long does it take to start receiving benefits?

If you are in special need because of very low income, you may receive benefits within 7 days, if eligible. However, for others, it may take up to 30 days to receive benefits. At the time of application, an eligibility worker will give applicants this type of information.

What measures are taken to prevent food stamp fraud?

USDA is committed to integrity in all of its nutrition assistance programs. USDA has taken several steps to make it easier to identify and punish those who misuse Food Stamp Program benefits. Retailers who violate program rules, recipients who try to obtain their benefits based on false information, or recipients who sell their benefits can be removed from the program, fined, and even jailed. Also, with the introduction of the electronic benefit card (EBT), which works much like a debit card at a grocery store, the USDA is better able to track and deter fraud.

Doesn't the EBT card make it easier for people to abuse the system?

No. The EBT card makes it more difficult for people to commit food stamp fraud. EBT eliminates paper food stamps and creates an electronic record for each transaction, making fraud easier to detect. Not only does the EBT card cut down on Food Stamp Program abuse, but it also reduces the stigma some people associate with receiving food stamp benefits.

Why are you advertising a free benefit for poor people?

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition program that helps low-income people have better diets, and better eating can mean better health. There are many people who are eligible for food stamp benefits but are not participating in the program. The FSP is a win-win for local retailers and local communities. Each \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates almost twice that amount in economic activity for the community. Average food stamp benefits are about \$94 a month per person (fiscal year 2006 data), translating to money spent in local grocery stores. Everyone wins when eligible people take advantage of benefits to which they are entitled.



COLLABORATING WITH THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM: NUTRITION EDUCATION PROVIDERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Many communities have a wealth of information available to help your organization promote the nutrition benefits of the Food Stamp Program (FSP). Focusing on nutrition can help your organization get the attention of individuals who might not be inclined to pick up food stamp informational materials. This gives your organization an opportunity to explain the FSP as a nutrition assistance program to potential applicants as well as employers, community leaders, and others, who might still associate the FSP with welfare programs. Learn more about FSP nutrition education providers in your community and what role each organization can play to increase FSP participation.

What is the goal of Food Stamp Nutrition Education?

The goal of Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) is to improve the likelihood that persons eligible for the FSP will make healthy food choices within their limited budget and choose active lifestyles, as the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the USDA Food Guidance System (MyPyramid) recommend.

Why should my organization consider collaborating with Food Stamp Nutrition Education providers?

Outreach and FSNE can work together to communicate messages about how the FSP can help needy families obtain healthy foods. The possibility of better nutrition can help generate interest in the FSP among potentially eligible persons as well as community workers serving that population. FSNE providers have conducted needs assessments to identify which nutrition messages to promote and strategies for communicating these messages to the FSP-eligible population. They also have access to nutrition education materials that are consistent with national nutrition initiatives. By working together, outreach and nutrition education can communicate accurate, unified, and reinforcing messages that have a more powerful reach.

FNS recently developed a series of nutrition education and promotion materials targeting mothers entitled Loving Your Family, Feeding their Future: Nutrition Education Through the Food Stamp Program. The nutrition education messages are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005. These nutrition education messages address the needs of English and Spanish speaking mothers with limited literacy skills. This series of education materials includes an educator's handbook, four discussion sessions with accompanying participant handouts, participant guidebook, and an online educator's learning module with a flash video component. These materials were developed primarily for food stamp nutrition education participants, however, they can be used in other nutrition education settings with similar target audiences such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Educators can access Loving Your Family... materials at <http://foodstamp.nal.usda.gov>.



WHERE CAN I GO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION?

States often provide nutrition education to FSP participants through contracts with the Cooperative Extension System, State Nutrition Networks, public health departments, and other organizations.

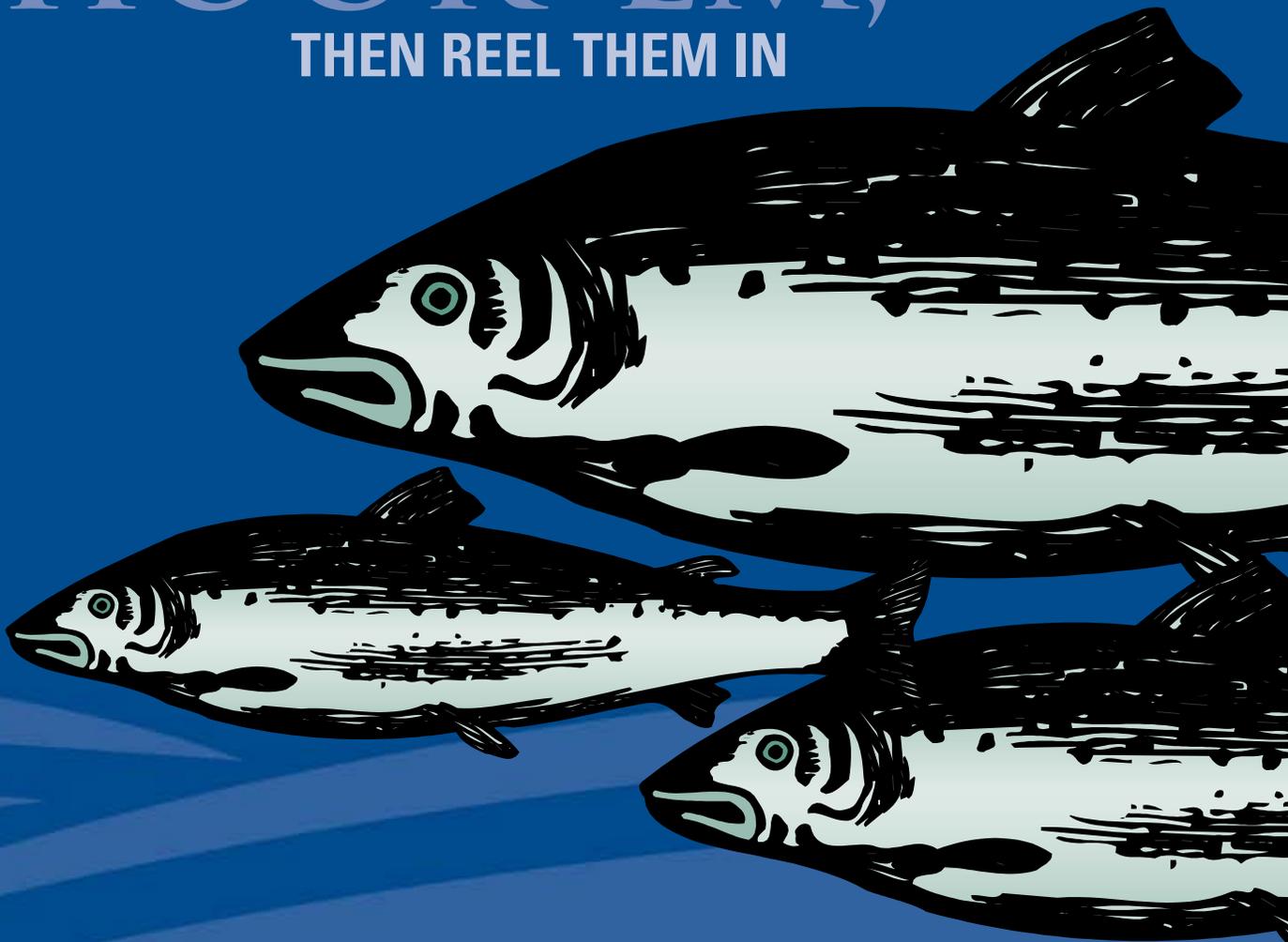
The Food Stamp Nutrition Connection, a project of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and the National Agricultural Library, maintains a list of State FSNE providers. You can access it online at www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/Stategates/index.html, request a print copy by phone at 301-504-5719, or e-mail FSNC@nal.usda.gov.

You can also contact your State or local food stamp offices for information on FSNE activities in your area.



2

HOOK 'EM, THEN REEL THEM IN



MAXIMIZING OUTREACH EFFORTS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

How can partnerships help my organization with outreach?

Although you can conduct food stamp outreach alone, your efforts will be more successful if you work with like-minded organizations. Since only local food stamp offices can certify clients for benefits, one of your most critical partners is your local food stamp office.

Partnerships with other groups can expand your ability to get the word out about food stamp benefits by:

- Providing new avenues of communication;
- Increasing the visibility and credibility of your message through a unified community voice;
- Leveraging your limited resources, and making sure your efforts are not duplicative.

Here is what you will find in this section:



KEYS TO:

Partnership
Development

- ➔ Ten steps for establishing a partnership;
- ➔ Useful template materials that can be tailored for local needs; and
- ➔ Examples of partnership materials.

What if I have questions about outreach and partnerships?

Go to the Food Stamp Program web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm>. There you will find free materials, such as posters, brochures and flyers, to order as well as general information about outreach, outreach strategies, and promising practices.

Learn from your colleagues by joining the Food Stamp Outreach Coalition, a nationwide network of advocacy groups and partner organizations that works to promote the health and nutrition benefits of the Food Stamp Program. Formed in 2003, this core group of national food banks, community and faith-based groups, and service organizations works together to end hunger and improve nutrition.

For more information about the Coalition, please visit the web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/about.htm>. You also will find a listing of national partners that may have a local chapter with which you can collaborate.

What are the steps for developing and maintaining a partnership?

You can establish a partnership by following 10 simple steps. These steps may also be helpful if you are approached by another community organization or a local food stamp office seeking a partnership with you.



10 STEPS TO DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A PARTNERSHIP

- 1 Inform your local food stamp office
- 2 Select a target audience
- 3 Determine which partners will effectively reach the target audience
- 4 Research and get prepared
- 5 Contact your prospective partners
- 6 Jointly establish your outreach plan
- 7 Confirm the partnership roles and responsibilities
- 8 Stay in touch with your partners
- 9 Evaluate your partnership
- 10 Share your success

STEP 1 | INFORM YOUR LOCAL FOOD STAMP OFFICE

One of your most important partners is your local food stamp office. You may need to work through these 10 steps with your local food stamp office even before you work through them with other potential partners. It is important to keep the food stamp office informed and updated as you move forward with your plans with other partners.

There are several important reasons to inform your local office at an early stage in your planning:

- Only a local food stamp office can certify eligible participants. Local offices need to know to expect new customers as a result of your outreach so they can adequately prepare.
- The local office may want to assess its customer service procedures before the partnership launches as another way to prepare for new customers. To be successful, work together to make sure there are no customer service barriers when potential applicants contact the local office.
- The local office may need to review outreach activities already in place at the county and State level, as well as State policies on specific aspects of partnership.
- If you plan to discuss the optional State outreach plan with your local office, give the local office time to find out if the State has an optional outreach plan. If the State doesn't already have a plan, it may be something to explore as a possible funding source for your partnership. If the State has a plan, explore how your agency can be included.

The local office can also provide or help you obtain a wealth of information, including:

- Data on the underserved populations in the community;
- Updates on the outreach they are already doing, so you can enhance their efforts;
- Details about local office services, phone numbers, locations, and hours;
- Application forms and informational materials;
- Assistance with tracking and administrative data; and
- Training for your employees, partners or volunteers.



STEP 2 | SELECT A TARGET AUDIENCE

Figure out what populations you want to reach through your partnership. National FSP data shows that the most hard-to-reach and underserved populations are seniors (age 60 and older), immigrants, and the working poor. However, the target audience for your community may be different.

For example, your community may have a large number of homeless individuals or unemployed people. You can:

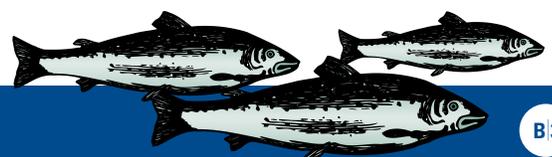
- Talk to others in your office and in other community groups about which populations in your community tend to be underserved.
- Work with your State and local food stamp office to review State- or community-specific information on underserved populations.

STEP 3 | DETERMINE WHICH PARTNERS WILL EFFECTIVELY REACH THE TARGET AUDIENCE

To decide whom to choose as partners, brainstorm and make a list of organizations that your target audience trusts and uses. Seek advice from others:

- Ask the local food stamp office what organizations they work with and may be trusted by their clients.
- Ask staff in your office which organizations they work with on a regular basis.
- Take advantage of any advisory groups or county boards that work with your organization to find out more about how best to reach the target group.
 - * Ask existing partners for input about other groups that should be involved in community outreach.
- Ask your own customers for the names of groups with which they come into contact.

See page B 10 for a list of potential partners.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUSINESS PARTNERS

Although local businesses have a genuine interest in helping out the needy in their community and will most likely have a formal community relations staff member, they also are driven by profit motivation and will have to think about their bottom line. If you plan to approach a local business or retailer about partnership, you may have to emphasize the economic arguments for participation expansion more than others. (See “Introduction” section for Food Stamp Program fact sheet.) Be sure you can tell retailers how food stamp participation helps their business thrive. Be sure you can tell employers how participation in the Food Stamp Program will help their employees.

See page B 11 for a list of activities for outreach partnerships.

STEP 4 | RESEARCH AND GET PREPARED

Increase your chances of success by being prepared before you contact your prospective partner.

RESEARCH

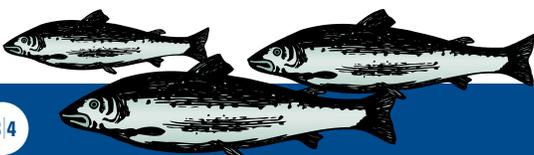
Take some time to learn as much as you can about your prospective partner. Make sure you understand the role the organization plays in the community and whom the organization serves. Following are some ways you can do this:

- Ask others in your office what they know about the prospective partner.
- Ask if anyone in your office has the name of a contact.
- Study the organization’s web site.

GET PREPARED

Collect your ideas. Be prepared for questions your partner may ask. Be sure you can:

- Provide a brief overview of your organization.
- For community partners, promote the health and economic benefits of the Food Stamp Program. (See page 35)
- Present the partnership as a “win-win” situation for all parties.
- Explain the role partners can play to assist potentially eligible people in accessing the Food Stamp Program. (See pages 34 for a list of ideas)
- If the food stamp office is one of your partners, explain the role the local office plays in your project.
- Discuss the importance of the project and why a potential partner should work with you to help their customers learn about and apply for food stamp benefits.



STEP 5

CONTACT YOUR PROSPECTIVE PARTNER

As you approach potential partners, remember that enthusiasm goes a long way. But if a potential partner says no to your ideas, don't get discouraged. Your ideas might not fit into their schedule right now. There will be other partnership opportunities. Try the next organization on your list.



CALL

First, call the potential partner to start the ball rolling and gauge their interest. Here are some tips for making this initial call:

- **Practice** the talking points in advance. Do this regardless of whether you are talking to an acquaintance or someone you don't know. (See the "Media Outreach" section for a pitch script.)
- **Don't just read** directly from the script; personalize and use a conversational tone.
- **Be respectful** of your contact's time; ask if it is a good time for a conversation.
- **Offer to schedule** an appointment to conduct a meeting in person.
- **Invite** them to your offices for a tour and a brief overview of the food stamp application process.



WRITE

If you can't reach your contact by phone, send an e-mail or letter. The following are some tips on composing your e-mail or letter:

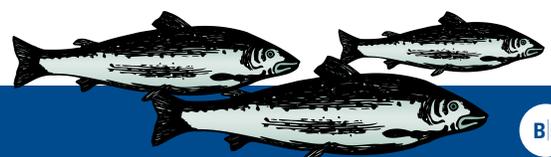
- **Personalize and localize** the information as much as possible. Your partner will want to know why you selected their group and what role you will want them to play in the project. (See the sample partner letter on page 33.)
- **Keep the letter short** and to the point.
- **Proofread** your letter before sending it out.
- **Promise to follow up.** Don't wait for a call. Post a reminder on your calendar and call back in a few days.



MEET

If you have scheduled a meeting with your partners, here are some helpful tips for a successful meeting:

- **Confirm the meeting** date, time, and any equipment a day or two before the scheduled meeting.
- **Consider sending** your partner an agenda and some informational materials by e-mail or mail before the meeting.
- **Tailor your presentation** to your audience. Take along materials from this toolkit or your agency that are appropriate to your audience, and leave materials for the partner to review after the meeting.
- **Provide your partners with information** about the food stamp application process. If you are talking with a local food stamp office, discuss how your organization will submit the application forms. Clear procedures are needed to protect the date the application was filed.
- **Be clear about your role** in this project.
- **Be clear and direct** about how you would like them to be involved.
- **Be clear on funding.** If there is no funding available, be sure that is understood.
- **Bring your partnership ideas** to the table.
- **Listen to the ideas** your future partners have.
- **Look professional,** be on time, and be respectful of their time.



STEP 6 | JOINTLY ESTABLISH YOUR OUTREACH PLAN

Once you and your partner have agreed to work together, take some time to jointly establish a plan for your outreach. Discuss your goals and the strategies or activities you will use to reach those goals.

USING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are enthusiastic and eager to help. If your plans call for the use of volunteers, be sure you discuss these issues with your partner as well:

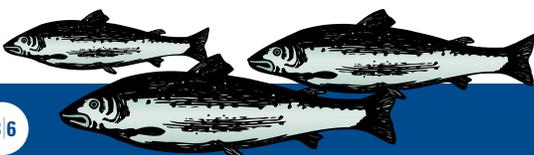
- How will you train volunteers to let them know what they can or can't do? For example, they can schedule appointments and fill out application forms, but they cannot certify households for food stamp benefits.
- How will you educate volunteers about the FSP?
- How will you handle volunteer turnover?
- How will you thank your volunteers?

Examples of outreach goals:

- Educate people about the nutrition benefits of food stamp benefits.
- Increase the number of applicants that fill out and file an application form for food stamp benefits at locations other than the food stamp office.
- Increase the number of individuals prescreened for food stamp benefits.
- Increase the number of callers to your or the local/State toll-free number.
- Develop a local web site which will contain community resources or other information.
- Increase the number of hits to your web site, if applicable.
- Promote the location containing the food stamp application form or prescreening tool, if applicable.
- Distribute application forms at locations such as food banks.
- Promote the EBT card to possible participants as a confidential way to receive benefits.
- Promote extended hours.

You will also want to discuss the following issues with your new partner:

- How many people do you want to reach?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each partner?
- How will funding be handled?
- How will you evaluate your work?
- How will problems be resolved?



STEP 7 | CONFIRM THE PARTNERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Confirm your partnership arrangements in writing by sending a letter to your new partner. If the partnership is straightforward, this document can be simple. Just list the details of the partnership. You may want to include a summary of the role and responsibilities of each partner. For an example, see the end of this section.

STEP 8 | STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR PARTNERS

Once your partnership is established and outreach is underway, keep your partners informed and involved. It is especially important to keep the local food stamp office informed of your work. Give them advance notice of any events or special projects that you host.

Here are some suggestions to help maintain your partnership:

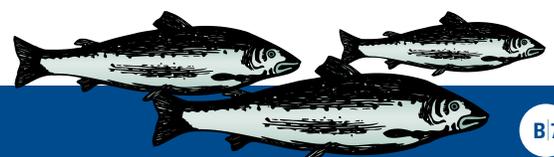
- Update your partners on activities. Be sure to call or meet periodically to check in on how things are going.
- Send periodic thank-you notes to partners and volunteers. Let them know how many new people are getting the benefits of the FSP as a result of their efforts.
- Offer to include your partners in promotional activities, like a newsletter or an event.



KEYS TO:

Establishing
and Maintaining
a Strong
Partnership

- ⇒ **Present** the partnership as a “win-win” situation for all parties.
- ⇒ **Agree** on goals and objectives.
- ⇒ **Develop** clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- ⇒ **Practice** clear and frequent communications.
- ⇒ **Show** appreciation through recognition.



STEP 9 | EVALUATE YOUR PARTNERSHIP

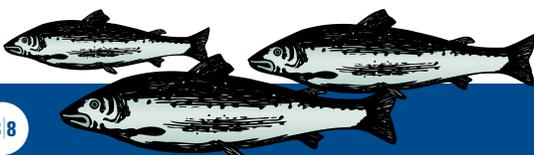
Although partnerships can be time-consuming, they can also be a valuable part of your work. It is important to track the value of these collaborations so that you can find out if you met your goals, and what did and didn't work. You can use either process measures, outcome measures, or both, depending on the nature of your partnership.

PARTNERSHIP PROCESS MEASURES

- Has the number of partnerships increased since you began your alliance-building program?
- When you established your partnerships, you began with a clear list of expectations. Are those expectations being met?
- Do staff who are working on the partnerships feel it is proceeding well?
- Do your partners approach you with new and creative ideas for working together?
- Have your partners provided you with new information and expertise?

PARTNERSHIP OUTCOME MEASURES

- Have you seen an increase in calls to your local number?
- When clients call or visit the local food stamp office, are they asked how they learned about the Food Stamp Program? Was it from your outreach effort? If these clients were a part of your project, does the local office staff think they are better prepared (for instance, form filled out, verification documents in hand) for the certification interview?
- Work with the local food stamp office to assign a code (like color, label, or number) for your organization that is placed on all applications that you distribute. Ask the local office if they can track this information and report back to you.
- Has your ability to reach the target audience improved? Have more people from the target audience called or come into your office or visited the local food stamp office as a result of a partnership?
- If you host an event, such as prescreening at a grocery store, track the number of people in attendance and the number of applicants prescreened for food stamp benefits.
- If certification interviews are conducted, work with the local office to track how many.
- If informational materials were distributed, track what materials were used and how many were given out.
- Did your partner help generate media coverage that increases the awareness of food stamp benefits? Keep track of the media clips.



STEP 10

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

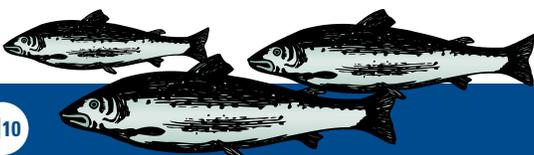
Once you have been able to demonstrate success, share it! By sharing your partnership successes, other organizations will clearly see the value and benefits of joining in the outreach effort. You can:

- Mention your current partners when you are at meetings and conferences.
- Write up your success and submit it on the Food Stamp Program's Promising Outreach Practices web page. (See the Promising Practices section of the toolkit for more information.)
- Nominate your local office as a Hunger Champion. (See this web site for more information: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/heroes.htm>.)



POTENTIAL PARTNERS

COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food banks and pantries • Community action agencies • Homeless shelters and soup kitchens • Family support centers (e.g., day care, domestic violence shelters, literacy, utility assistance programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Aid • Salvation Army • Goodwill • Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) locations
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Temples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosques • Synagogues
CITY, COUNTY, STATE, OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food stamp offices • Local health department • Employment assistance offices, including one-stop career centers • Schools • Department of Motor Vehicles • Property tax offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor or city or county officials • Housing projects • Federal agencies (for prisoners with imminent release) • Local Social Security office • Local military bases or installations • Local or regional IRS offices
BUSINESS AND LABOR	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers • Grocery stores • Local unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit providers • Utility companies
MEDICAL COMMUNITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctors • Hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacies • Community Health Centers
SENIORS' GROUPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted living facilities • Area Agencies on Aging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AARP chapters • Meals-on-Wheels program
IMMIGRANT GROUPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local consulates • Clubes de Oriundos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrant service organizations (e.g., the Michoacan Federation, Lao American Community Service)
MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio • TV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers • Internet



ACTIVITIES FOR POTENTIAL OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS

Community groups/agencies/other organizations can:

- Conduct food stamp eligibility prescreening.
- Provide application assistance. Distribute food stamp application forms and help potential clients fill out the forms. Explain to potential applicants what types of information and documentation the local food stamp office will need in order to complete the application process.
- Provide translation services, when appropriate.
- Include information about the nutrition and health benefits of the Food Stamp Program in newsletters or other local outreach materials.
- Post posters or flyers in lobbies, waiting areas, employee break areas, health clinic checkout areas, nutrition education rooms, etc.
- Post information on their web site and link to Step 1, the FNS eligibility prescreening tool.
- Provide food stamp information or giveaways at community events such as health or county fairs.
- Host a "nutrition/health fair" to promote food stamp benefits.

Retailers/grocers can:

- Play PSAs on in-store radio.
- Include flyers and brochures in mailings and weekly circulars.
- Include food stamp benefit information on store receipts and in grocery bags.
- Print FSP information on grocery bags. Make it lively--a grocery bag image containing the national toll-free number is available from USDA. (Graphic is included on disc in this toolkit.)
- Advertise food stamp information on grocery carts.
- Design, produce, and post promotional materials about food stamp benefits in the store — posters, banners, floor graphics, recipe cards, etc. (Logos for graphic design are included on the disc in this toolkit.)
- Provide food stamp information in the checkout display area.
- Underwrite paid advertising on local media.
- Underwrite printing of outreach materials.
- Allow eligibility prescreening to be conducted in the store or outside of it.

more >



ACTIVITIES FOR POTENTIAL OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS

Pharmacies can:

- Include FSP information on the patient information form that is stapled to prescription drugs.
- Include information in circulars.
- Air PSAs on in-store radio.
- Advertise food stamp information on shopping carts.
- Post information on pharmacy web sites.
- Encourage sponsorship of health fairs where prescreening for benefits can take place.

Employers can:

- Include FSP information in new employee packets, newsletters, job training programs, etc.
- Put a notice about a local or national toll-free number on check stubs.
- Make periodic announcements about the FSP over the intercom system.
- Post FSP information on bulletin boards.

Transit companies can:

- Provide free advertising space on bus shelters, buses, and subways/light rail.
- Include flyers and brochures in mailings.

Utility companies can:

- Put food stamp benefits information in newsletters.
- Print information on utility bills.
- Enclose insert along with invoice.
- Allow organizations to give out informational materials or prescreen for food stamp benefits onsite.

Media organizations can:

- Air public service announcements (PSAs). (See the PSA section of this toolkit for further information.)
- Provide a disc jockey or on-air celebrity to be the official spokesperson of your outreach effort, or make an appearance at community events, such as a "nutrition fair."
- Serve as a media advisor to your outreach efforts.
- Introduce groups to local advertisers who may be interested in funding newspaper, radio, or TV ads.



GET INVOLVED!

PARTNERS WITH A COMMON GOAL

Community and faith-based groups, retailers, and antihunger advocacy groups across the country have a common goal to reduce hunger and improve nutrition.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

By coming together in partnership, we can advance our efforts to inform individuals and families in our communities about the FSP, ensuring that everyone can eat right, even when money's tight.

RAISING AWARENESS

There are a number of ways you can help inform members of your community about the nutrition benefits of the Food Stamp Program.

WAYS TO INFORM MEMBERS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

- Order and hang free “Food Stamps Make America Stronger” posters or flyers on bulletin boards in offices, lobbies, or lunch/break rooms.
- Provide free Food Stamp Program resources including USDA’s free trifold brochures and bookmarks (available in English and Spanish) for waiting rooms, health fairs, libraries, and community centers.
- Insert free Food Stamp Program materials in grocery bags, informational packets, new employee materials, etc.
- Include the Food Stamp Program toll-free number or web site (www.fns.usda.gov/fsp) on promotional pieces such as posters, flyers, milk or egg cartons, paper or plastic bags, store receipts, and in-store displays.
- Include information about Step 1, the FSP’s online prescreening tool, in promotional pieces or make arrangements with employers or senior groups to allow individuals to use the prescreening tool to learn their possible eligibility for food stamp benefits.
- Publish an article about the nutrition benefits of the Food Stamp Program in your employee or group newsletters and magazines.
- Broadcast Food Stamp Program public service announcements (PSAs) at your store or company or use your contacts to get donated time at radio stations. PSAs can be downloaded from www.fns.usda.gov/cga/radio.htm.
- Add a link to www.usda.gov/fsp from your web page.
- Host a special food stamp prescreening event, cooking demonstration, or information fair.
- Volunteer at an activity to raise awareness about the Food Stamp Program (options could include helping at a food pantry or food bank, soup kitchen, or prescreening event).
- Subscribe to the Food Stamp Outreach Coalition listserv and learn about other outreach efforts taking place across the country. To join, send an e-mail to fsoc@fns.usda.gov.



PARTNER LETTER TEMPLATE

[DATE]

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP CODE]

Dear Mr./Ms. [NAME]:

The Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense against hunger. On behalf of [ORGANIZATION NAME], I am writing to invite you to lend your support to [STATE/CITY/TOWN'S] food stamp outreach effort by *[Describe the request — an activity you would like the organization to participate in, such as: hosting a health fair or prescreening event; volunteering; distributing informational flyers; promoting events; etc.].*

The goal of this outreach effort is to ensure that everyone who is eligible for the Food Stamp Program knows about the program and is able to access benefits. Our organization is helping to promote the nutrition benefits of the FSP.

[Provide local information on what your organization is doing, who you plan to target in your campaign, and the need in your community (number of potentially eligible individuals that are not being served for this type of effort.)]

We hope you will join us in supporting [ORGANIZATION or COALITION NAME's] outreach efforts; we would be honored to work with you. With your support, we are confident that we can reach more of [CITY/STATE's] individuals and families not yet enrolled in the Food Stamp Program. By participating, *[List benefits to organization such as: reinforces position as community leader; provides opportunity for positive media exposure; offers community service opportunities; etc.].*

I will contact you in the next few days to further discuss the vital role you can play in helping our community. In the meantime, feel free to contact me at [PHONE NUMBER] should you have any questions. I have also enclosed additional information on food stamp benefits for your review.

Again, we hope you can join us in supporting this important effort, and look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]

Enclosures

How can I initiate a partnership? If a relationship is not currently in place, a good way to initiate a partnership is by sending a letter to a community relations, marketing, or communications contact. Your letter should outline your outreach effort, provide background information on your organization and the Food Stamp Program, and describe the nature of your partnership request. Following is a template letter that you can use with your own letterhead.

**FIND THIS
TEMPLATE
on the
accompanying
disc!**



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT LETTER TEMPLATE

[DATE]

[NAME]
[TITLE]
[BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP CODE]

*Highlighted are
some examples
of what you
might include
in this letter.*

Dear Mr./Ms. [NAME]:

Thank you so much for agreeing to partner with [NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION] to help us reach those low-income individuals and families in our community who can benefit from the Food Stamp Program. Our partnership is part of a larger national effort to ensure that everyone who is eligible for food stamp benefits receives them.

Below is an outline of the partnership specifics we discussed:

In-Kind Donations

- Financial contribution for production of materials such as pamphlets, bus/subway ads, bus/subway shelter ads, pot holders, recipe cards, etc.
- In-store space to conduct nutrition events, prescreenings, etc.
- Placement of PSA or donated print advertisement space, etc.
- Personnel support to help fill out food stamp application forms, obtain verification documents, etc.

Promotional Opportunities

- Appearance of company name in food stamp media materials.

Visibility–Advertising, Media and Event Signage

- Your company’s logo on food stamp signage and in outreach materials.
- Opportunity for a company representative to attend/participate at event(s).

We’re so glad you see the value of partnering on such an important outreach effort. Please feel free to call me at [PHONE NUMBER] with any questions. Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

[NAME]
[TITLE]

Within your community, there may be a host of potential partners interested in joining your effort to boost Food Stamp Program enrollment and inform people of the nutrition benefits of the program. Retailers, businesses, community-based organizations, and government entities can all play a vital role in food stamp outreach.

**FIND THIS
TEMPLATE
on the
accompanying
disc!**



10 IDEAS FOR RETAILER FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OUTREACH

Help your customers learn about the nutrition benefits of the Food Stamp Program. Food stamp benefits bring Federal funds into your community that can increase sales at your store. With food stamps, your low-income customers can purchase more healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods, and dairy products. As a retailer, you can:

1. DISPLAY food stamp posters, flyers, magnets, and other materials. Go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fjsp/outreach/default.htm> for free USDA materials and promotional items.

2. INVITE local groups such as food banks, antihunger groups, or other community or faith-based groups to staff an information table to give out food stamp information or prescreen customers for eligibility.

3. PUT FOOD stamp information, such as national or local food stamp toll-free numbers, on grocery bags and in weekly circulars and bulletins.

4. PUBLISH food stamp materials in languages spoken in your community.

5. PRINT food stamp promotional messages on store receipts.

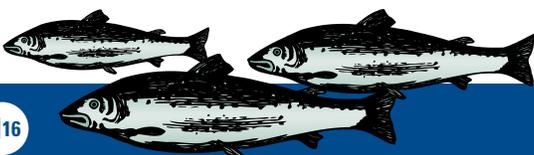
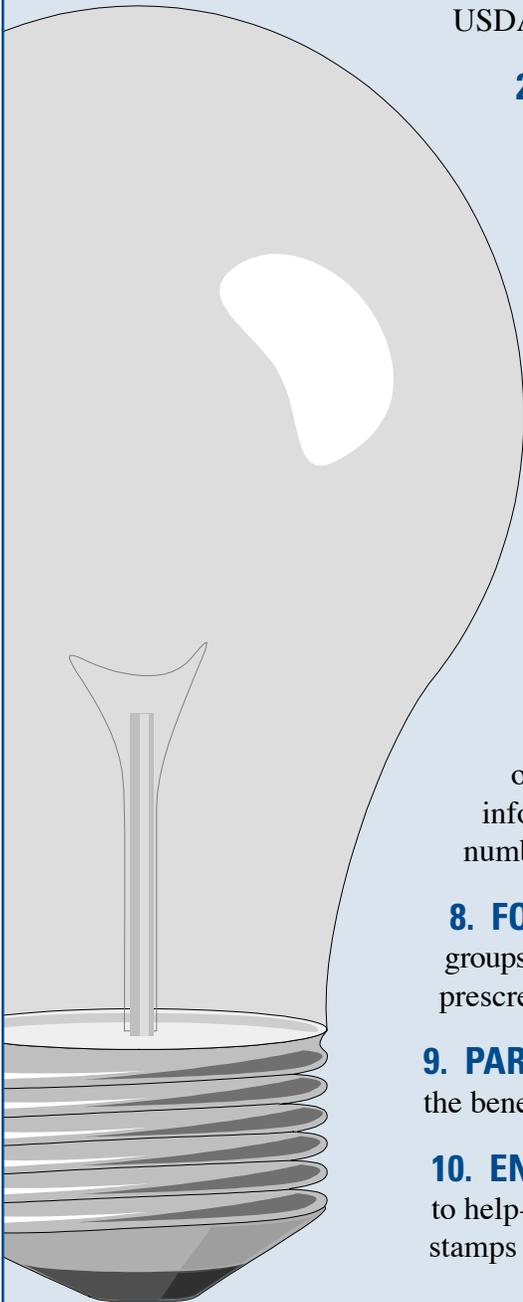
6. BROADCAST Food Stamp Program public service announcements in the store.

7. HOST nutritious food tastings or cooking demonstrations. Give out recipe cards that contain nutrition information and the national or local food stamp toll-free number.

8. FORM partnerships with local community and advocacy groups. Host a “health fair” to conduct food stamp eligibility prescreenings. Invite local media to the event.

9. PARTNER with EBT processors to educate cashiers about the benefits of the Food Stamp Program.

10. ENCOURAGE EBT processors to add recorded messages to help-desk numbers promoting the nutrition benefits of food stamps and encouraging food stamp clients to “tell a friend.”



FOOD STAMPS MAKE AMERICA STRONGER: THE BENEFITS OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM (FSP)

The Program Helps Low-Income Families:



- **Stretch food dollars.** Those receiving food stamp benefits spend more money on food than other low-income households.
- **Fight obesity through education.** Nutrition educators teach food stamp participants the importance of a quality diet, how to prepare healthy foods, and how to make healthy choices.
- **Put food on the table for their children.** Food stamp benefits are an investment in our future. Nearly 50 percent of participants are children.
- **Keep elderly family members independent.** For the elderly, participation can help improve nutritional status and well-being and increase independence. Nine percent of food stamp recipients are age 60 or older.
- **Make the transition to self-sufficiency.** The FSP helps participants become financially stable and provides needed support as they transition to self-sufficiency. Half of all new participants will leave the program within nine months.

The Program Helps States and Local Communities:

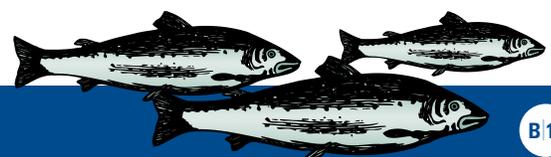


- **Support local food retailers.** The average monthly food stamp benefit is approximately \$214, which is spent in local grocery stores.
- **Generate economic activity.** Every \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates a total of \$9.20 in community spending.
- **Support farms.** On average, \$1 billion of retail food demand by food stamp recipients generates 3,300 farm jobs.
- **Leverage Federal funds.** Food stamp benefits are Federal funds. By increasing the number of people in the FSP, communities can bring Federal money into their States and communities.

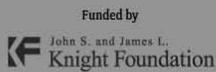
The Program Helps Businesses and Workers:



- **Achieve optimal performance.** Employees whose food needs are met at home may have higher productivity and take fewer sick days for themselves and their children.
- **Attain self-sufficiency.** Food stamp benefits supplement the food budgets of low-income workers so they can stay independent and work toward self-sufficiency.



SAMPLE FLYER: GREATER MIAMI PROSPERITY CAMPAIGN FRONT



JOIN THE GREATER MIAMI PROSPERITY CAMPAIGN. HELP OUR COMMUNITY PROSPER.

The Greater Miami Prosperity Campaign can bring millions of dollars into the local economy and add substantial income to thousands of entry-level working families in Miami Dade County. The Campaign consists of three "Economic Benefits Programs", with more to be added.

- **The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC),**
- **Florida KidCare**
- **Food Stamps**

Increase your employee's income at no cost to you. All you have to do is let your employees know about these programs. This is a **WIN for you as an employer**, because you can help your employees put more money in their pockets without any cost to you.

It is a **WIN for your EMPLOYEES**, because they can substantially increase their income. And it is a **WIN for our COMMUNITY**, because eligible low-income workers can bring hundreds of millions of federal dollars into Miami-Dade County's Economy.

The Human Services Coalition of Dade County has been awarded grants by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the US Department of Agriculture, State of Florida Department of Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to coordinate the Greater Miami Prosperity Campaign in partnership with the Mayors of Miami and Miami-Dade County; the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Miami Dade and The South Florida Workforce. The Internal Revenue Service, The Federal Reserve and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are also members of the task force that is coordinating the campaign.



SAMPLE FLYER: GREATER MIAMI PROSPERITY CAMPAIGN BACK

MIAMI-DADE MAYOR
ALEX PENELAS

"We want to make sure that low- and moderate-income taxpayers apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit and get all the end-of-the-year tax deductions and benefits they are entitled to. Greater tax returns will not only help those families but will also have a positive multiplier effect on the economy of Miami-Dade County."

MIAMI MAYOR
MANNY DIAZ

"This program will put a substantial amount of money into the hands of the people who need and deserve it the most: the people who work every day at modest wages to support their families. That's money that goes to buy groceries, clothing for their children, or to pay rent."

PETER W. ROULHAC,
CHAIR ELECT OF THE GREATER
MIAMI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
VICE PRESIDENT, COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT, WACHOVIA
NATIONAL BANK, N.A.

"We want everybody in our community who is entitled to the Earned Income Tax Credit to have it in their bank account where it belongs, not left on the table in Washington, D.C. The EITC is in the best interest of every business in the county, because the money will be recycled here when people use it to build a better future – by paying college tuition, buying a car to get to work or by putting a down payment on a home."

DANIELLA LEVINE,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
HUMAN SERVICES COALITION

"Miami-Dade County has an unacceptably high rate of poverty. In the 2000 Census, Miami was identified as the poorest large city in the United States. This is not a #1 position that any of us wants to have. Hard working people are finding it difficult to raise their families and meet basic needs. This is bad for families, bad for business and bad for our community."

The goal of the campaign is to build community prosperity and make a difference in the lives of low-income workers. The business community is taking the lead by spreading the word:

Florida KidCare provides free or low-cost health insurance for children living in low-income families. Families enroll by filling out a one-page application and mailing it to Tallahassee.

Federal Earned Income Tax Credit a refundable tax credit of up to \$4,140 per year for a family earning up to \$33,178. Families claim the EITC on their federal income tax return or through their payroll.

Food Stamps allows debit cards to be used for food purchases that supplement the earnings of entry-level workers.

The Human Services Coalition can help employees apply for each program and calculate the amount of benefits for which they qualify.

Employers who want to assist their employees in obtaining Economic Benefits Programs may contact us at (305) 576- 5001:

Joe Grimes (EITC) ext. 33

Christine Irwin (Florida KidCare) ext. 16

Loren Daniel (Food Stamps) ext. 30

Individuals interested in getting involved with the Greater Miami Prosperity Campaign with volunteer time or sponsorship assistance may contact us. The campaign needs and welcomes assistance in this effort to bring prosperity to the entire community.

WIN, WIN, WIN!



The Greater Miami Prosperity Campaign is a project of the Human Services Coalition, funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

In partnership with:



Flyers produced thanks to Metro Miami Action Plan



**SAMPLE MAILER INSERTS: PROJECT BREAD
ENGLISH AND SPANISH**

Know someone struggling to put food on the table?

For information about food stamps and other free and low-cost food resources, call:

Monday - Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Project Bread 
FoodSource Hotline
1-800-645-8333

The FoodSource Hotline is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

3/05

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Para español vea el reverso.

Para más información sobre cupones de alimentos y otros recursos alimenticios tanto gratuitos como de bajo costo llame al

De lunes a viernes
Desde las 8 a.m. a las 5 p.m.

Project Bread 
FoodSource Hotline
1-800-645-8333

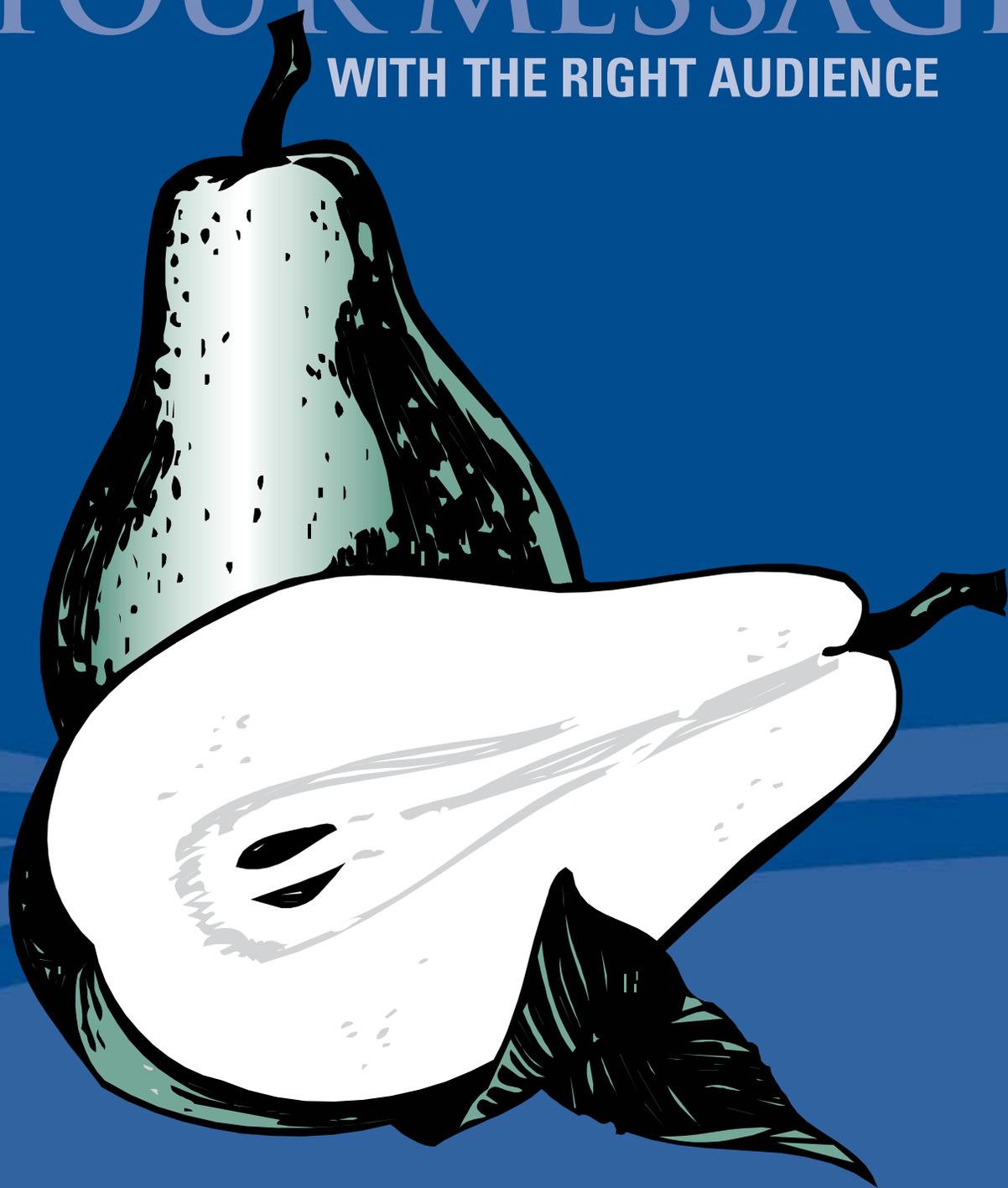
La línea directa y gratuita FoodSource es financiada por el Departamento de Asistencia Transitoria de Massachusetts

Sp/05



PAIRING YOUR MESSAGE

WITH THE RIGHT AUDIENCE



MEDIA OUTREACH

Why media outreach?

One of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to inform members of the community about the Food Stamp Program (FSP) is through local television, radio, and newspapers.

What is media outreach?

Media outreach takes many forms — from a simple call to a reporter to suggest a story, to a formal press release or an organized event. All can be effective. Match your media efforts to what works best in your community.

Why would the media be interested in covering Food Stamp Program issues?

There are many compelling sides to the food stamp story. It is about the strength of a local community working together to help those who are less fortunate. It is about people facing challenges and doing what is right for themselves and their families. It has all the elements of an interesting story that local media want to cover. Your local media have both a community responsibility and a business interest in providing readers and viewers with valuable information.

What does media outreach involve?

Media outreach consists of the following seven steps:

1. **SELECT** a target audience.
2. **DEVELOP** a media list.
3. **BRAINSTORM** story ideas.
4. **PREPARE** materials and information.
5. **IDENTIFY** spokespersons.
6. **CONTACT** the media.
7. **EVALUATE** your efforts.

You may not have the time or resources to follow every step. The important thing is to keep the media informed about what you are doing so they can get the word out to eligible people in your community that food stamp benefits are available to them.

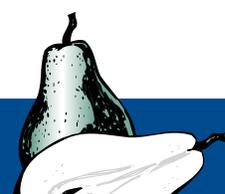
How will this toolkit help me with media outreach?

This section of the toolkit elaborates on each of the seven steps. It also provides information on media outreach tactics that require a little more effort, such as media events and getting into the media’s editorial section. Regardless of how elaborate your effort is, this section will help you to work more effectively with the press and garner positive media coverage of hunger and nutrition issues and the Food Stamp Program.

Understanding that you may be working with limited staff resources, this section of the toolkit also includes tips and template materials to use when you contact the media.

TIPS & TOOLS

Placing stories in your local community’s print and broadcast media can lead to bigger things. Frequently, statewide and national media outlets get story ideas from coverage at the local level. Do not be surprised if a story about food stamp outreach in your community is picked up by one of the major networks! Recently, a story about food stamp participation in local media outlets in Pennsylvania and Texas caught the eye of National Public Radio and led to an airing of a positive story about the Food Stamp Program.



STEP 1 | SELECT A TARGET AUDIENCE

Select your audience(s). Determine whom you are trying to reach before you begin your media outreach. Generally, you are trying to reach people who are eligible for food stamps but not receiving them. Specific examples include:

- People 60 years of age or older
- Children
- Families
- Working poor
- Immigrants

National research shows that the most underserved and hardest-to-reach populations tend to be seniors, immigrants, and the working poor. The audience for your community may vary. Talk to people in your local food stamp office to see whom they are trying to reach. Do your own research on underserved populations and the best methods to reach your selected audience(s). For more on this, see the Resources section of this toolkit.

GOALS

Before you begin your outreach, establish some simple goals for your effort. Examples include:

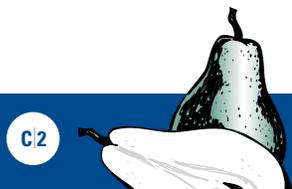
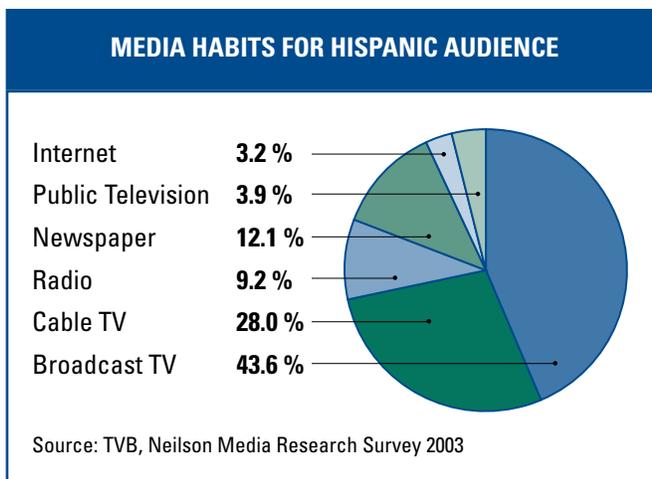
- **Educating people** about the nutrition benefits of food stamps
- **Increasing the number of calls** to the local, State, or national toll-free number
- **Increasing hits** on your web site
- **Promoting** the EBT card
- **Promoting extended hours** for food stamp application certification interviews

STEP 2 | DEVELOP A MEDIA LIST

Determine the best channels for reaching your target audience by researching the answers to the following questions. Then begin to create a media list, which is a list of local news media organizations and their contact information.

Does your target audience:

- Listen to certain radio stations?
- Watch particular TV channels?
- Read local community papers or daily newspapers?

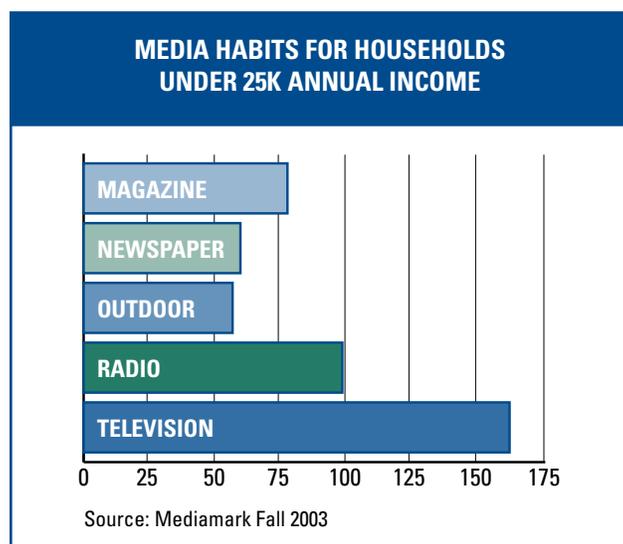


Check with your partner organizations to see if they already have a list that they are willing to share.

POINTERS TO DEVELOP A MEDIA LIST	
✓	Check the local phone book for listings of television and radio stations, local daily and weekly newspapers, and magazines.
✓	Use the U.S. Newspaper List web site at www.usnpl.com .
✓	Check the local library for media reference books, such as the Bacon's Media Yellow Book or the News Media Yellow Book.
✓	Check newspaper and television web sites. Search their online archives to find names of reporters who have covered stories on food stamps, hunger, poverty, or nutrition in the past. Review the articles previously written or stories broadcast by the reporter to get a feel for her or his style and areas of interest.
✓	Ask your clients about their preferred local media sources.
✓	Add reporters' names to your list when you read a story or meet a reporter working on a story about hunger or community groups.
✓	Add the local offices or bureaus of national media organizations. These are typically located in State capitals or large cities. Wire services like the Associated Press (AP) (see page 57), Reuters, and the Scripps Howard News Service provide articles to local newspapers. Large radio and television networks also distribute stories to local affiliates. A listing of these is provided on page 58.

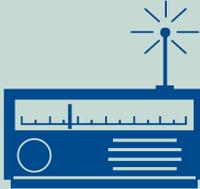
As you build your media list, add the names and contact information (phone, e-mail, fax, address) for specific individuals within each organization. These individuals may include reporters, editors, and/or producers. By appealing to specific individuals, you are more likely to get a response. Double-check to make sure your contact names are up-to-date. Call the main number of the newspaper or station and ask the operator for assistance.

On your list, also make note of publication deadlines so you can contact editors and reporters well in advance of when you hope to actually see your story in print.

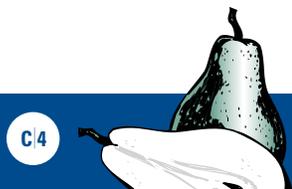


CHOOSING THE MOST APPROPRIATE CONTACT

There are a number of individuals within a news organization who shape what is printed or broadcast. People to include on your media list are:

APPROPRIATE CONTACTS	
<p>NEWSPAPER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporters who cover health, social, and family issues, • Writers for the calendar or community events page, • Community columnists, • Editorial page editors, and • Assignment editors who direct reporters or photographers to cover events. 	
<p>TV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporters/on-air personalities, • Planning/assignment editors, • News broadcast producers, and • Producers of morning shows or community programs. 	
<p>RADIO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News directors, • Assignment editors, • Public affairs show hosts and producers, and • On-air personalities or commentators. 	

Keep in mind that each media outlet may have a separate staff that writes for its web site, and remember to include smaller media outlets, such as local cable access TV stations, community newspapers, and local parenting magazines and tabloids.



SAMPLE MEDIA FILE

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Hon	First	Last	Organization	Title	Address 1	City	St	Zip	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Mr.	Bob	Cook	Akron Beacon Journal	Opinion Page Writer	12 Exchange Street	Akron	OH	44328	330-123-3000	330-123-9235	bcook@thebeaconjournal.com
Mr.	Tom	Farmer	Alameda Times-Star	Opinion Page Director	345 Sixth Street	Oakland	CA	94612-2601	510-456-6333	510-456-6487	tfarmer@angnewsletters.com
Mr.	Keith	Baker	Antelope Valley Press	Opinion Page Writer	78 Pepper Lane	Palmdale	CA	93590-4050	661-789-2700	661-789-4870	kbaker@avpress.com
Ms.	Jeanne	Gardener	Arizona Republic	Opinion Page Editor	900 Peachtree Blvd.	Phoenix	AZ	85004	602-101-8000	602-101-8933	kgardener@arizonarepublic.com
Mr.	Andrew	Rice	Asbury Park Press	Opinion Page Editor	123 Apple Way	Neptune	NJ	07754	732-234-6000	732-234-4818	arice@app.com
Mr.	David	Glass	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Opinion Page Editor	4500 Water Street	Atlanta	GA	30303	404-567-5151	404-567-5611	dglass@ajc.com
Ms.	Carolyn	Spooner	Bellingham Herald	Opinion Page Editor	P0 Box 678	Bellingham	WA	98227-1277	360-890-2600	360-890-2826	cspooner@bellingham.gannett.com
Mr.	Donald	Newton	Boston Globe	Opinion Page Editor	910 Orchard Street	Boston	MA	02107-2378	617-987-2000	617-987-2098	dnewton@globe.com
Ms.	Ginger	Fisher	Boston Globe	Opinion Page Columnist	P0 Box 120	Boston	MA	02107-2378	617-654-2000	617-654-2098	gfisher@globe.com
Ms.	Marjorie	Wheaton	Boston Globe	Opinion Page Editor	3400 Grocer Blvd.	Boston	MA	02107-2378	617-321-2000	617-321-2098	mhwheaton@globe.com
Ms.	Christine	Miller	Boston Herald	Opinion Page Editor	56 Maple Avenue	Boston	MA	02106	617-246-3000	617-246-1315	cmiller@bostonherald.com
Mr.	Stewart	Brown	Boston Herald	Opinion Page Columnist	788 Honey Avenue	Boston	MA	02106	617-802-3000	617-802-1315	sbrown@bostonherald.com
Mr.	Herbert	Smith	Bradenton Herald	Opinion Page Editor	1000 Raspberry Way	Bradenton	FL	34206-0921	941-531-0411	941-531-7094	hsmith@bradentonherald.com
Ms.	Rosemary	Green	Bradenton Herald	Opinion Page Writer	P0 Box 987	Bradenton	FL	34206-0921	941-579-0411	941-579-7094	rgreen@bradentonherald.com
Ms.	Olive	Johnson	Brattleboro Reformer	Opinion Page Editor	654 Sugar Way	Brattleboro	VT	05302-0802	802-234-2311	802-234-1305	ojohnson@sover.net
Mr.	Marc	Stover	Bucks County Courier Times	Opinion Page Editor	3200 Lime Avenue	Levittown	PA	19057	215-567-4000	215-567-4177	mstover@calkinsnewsletters.com
Mr.	Charles	Mills	Cape Cod Times	Opinion Page Editor	101 North 40th Street	Hyannis	MA	02601-4037	508-890-1200	508-890-3292	cmills@capecodonline.com
Mr.	Michael	Huntley	Chicago Sun-Times	Opinion Page Editor	234 River Avenue	Chicago	IL	60611-3532	312-876-3000	312-876-2120	mhuntley@suntimes.com
Ms.	Trudy	Black	Chicago Tribune	Opinion Page Editor	5600 Orchard Street	Chicago	IL	60611-4041	312-543-3232	312-543-2598	tblack@tribune.com
Ms.	Clara	Baker	Christian Science Monitor	Opinion Page Editor	780 Market Street	Boston	MA	02115	617-123-2000	617-123-7575	cbaker@csp.com
Ms.	Keith	White	Christian Science Monitor	Opinion Page Writer	900 Plains Blvd.	Boston	MA	02115	617-456-2000	617-456-7575	kwhite@csp.com
Ms.	Elizabeth	Rancher	Columbian	Opinion Page Writer	1000 Greenway Street	Vancouver	WA	98666-0180	360-789-3391	360-789-6031	mgumsey@columbian.com
Mr.	Mike	Gurnsey	Columbian	Opinion Page Writer	200 Sowers Avenue	Vancouver	WA	98666-0180	360-102-3391	360-102-6031	esmith@columbian.com
Ms.	Elsie	Smith	Concord Monitor	Opinion Page Editor	340 Cooler Street	Concord	NH	03302-1177	603-345-5301	603-345-8120	ssummer@cmonitor.com
Mr.	Stephen	Sumner	Connecticut Post	Opinion Page Editor	560 Harvest Lane	Bridgeport	CT	06604-4560	203-678-0161	203-678-8158	swinter@cpost.com
Mr.	David	Green	Conroe Courier	Opinion Page Editor	7800 Sugar Avenue	Conroe	TX	77305-0609	936-910-6671	936-910-6729	dgreen@conroecourier.com
Mr.	Harvey	Pine	Contra Costa Times	Opinion Page Editor	9100 Orange Lane	Walnut Creek	CA	94596	925-765-2525	925-765-0239	hpine@netcom.com
Mr.	Alan	Farmer	Courier-Post	Opinion Page Editor	2300 Culter Street	Cherry Hill	NJ	08002-2905	856-432-6000	856-432-2831	afarmer@courierpostonline.com
Mr.	John	Miller	Daily Camera	Opinion Page Editor	45000 Fig Lane	Boulder	CO	80306-0591	303-109-1202	303-109-1155	jmiller@thedailycamera.com
Mr.	Martin	Cook	Daily Local News	Opinion Page Editor	60 West Acres Street	West Chester	PA	19382-2800	610-876-1775	610-876-1180	mcook@dailylocal.com
Mr.	Buddy	Johns	Daily Record	Opinion Page Editor	700 Bloom Way	Parsippany	NJ	07054-0217	973-543-6200	973-543-6666	bjones@morristo.gannett.com
Mr.	Bill	Grower	Daily Republic	Opinion Page Editor	89 Beesley Street	Fairfield	CA	94533-0747	707-210-4646	707-210-5924	bgrower@dailyrepublic.com
Ms.	Violet	Pinter	Daily Times-Call	Opinion Page Editor	10 Apple Street	Longmont	CO	80502-0299	303-345-2244	303-345-8615	vpinter@dailytimescall.com
Mr.	Richard	Moos	Dallas Morning News	Opinion Page Editor	246 Market Lane	Dallas	TX	75202	214-678-8222	214-678-8319	rmoos@dallasnews.com
Ms.	Sheri	Coffee	Delaware State News	Opinion Page Editor	810 Peachtree Blvd.	Dover	DE	19903-0737	302-864-3600	302-864-8223	scoffee@newszap.com
Ms.	Jane	Gardener	Denton Record-Chronicle	Opinion Page Editor	135 Mercantile Lane	Denton	TX	76202-0369	940-642-3811	940-642-9666	kgardener@dentonrc.com
Mr.	Robert	Brown	Denver Post	Opinion Page Editor	79 Grainer Blvd.	Denver	CO	80202	303-420-1010	303-420-1369	rbrown@aol.com
Mr.	Memil	Stover	Desert Dispatch	Opinion Page Editor	468 Orchard Way	Barstow	CA	92311-3289	760-975-2257	760-975-0685	mstover@link.freedom.com
Mr.	Ron	Fisher	Detroit Free Press	Opinion Page Editor	357 Pear Street	Detroit	MI	48226	313-753-6400	313-753-6774	rfisher@freepress.com
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STEP 3 | BRAINSTORM STORY IDEAS

Although much of the news covered on TV or in the newspaper is unanticipated, you can sometimes generate interest by calling the media with a compelling story.

What makes your story newsworthy?

Consider the aspects of a news story that kept you engaged and interested. Provide local statistics and stories and offer the reporter an interesting angle.

What are some examples of newsworthy stories?

- Launch of a new program.
- Start of a new outreach effort for a specific audience like seniors, immigrants such as Hispanics, or working poor.
- Information about an organization or a community leader who has recently shown interest in issues such as nutrition or food stamps.
- Community happenings that tie into food stamp issues, such as a factory closing or a new community partnership.

FIVE COMPONENTS OF A NEWSWORTHY STORY

	<p>TIMING: The word <i>news</i> means exactly what it says: things that are new. In this electronic age, people are used to receiving immediate news updates. If it happened today, it's news. If the same thing happened last week, it's no longer interesting. Think ahead to upcoming actions, events, holiday or seasonal stories, and volunteer appreciation stories — and plan your media outreach in advance so reporters can get the story while it is still news.</p>
	<p>SIGNIFICANCE: The number of people affected by a story is important. If a significant number of people in your community are eligible for the Food Stamp Program, yet are not tapping into the benefits, this will be considered newsworthy.</p>
	<p>PROXIMITY: The closer the story hits to home, the more newsworthy it is.</p>
	<p>PROMINENCE: Famous people get more coverage simply because they are famous. But celebrities do not have to come from Hollywood — they can be local politicians, prominent business owners, hometown sports heroes, or key community leaders.</p>
	<p>HUMAN INTEREST: Human interest stories appeal to the readers' emotions. Talking about the benefits of food stamps through a first-person account is a good way to personalize what readers or viewers might otherwise think is merely a government program that has no relevancy to their lives.</p>



STEP 4 | PREPARE MATERIALS AND INFORMATION

Once you have your story idea, get ready to present it to your local media.

How do I prepare my story?

Start by preparing any new materials and collecting background information. You might wish to check with your local food stamp office to see whether they have information you can use that is specific to your community.

In some cases, you might not need to develop any media materials. You may simply call or e-mail a reporter with your pitch (see step 6).

If your story idea is time-sensitive or about a piece of breaking news, develop a press release.

Sample media materials are provided in the media relations section.

EXAMPLES OF MEDIA MATERIALS THAT MAY NEED TO BE PREPARED

- **PRESS RELEASE:** A 1–2 page document with information about your news. Press releases should be issued only for timely and significant happenings.
- **MEDIA ADVISORY:** A 1-page document that lists enough information to pique a reporter’s interest without giving away the whole story. Usually, these are sent out before media events (see pages F 6- F 10 for more information).
- **PITCH LETTER:** A brief letter that presents your story idea.
- **FACT SHEET:** A document with statistical information about your news.
- **BIOGRAPHIES:** Background information about your spokespeople.
- **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ):** Information about food stamps, hunger, nutrition issues, and so forth, including such information as locations of local food stamp offices, the local toll-free number, and extended office hours or online applications.
- **GRAPHICS:** Charts on local enrollment trends, participation, or numbers of people who are eligible, but not participating.



STEP 5 | IDENTIFY SPOKESPERSONS

OFFICIAL SPOKESPERSONS

Identify people whom the media can interview about the story. These may be local health experts, nutritionists, grocers, or human services providers. Be sure you have the full name, title, and contact information of these individuals readily available. Be sure that your spokespersons are approved by their organizations to speak to the media, and that they:

- Know the Food Stamp Program;
- Are available to appear on television or radio and to be interviewed by the print press;
- Are comfortable speaking to media;
- Are able to clearly communicate the point you want to get across;
- Can respond effectively to questions; and
- Will be considered credible, trustworthy sources of information by viewers or readers.

TESTIMONIALS

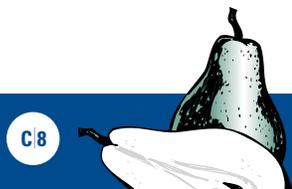
To add a human interest angle to the story, try to find people in your community who would be willing to share their food stamp benefits stories with the media and talk about how the support helped them get back on their feet. Speak to your partners to see if they can help identify someone like this.

Once someone has been selected, make sure the person is comfortable telling his or her story and has a positive experience to share. You will also need to confirm with the media outlet whether or not they have to use the true identity of the person giving the testimonial. A food stamp recipient may be uncomfortable using his or her name; some individuals might want to use an alias and others might want to just use their first name.

STEP 6 | CONTACT THE MEDIA

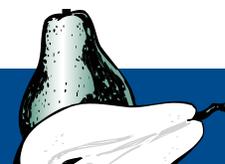
What are some helpful tips on contacting reporters?

- **Select the most appropriate reporters for your specific story.** Do not bombard reporters with story ideas that are not relevant to the reporter’s beat or specialty. For example, if you are pitching a story about the economic benefits of the Food Stamp Program, contact the reporter on your media list who covers the local economy.
- **Find out how reporters like to be contacted and respect their time.** Ask if a reporter prefers phone calls, e-mail, or news the old-fashioned way — by U.S. mail. Reporters may keep odd hours and juggle several assignments at once. Be respectful of their schedules and how they like to receive information. If you need to send out a press release or media advisory to a mass list rather than individual names, be sure to put e-mail addresses in the blind copy (bcc:) field to avoid sharing e-mail addresses with all the other recipients.



- **Review your talking points before you call reporters.** Have your ideas ready (see page F 3 for a pitch script sample) since most reporters are extremely busy and will give you only a minute or so to make your case before deciding if they are interested.
- **Make sure your e-mail subject line is descriptive but concise.** Include a short (about two paragraphs), catchy pitch along with your contact information. (See sample at the end of this section.) Make the reporter’s job as easy as possible by providing the most important information in the first paragraph. Include a link to the FSP web page (www.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/htm), as a reporter will often visit the web site for insight before calling back.
- **Avoid using all caps or excessive punctuation.** Reporters avoid anything that looks like unsolicited e-mail or “spam.” Avoid using attachments when contacting a reporter for the first time, as he or she may suspect the attachment of containing a computer virus. Copy and paste relevant text into the body of the e-mail.
- **Introduce yourself fully on phone calls.** Reference previous conversations, if applicable, to jog their memory as to who you are and why you’re calling. Ask whether it is a good time to talk. If they cannot talk, offer to call back later at their convenience. If they have time to talk, get to your point quickly and gauge their level of interest based on the response. If they are not interested, they will let you know.

TIMING YOUR OUTREACH		
TYPE OF OUTLETS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING
MONTHLIES	Monthly publications are typically magazines, often designed to appeal to a particular segment of the community. They are not as focused on time-sensitive news events, and are therefore good channels for communicating “big picture” stories and features.	Stories created for monthlies must often be written 3 to 6 months prior to publication date.
WEEKLIES	Weeklies can come in a magazine or newspaper format, and often are distributed free at grocery stores or other popular community locations.	Plan on contacting weeklies 2 to 6 weeks before you hope to see your story in print.
DAILIES	Dailies are defined as local newspapers that focus on breaking news, although they are also good outlets for in-depth features.	For feature stories, plan on contacting dailies 2 to 3 weeks before you hope to see your story in print.
BROADCAST	Broadcast outlets include television and radio. Broadcast news tends to provide live coverage of news events, and relies on images or audio sound bites to tell the story. Broadcast outlets can also be interested in longer stories, particularly for morning or community shows.	For feature-length stories, contact the producer of the segment you are pitching 2 to 3 weeks before you hope to see your story on the air.

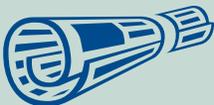


- **Be reliable.** Nothing will squelch a media relationship faster than a promise you cannot deliver. Do your best to get reporters what they need in advance of their deadlines. However, if you won't be able to come through, let them know as early as possible.
- **Follow up.** Although some reporters will provide coverage after one phone interview, that is frequently not enough. It is important to be in front of reporters on a consistent basis with compelling information that demonstrates what you are pitching is viable, credible, and worthy of coverage. Be sure to offer reporters the additional elements they would need to round out their stories — photos, web site information, toll-free numbers, listing of local food stamp offices, and additional resources, if necessary.
- **Know when to keep at it and when to let go.** No matter how passionate you are about a story, some reporters will never buy in. A good way to circumvent a quick “no” is to pitch by phone rather than e-mail (unless that is a reporter's preference). This will get you better results and allow you to build the relationships you need to ensure consistent success. When using the phone, leave one message only, and then continue to call at different times of the day until you are able to speak to the reporters. Once you have them on the line, it is much easier to make your case, as you can engage a reporter in a conversation and handle questions or objections as they arise.

WHAT ARE REPORTERS' DEADLINES?

PRINT:

Call a newsroom between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when reporters are most likely not in planning meetings or working against a 5 p.m. deadline.



TELEVISION:

Call assignment or planning editors after 10 a.m. and before 3 p.m., but not in the hour or so before a noon newscast. It's best to call the assignment desk after the morning planning meeting, which usually ends between 9:30 and 10 a.m.



RADIO:

Call early, around 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. After that, staff often has planning meetings, but you can start calling again after 10 a.m. News directors, reporters, and producers are often gone by the afternoon.



STEP 7 | EVALUATE

Reviewing and analyzing your media outreach allows you to determine whether you reached your goals and what did and didn't work. It also gives you an opportunity to share your success. The end result need not be an exhaustive report, just some information to help you track your efforts.

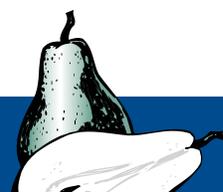
How can I chart our media outreach efforts?

- **Set goals before you begin** so that you have something to measure (for example, place one newspaper article or TV story about food stamp benefits, promote the local toll-free number, or increase inquiries about food stamps by 10 percent).
- **Establish a starting point** (known as a baseline), if possible. Take note of how many calls you are getting about food stamps, or how much media coverage you are receiving now. If you do this, you can quantify improvements and increases.
- **Begin your analysis as soon as possible** after your media push or event so that everything is fresh in your mind.
- **Use numbers to paint your success story:** “There was a 50-percent increase in media coverage compared to last year,” or, “After our appearance on the local radio show, calls about food stamp benefits increased by 20 percent.”
- **Use anecdotal evidence to show your success:** “Many clients remarked that they didn't think they would be eligible for food stamps until they saw the TV story.” In addition, use quotes from clients that support your success: “I was surprised to learn that I might still qualify for food stamps even though I have a job.”
- **Include information on the reach of a media outlet:** “An article ran in the Anytown News, which has a circulation of 80,000.” This information is usually available on the media outlet's web site.
- **Look at what is said in the media coverage you receive to determine whether you communicated your key points.** If you wanted to convey that every accommodation is being made to help elderly people apply for benefits, did that come across in your story?
- **Make copies of the newspaper articles that include your contributions.** Make sure they are well presented. Keep a file of media coverage that you can easily access.
- **Share articles with partners,** or incorporate articles in a presentation folder for potential partners.

How do I monitor for media coverage?

Following are some quick and easy ways to monitor coverage on a shoestring budget:

- Check the outlet's web site. Most searches are free for any time up to a week or month.
- If you submitted an announcement to a newsletter or bulletin, ask about distribution numbers, so you get a rough estimate of how many people read your message.
- If you know a TV story will air at a certain time, record the segment.
- To find out the circulation or audience numbers for newspapers and TV, check the outlet's web site. If you need to call to ask for this information, the advertising department will usually give it to you.



What are some additional media tracking resources?

- **U.S. Newspaper List:** A comprehensive list of State and local media outlets. Once on the site, click on your State and then city for shortcuts to your community papers and television stations. www.usnpl.com/
- **NewsIndex:** The web’s first news-only search engine; cost is \$20/month. www.newsindex.com/delivered.html
- **HandsNet:** Offers WebClipper, a reasonably priced service targeted at nonprofits and the human services community. <http://webclipper.handsnet.org/mt-static/>
- **NewzGroup:** Provides comprehensive statewide press clipping services of all daily and weekly newspapers in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Basic coverage is about \$100/month. <http://209.43.121.4/index.html>
- **Lexis-Nexis:** This is probably the most comprehensive online database of full-text news and magazine articles, but it is also among the most expensive of the available services. www.lexisnexis.com/
- **Google News:** A “beta” (test) offering at the time of this printing, this is a free search engine especially for news stories. <http://news.google.com/nwshp?hl=en+gl=us>

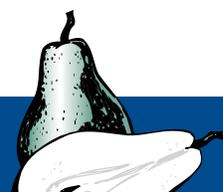
HOW DO I CREATE A FILE OF MEDIA COVERAGE?

1. **Locate** either an online or print copy of the story.
2. **Cut out** or print off the title of the publication (also known as the flag, logotype, or masthead).
3. **Make sure** the date and byline (reporter’s name) are included on the article. If one or the other is not included on the printed version, type the date and byline (sometimes the byline will be “Staff” or “Reuters”) on a separate piece of paper; cut it out.
4. **Lay the components out** on a white, blank piece of paper in the following order: flag, byline, date, and content.
5. **Tape the components** neatly onto your blank paper; make sure the edges are not folded.



10 TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE MEDIA OUTREACH

- 1 **Identify who you want to reach.** Who is your target audience? Do you want to reach all eligible nonparticipants, or do you want to focus on a specific audience, such as seniors or the Latino community?
- 2 **Determine the best way to reach them.** Does your target audience read community newspapers? Do they watch TV? What time of day are they watching TV? Do they listen to the radio? Make a list of the relevant media outlets and reporters.
- 3 **Set simple objectives.** What do you want to achieve through media outreach? For example, do you want to increase inquiries to the toll-free number, inform people about the nutrition benefits of food stamps?
- 4 **Think about the best timing for your story.** Does your news need to be released immediately? Would it be better to wait for a more opportune time such as after the holidays when people are struggling to make ends meet?
- 5 **Think about what you want to say.** Formulate the message that you want to communicate to your target audience, e.g., promote toll-free number, extended office hours, the nutrition benefits of food stamps.
- 6 **Think about ways to make your story interesting.** Can you get real-life testimonials from Food Stamp Program participants? Could a statewide story be tied into your pitch?
- 7 **Determine how you are going to communicate your message.** Will you simply call the reporter and provide background information? Do you need to put together a press release or host a press conference?
- 8 **Determine who is going to say it.** Do you have people lined up that reporters can speak to, like a food stamp office director, a food bank supervisor, or a nutritionist?
- 9 **Be targeted in your media outreach.** Your pitch will be more effective if you reach the right person. Spend some time reading, watching, and listening to the media outlets you will pitch and recent coverage by the reporter you will be contacting. How far in advance do you need to reach out? What time of day would work best? Do reporters prefer e-mail or a phone call?
- 10 **Evaluate your results.** Reviewing and analyzing your media outreach lets you know if you reached your goals and what did and did not work. Share your success with others!



CULTURAL COMPETENCY:
A DASH
OF DIVERSITY, A MEDLEY OF OUTREACH IDEAS



CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Section I. The Right Thing: The Importance of Effective Food Stamp Outreach Across Cultures

What Is Cultural Competence?

Cultural competence refers to how well people understand and interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Diversity means not only people of different nationalities, ethnic groups, and religious backgrounds, but also includes gender and age, people with disabilities, as well as the extent to which immigrants have integrated into mainstream American culture.

While there are many definitions of cultural competence, we have chosen to use the following as the foundation for this section of the Outreach Toolkit:

Cultural Competence

is the capacity of an individual or an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively and to convey information in a manner that is easily understood by and tailored for diverse audiences.

What Does This Section Hope To Accomplish?

This section of the toolkit provides suggestions and practical tips, planning tools, and real-life examples of how to make Food Stamp Program (FSP) outreach more culturally competent. It is not, however, intended to provide specific strategies and tactics for reaching individuals of distinct races, ethnicities, cultures, or other demographic groups.

Why Should Outreach Workers Care About Being Culturally Competent?

By using language and materials that are tailored for specific target groups, outreach workers improve communication with clients for better customer service. Ultimately, their jobs are easier, more productive, and more fulfilling. Culturally competent communication allows outreach workers to:

- Spend more time providing services and less time trying to clarify confusing or misunderstood information.
- Decrease the level of stress and anxiety for themselves and clients.
- Reduce the likelihood of errors on applications and other important paperwork.
- Increase the level of trust with clients and improve overall satisfaction with the FSP.



Why Is Cultural Competence Important for FSP Outreach?

The need to reach diverse audiences is greater now than ever before. The U.S. population is changing, and communities today are more racially, ethnically, culturally, and economically different. By the year 2030, the Census Bureau reports that 40 percent of the U.S. population will describe themselves as members of racial and ethnic groups other than non-Hispanic and White.

A recent report on participation rates by various demographic characteristics shows that more than half of all individuals receiving food stamps are non-White:

- More than 33 percent or one-third of participants are Black or African-American.
- Nineteen percent are Hispanic.
- Another 4 percent belong to other races or ethnic groups.

Still, not everyone who is eligible for food stamps takes part in the program. Participation among target populations continues to be low. This is especially true among Hispanics and the elderly:

- About 51 percent of the eligible Hispanic population participate in the FSP.
- Only 30 percent of the elderly who are eligible for the FSP actually participate.

What Are the Implications of Not Being Culturally Competent?

Given the current and projected demographic changes in the United States, outreach providers must take the Nation's increasingly diverse and complex backgrounds into account when conducting food stamp outreach in order to be effective in reaching as many eligible people as possible.

Outreach workers who are not culturally competent are less effective or successful when conducting outreach due to potential miscommunications and misunderstandings. A small amount of time invested up front in learning to communicate effectively with diverse groups, especially those groups that the office serves frequently, will pay off with more efficient time management, better customer relations, and improved participation in the FSP.

The FSP is a nutrition assistance program that enables families to supplement their food budget so that they can buy more healthful food, such as vegetables and fruits. A healthy diet and physical exercise are important. An increasing number of studies and reports, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People 2010 (www.healthypeople.gov), cite poor nutrition as a leading contributor to diseases that disproportionately affect minorities and low-income populations. Consider these other facts:

- Obesity among low-income Americans is linked to having limited or uncertain access to nutritious and safe foods.
- People living in rural areas are more likely to be older, poorer, and less healthy than people living in urban areas.
- Obesity continues to be higher for African-American and Mexican-American women than for non-Hispanic and White women.
- The prevalence of high blood pressure in African-Americans is among the highest in the world.



Myths About the Food Stamp Program

Myth: “I work every day. Food stamps are for people who are unemployed or who can’t work.”

Fact: Many food stamp users are employed full-time yet need extra help to afford more nutritious foods.

Myth: “I can’t buy the types of food my family eats with food stamps.”

Fact: Most grocery store chains and even some small specialty or “corner” stores and farmers markets accept food stamps. What’s most important is that there are very few foods that you cannot purchase with food stamps; examples of items that may not be purchased are alcohol, pet food, and hot, prepared foods.

Myth: “I refuse to be on welfare. Only welfare recipients receive food stamps.”

Fact: The FSP is a nutrition assistance program, which is not the same as welfare. Participants do not have to receive welfare to be eligible for food stamps.

Section II. Getting To Know Your Community: How To Conduct a Needs Assessment

What Is a Needs Assessment?

A needs assessment is the process of gathering and examining information to get a clearer and more accurate picture of an issue, challenge, or environment. In this case, the needs assessment will help you better understand the diverse community in which you want to conduct food stamp outreach. This information is gathered through a series of carefully crafted questions that will likely be asked of individuals inside and outside of your organization so that you can get a number of different opinions. The results can be presented as a formal report or an informal document—the key is to summarize the findings accurately.

Reaching Diverse Audiences: You Know You Are Being Effective When...

- Your staff reflects your client population, or target client population, in racial and cultural makeup and language.
- Your staff is aware of and demonstrates the behaviors, attitudes, and skills that enable them to work well across cultures.
- You work with organizations that are directly involved with the diverse communities you need to reach.
- You have relationships with ethnic or minority media in your community.
- Your outreach includes varied approaches to sharing information with individuals with disabilities.
- You use translation and interpretive services to meet the language needs of your clients.
- Print materials are easy to read and meet the sixth grade literacy level. Print materials include picture and symbol format, as needed.
- Materials are available in different formats, such as video and audiotape and enlarged print.



Why Is a Needs Assessment an Important Part of Food Stamp Program Community Outreach?

A needs assessment will help you better understand the challenges facing underserved communities and the barriers that potential clients face in applying for food stamps. It allows for a more indepth and unbiased look at the problem from a wide range of people. This information can provide new insights and answer questions you may have, such as:

- What do we know about the local needs for food stamp outreach?
- Are we reaching out to the neediest groups?
- Which organizations in our community are conducting food stamp outreach, what services do they provide, and how are these services funded?
- Do various groups understand who is eligible for food stamps?
- Which media are most credible among our target populations?
- How do we establish and maintain trust?
- How can we strengthen the effectiveness of current community outreach activities?
- Do our materials appeal to multicultural audiences?
- Are our materials in the appropriate languages? At the sixth grade reading level?
- Are we maximizing relationships with influential people and organizations to reach diverse communities?

Having the facts in hand enables you to set specific goals, develop tailored plans of action, and determine the best use of limited resources. Once you know and understand your audience, it is easier to develop strategies to reach them.

Reasons To Conduct a Needs Assessment

- To learn how other organizations, such as community-based groups or your local food stamp office, might support your outreach efforts.
- To get tried-and-true suggestions that worked with other programs.
- To get insight into what your target audience really thinks and believes about food stamps.
- To help set goals and measure success.
- To understand basic statistical and other information about the needs in your community and the gaps between services and needs in order to identify appropriate strategies to address them.



*How Do I Get Started?***STEP 1****CONFIRM/IDENTIFY THE COMMUNITY FOR WHICH YOU WANT TO CONDUCT THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT.**

Through your day-to-day activities, you may have a clear understanding of the population in your community.

If you are new to your position and are not sure which groups to reach, there are many sources that can help you create profiles of key populations in your area to identify which group(s) you want to conduct the needs assessment on, starting with your State FSP agency and your city's web site.

How To Identify the Community You Want To Reach

Start with your State FSP agency. They may have population profiles of your community. You can find your State FSP agency at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/contact_infolstate-contacts.htm.

Other sources include:

- The Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov>)
- The U.S. Department of Labor (<http://www.dol.gov>)

When using demographic information or statistics, be mindful that numbers change. Check yearly or frequently for updates.

- Visit your city's web site. Here, you'll likely find demographic information on the racial and ethnic groups in your community and average household incomes. If it's not readily available on the web site, make a few quick phone calls to city agencies requesting the data you want.
- Contact your city's Office on Aging. The Office on Aging should be able to help identify the number of low-income seniors in your community, along with ZIP Code data on where they might reside.
- Contact the local department of education to request schools in your community where large numbers of students receive free or reduced-price lunches. In many cases, they can also provide a profile of the students—their racial/ethnic backgrounds and languages that are spoken.

Could This Happen at Your Organization?

Real life Stories of Culturally Incompetent Interactions.

Ms. G. speaks very little English. She knows she could qualify for social services, such as food stamps and WIC, but finds it very difficult to communicate over the telephone, and is frustrated when she shows up in person because she usually must wait until the only bilingual person in the office is free to assist her. Thus, Ms. G. has to ask a friend or one of her older children to make the call or go with her to the office.

A fixed appointment with a bilingual person is one way to help someone like Ms. G. This way she would avoid long waits, which are often difficult when coordinating schedules with others. The office could also arrange to have its bilingual staff person call Ms. G at home at a scheduled time. This is an opportunity to review the application and identify documents Ms. G would need to provide.



- Contact the local health department and department of social services. Because both of these agencies have specific programs for low-income residents, they can also provide information on underserved groups in your community—where they reside and programs are already in place to serve them.
- Contact your local United Way, whose mission is to help identify community needs and provide funding to support these efforts. The United Way may be willing to share research and other data that it has collected from and about local groups.
- Contact professors or research institutes in local colleges and universities that may be collecting data or conducting research with your target population.

After compiling this information, a careful review should help you confirm the community/communities you want to assess and reach out to.

STEP 2 | REVIEW WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW.

After choosing the population you want to reach, you may find that you already know something about how to reach them with information about the FSP. In fact, you may be aware of many possible solutions. But it's important to go through the process. Ask yourself:

- What other organizations have similar goals and might be willing to work with us to address this need? Don't forget to include your local food stamp office.
- What resources (staff, in-language support, materials) do we have but may not be fully using?
 - Has any research been conducted that highlights effective ways of reaching the target population within the community? Can we rely on other work to give us insight and answers?

You may wish to have more than one person in your organization complete the questions to get different opinions and a range of responses.

STEP 3 | DRAFT THE QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ASK.

Asking the right questions is the key to getting the information for your needs assessment. Accurate information helps you develop the most effective and culturally competent outreach plan. This is an important step, so

take your time to think broadly about the type of information you need. You may want to invite other groups to join you, including members of the communities you wish to target and representatives from culturally specific organizations, to help draft or to review your list of questions. Ask if someone has already done a needs assessment—you may want to build upon their model. While your questions may be tailored to meet local needs, the following list of questions can act as a guide.



Questions To Get the Ball Rolling on a Needs Assessment

1. Which group(s) are you most interested in reaching and why?

2. How many food stamp offices are in your area? Where are they located, and does the location pose a potential barrier (e.g., is it accessible by public transportation)?

3. Are there any linguistic or cultural barriers that prevent individuals from participating in the FSP? What community resources are available to help minimize these barriers?

4. What is happening with your outreach efforts vs. what you would like to happen?

5. What groups are already successfully reaching the population you want to access?

6. Which of their initiatives have been particularly effective and why?



7. Where does the majority of the target population live? Are they clustered in one area or spread out?

8. What local organizations and individuals have the greatest influence with the population?

9. Do the grocers/farmers markets they patronize accept food stamps? Are they served by public transportation?

10. Is public transportation easily accessible in their community? Do public transportation routes reach the local food stamp office and grocery stores? If no, how do people access the FSP and grocery stores?

11. Are there existing community events and activities that attract the people you're interested in reaching? Is there a Diabetes Support Group meeting nearby? Is there an annual Cinco de Mayo celebration coming up? What events or activities are popular with your target group?

12. What media outlets does this group prefer?



13. Is the “word on the street” about food stamps positive or negative? What are the positives and negatives?
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-
-
-
14. What types of partnerships would help achieve the outreach objectives?
-
-
-
-
15. Would these partners be able and willing to provide volunteer outreach workers? If yes, what services will the volunteers provide; what type of training will they need; and how often will they be available?
-
-
-
-
16. What outreach activities might motivate your audiences to seek more information?
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-
-
-
17. How can media and community channels be used most effectively?
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-
-
-
18. Are there any other barriers that prevent potentially eligible individuals of this community from enrolling in the FSP? What are the barriers? What can your organization do to help eliminate the barriers?
-
-
-
-

Could This Happen at Your Organization?

Real life Stories of Culturally Incompetent Interactions.

Mr. M. is an independent, 23-year-old young man with a hearing impairment who uses sign language. He also participates in the Food Stamp Program. He is able to communicate effectively in most day-to-day situations, but one of his parents or an interpreter usually goes with him on appointments to the doctor, or the Medicaid or Food Stamp Program office, because staff cannot communicate with him. Recently, he had an appointment at the Food Stamp Program office, but work emergencies prohibited either parent from accompanying him. To make matters worse, it was too late to get an interpreter. Mr. M arrived at the office during an extremely busy time—several clients were already waiting for assistance. Realizing that an interpreter was not available and believing that helping Mr. M would be a lengthy process, the staff immediately brushed him off and asked him to come back later when an interpreter was available.

Unfortunately, no one took the time to ask if Mr. M was comfortable communicating in writing, which he was. Sometimes people assume that individuals with physical disabilities are also developmentally delayed or have limited literacy skills. In addition, if an outreach worker had taken the time to ask if there was someone they could call to help interpret, Mr. T would not have had to make another trip. The night before, he had role-played with his parents on how best to respond to any communication problems. Therefore, a quick telephone call to either parent would have enabled Mr. T to get the information he needed.



STEP 4 | IDENTIFY WHOM YOU ARE GOING TO TALK TO.

Once you've created a profile of the group(s) you intend to target and gathered the necessary background information, it's time to speak directly to individuals in the "field." It's these "primary sources" that will help you fine-tune your outreach strategies, avoid potential pitfalls and, hopefully, provide ongoing support. While there are a wide range of people who can participate in the needs assessment, you will want to identify those who will provide the most useful information. Once you've identified the people you want to talk to, revisit the questions to make sure they are appropriate for each group. You may need to reword some questions or eliminate one or two for a specific group.

Examples of influential people:

- Religious leaders
- Representatives of faith-based and community-based organizations
- Business leaders
- Doctors, nurses, and nutrition educators
- State or County food stamp workers
- City, County, State, or Federal workers
- Elected officials at the State and community level
- Schools, teachers, and coaches
- Leaders of age- or race-based or culturally specific organizations that advocate for those groups
- Current food stamp participants
- Opinion/trusted leaders in the identified communities such as promotoras
- People in the community you want to reach, including potentially eligible nonparticipants



STEP 5 | DECIDE HOW YOU WILL COLLECT INFORMATION.

Some common and effective methods for gathering information include:

- **One-on-one interviews** with influential community members. These are useful if you are working with a small budget and are already knowledgeable in the area.
- **Written questionnaires** conducted with influential community members and members of the community at large. While it might be a little more time-consuming to collect and tabulate the data, there are online tools, such as www.surveymonkey.com, that make drafting a well-crafted research instrument easy for the beginner and experienced researcher alike. Graduate students in survey research courses may be willing to help you design, collect, and/or analyze information. Establish relationships with professors in local colleges and universities who could help you with this project.

Additional Techniques for a More Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Your organization's resources will likely dictate the complexity of your needs assessment. With additional staffing and budget, focus groups and/or literature reviews can help fill in remaining information gaps. If you have the budget but not the time, market research firms can help you; www.greenbook.org provides an extensive listing of market research firms.

- **Focus Groups.** These are sessions held with small groups of the target audience. A facilitator, who speaks the same language as the participants, will ask specific questions and the responses will be recorded for later analysis. However, getting individuals to participate in a focus group can take time and may require some sort of incentive for participation, such as meals, transportation costs, or childcare expenses. Your partners can play an important role in helping you stay within your budget by locating facilitators and focus group participants. Focus groups with current participants and eligible nonparticipants can help you get a sense of what community members know and feel about the FSP, as well as resources, barriers, and possible solutions. With current FSP participants, you can explore their motivations for enrolling and where they received information about the program. In contrast, potential participants may be able to share what they've heard about food stamps, any concerns they have, and outreach methods that might be effective.
- **Literature Review.** Review existing research about the population of interest and their behaviors, habits, or preferences as they relate to nutrition and/or nutrition programs. The reference desk at your public library may conduct a search for you—free or for very little cost. Of course, many of the documents you're looking for may be found online. Another idea is to seek volunteers at your local university. Often graduate students are looking for research projects to enhance their coursework or gain real-world experience. Another good starting point is the bibliography at the end of this section.



Tips for Maintaining Relationships With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Partners

- Share information and resources that could support one another's efforts.
- Recognize and respect cultural differences in expressing opinions and in the decisionmaking process.
- Be flexible. Meeting times and locations may need to support childcare arrangements and/or attendance by family members or children.
- Rotate meetings to visit groups located in ethnic and rural communities.
- Be sensitive to the fact that the level of formality associated with meetings, meeting times, conference calls, or other group endeavors may reflect differences in racial, ethnic, or cultural habits, customs, and traditions.
- If hosting meetings, be prepared to provide interpretation and translation services for participants with limited English proficiency or who need accommodations due to disability.
- If chairing a committee, consider including a food stamp participant representing each of the diverse communities you want to reach.

Free or Low-Cost Sources of Information

- Local food stamp office or State food stamp agency
- Local or college library
- Local Census Bureau or Census Bureau web site (www.census.gov)
- City/County/State health department web sites and community clinics
- Local United Way or other community funding sources
- Professors in local colleges and universities who conduct research with your target population
- Race-, ethnic-, and/or culturally specific business associations
- Race-, ethnic-, culture-, disability-, and hunger-related advocacy groups



Regardless of the methods you use, the most important part is to listen and respect the insights of people who have access to and understand the populations you want to reach. In the end, your needs assessment will not only ring with a richness that only a diverse, multifaceted group can provide, but will also provide a blueprint for enhancing culturally competent food stamp outreach.

Thinking of Forming a Community Coalition?

Where To Look for Members

- ▶ The Food and Nutrition Service’s Office of Research, Nutrition, and Analysis (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/research.htm>)

Section III. The Right Messengers: Breaking Down Barriers With Community Partners

How Can Community Partners Help Us Reach Diverse Audiences?

One of the key elements of reaching out to diverse audiences about the benefits of the FSP is working with your community partners. Outreach providers who reach diverse groups must extend their reach beyond the walls of their own organizations to other programs with similar missions and services.

Community partners can offer substantive and long-lasting benefits to your organization and to the health of the community. They can:

- Provide cultural perspectives.
- Bring credibility to your efforts.
- Bring expertise in working with the groups you want to target. For instance, they may have knowledge of health and nutrition beliefs and practices, and preferred sources of information and distribution channels.
- Offer help with providing translation and interpretive services or allowing your organization to conduct FSP prescreening at their offices.
- Bring community resources to support your efforts; for example, access to media, community opinion leaders, or financial and/or in-kind support for costly services such as translation and interpretive assistance.
- Discuss new ways of doing business.
- Assist in efforts to select focus group participants or “pretest” materials (see Section IV, The Right Materials for Diverse Audiences).



Could This Happen at Your Organization?

Real life Stories of Culturally Incompetent Interactions.

Ms. B. takes great pride in her appearance and frequently receives compliments on her choice of clothing and jewelry. On this day, Ms. B walks into the Food Stamp Office to apply for benefits. She sits down with a caseworker who immediately compliments Ms. B on her outfit. The caseworker goes on to remark how she can't believe someone so well-dressed would need food stamps. Although Ms. B finished her appointment, she left feeling insulted. She could not believe that anyone, especially a caseworker, would stereotype the way food stamp recipients dress. The next day, Ms. B. called the county grievance office to lodge a complaint.

There's an old adage that's well known but not practiced nearly enough: "Don't judge a book by its cover." Always avoid making assumptions or snap judgments about people based on outward appearance, or even a few moments of conversation. The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs, including FSP outreach activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability. In this scenario, the caseworker should have refrained from making remarks related to Ms. B's outfit or outward appearance. In Ms. B's case, this was not only a wrong assumption, but one based on stereotypes about race and income. Instead, the case worker should have followed the federally mandated guidelines for outreach as outlined by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

Lastly, some community partners can become ambassadors for your organization within the target communities. Those partners who will be most effective at conveying your program messages will be ones who are already trusted messengers within those communities.

How Do I Identify Community Partners?

STEP 1 | ASSESS THE GAPS IN YOUR PROGRAM.

Are you in regular contact with anyone who works with or has ties to the communities you need to reach? If not, then you'll want to look specifically for partners who are linked to those communities.

STEP 2 | ASK YOUR COLLEAGUES.

Some names of community partners may surface through the needs assessment process. In addition, coworkers, food stamp workers, advisory groups, board members, or other professional colleagues, particularly ones who work with the communities you want to target or are focused on access to health and nutrition information, are good sources for information about possible partners.

STEP 3 | DON'T FORGET YOUR CLIENTS.

Your food stamp clients can be the best source for identifying good community partners. Informally poll several clients about whom they trust for information about issues that matter in the community and, more specifically, about issues such as health and nutrition.

STEP 4 | BROADEN YOUR THINKING.

You'll want to make sure that you are not limiting your potential partnership pool to those organizations or individuals you know or with whom your organization has had a previous relationship. Other reliable sources to check for suitable partners include:



- Internet, including news search engines to see what organizations are quoted in the media
- Nonprofit or charity directories (available at your local library)
- Community and faith-based organizations
- United Way
- Schools
- Local age-, cultural-, or ethnic-specific businesses or professional organizations, such as local Office on Aging; local Office of Asian and Pacific Islanders; or local in-language newspapers (most staff speak English)

“Community-based organizations can ask partners, such as local or State food stamp agencies, to help develop, copy, or print materials.”

More on identifying valuable community partners can be found in the Partnership section of the Food Stamp Program Outreach Toolkit:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/partners/4_partners_partnerships.pdf
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/office/4_offices_partnerships.pdf

How Do I Reach Out to Community Partners?

- Send a letter to potential partners to introduce yourself and your program. For a sample partner letter, see page B 14. Acknowledge their work in the community, and identify the specific audience you need to reach. State your desire to discuss how you might work together. Make sure to include what you want them to respond to or your planned followup to the correspondence.
 “Please call me if you are interested in discussing how we might work together...” or,
 “I will call you next week to discuss how we might work together....”
- Telephone potential partners and schedule a convenient time to discuss your suggestions and requests.
- If the potential partner is referred by a colleague, ask him or her to facilitate an introduction.

What Is the Difference Between a Partnership and a Coalition, and What Can One Do That the Other Cannot?

There is strength in numbers. Sometimes that strength lies with just two or three people and other times it comes with 10 or 12. A partnership – typically defined as two or three individuals or organizations coming together to work toward a common goal – is ideal for many organizations. Partnerships are more likely than coalitions to include members who are of like mind and mission. They tend to be much easier to manage. Finally, they reach decisions more quickly and are more likely to stay on point and focused toward reaching a single goal. On the other hand, because of the limited number of individuals, a partnership may not offer a broad representation of ideas. Depending on the project, the workload could be quite heavy.



“ Among diverse populations, surveys consistently reveal that word of mouth, phone calls, or face-to-face communication are the most desired forms of communication. ”

Because coalitions are more structured and tend to meet more regularly, there's a greater opportunity to share ideas, lessons, and resources. Because coalitions often function as work groups, you are also more likely to get in on the ground floor when planning culturally specific activities and events.

Challenges in Working With Coalition Partners

Anytime you are working with a large group, there are bound to be challenges. While the benefits of coalitions certainly outweigh the negatives, you should be aware of the following:

- Larger, better-funded organizations tend to have more experience conducting meetings and outreach and may talk more than those with less experience. Make an effort to engage everyone equally and focus on your topic and goals to maintain control of your meetings.
- People may have had previous bad experiences with other members of the coalition. Encourage participants to focus on the business issues being discussed rather than personal issues.
- Group decisionmaking may require a longer approval process. Propose and agree on an approach for achieving consensus.
- You may have to compromise on some issues. Determine which issues or positions you are willing to compromise on before negotiations.
- Additional workload, meetings, and outside activities can be time-consuming. Consider the members' time and interests when organizing events.



Ways To Ensure Outreach Materials Are Appropriate

Materials Are Culturally Competent When They...

- Show respect for the cultural values, beliefs, and practices of the intended audiences both in content and graphics.
- Contain straightforward messages and are free from idioms, clichés, and colloquialisms that the intended audience may not be familiar with or understand.
- Convey the intended concept in a manner that is meaningful to the target audience. Some words or ideas are more difficult than others to get across, especially in translation. For instance, in other languages the concept of food stamps must be conveyed, rather than translating the actual words. Use your community partners or a translation service, if needed, to make sure that the message you are trying to convey is on target.
- Do not lay blame or use guilt or negative stereotypes to get the point across.
- Are readily available in the preferred language or medium of the target audience.
- If appropriate, use pictures and symbols to simplify messages for low-literate audiences.
- Use large and/or bold type for seniors or people who are visually impaired.
- Depict the family and community as primary systems of support and intervention. To achieve greater efficiency, use pictures of persons and families that reflect the community you are trying to reach. If you are depicting activities, illustrate an activity that your target group is familiar with and enjoys.

In general, organizations that make ideal partners are ones that have been in the community for a while, providing services or offering programs to similar populations. Selecting appropriate partners is important as it improves the likelihood that there will be shared vision, as well as desire and appreciation for ensuring cultural and linguistic competence and success.

What Groups or Individuals Should I Consider for Potential Partners?

The needs assessment process should provide guidance here, as well as the Partnership section of the Food Stamp Outreach Toolkit. Consider:

- Local food stamp office or State food stamp agency
- Schools or colleges
- Fraternities and sororities
- Disease-specific organizations or age-specific organizations at senior centers



- Faith communities. Many religious institutions have specific programs designed to meet community needs, such as health-related ministries, soup kitchens, or senior services.
- Community-based organizations, such as the local job training center, adult education and/or English as a Second Language program, health clinic or recreation center
- Local or national ethnic/minority media outlets including in-language cable television and radio
- Ethnic business associations, such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Black Chamber of Commerce

Promising Practices/Examples of Partnerships

Partnerships can be extremely effective, even among groups that don't agree on some issues; our common points are far more numerous and powerful than our differences.

Larry Goolsby, American Public Human Services Association

We have quite a few helpful volunteers from local credit unions. Their customer service skills are great, and they're used to helping people complete applications.

Teresa Kunze, FNS Outreach Grantee

Catholic Charities of Wichita, Kansas

Faith-based groups sometimes get church volunteers to go door-to-door talking to those they imagine could use a service or program.

Jean Beil, Catholic Charities USA

Tips for Success When Working With Minority Media

- Use statistics about the FSP that are relevant to your target audience.
- Be prepared with FSP information and other supporting materials. Minority media often work with much smaller staffs and may ask you to provide photographs and background materials.
- Check with each media outlet on whether or not they need information in English or translated. Some will translate for you, but not always.
- Identify and offer culturally appropriate spokespersons, including community leaders and trusted people such as religious leaders. Don't forget about the director of your local food stamp office.
- Include tips and educational information about how to use the program.



We partner with the traditional organizations, like senior centers. But we also work with grocery stores and apartment complex managers. We make it a priority to free up our outreach workers so they can attend community meetings, whenever they happen.

*Ana Paguaga, FNS Outreach Grantee
Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries, Waterbury, CT*

Give partnerships a chance to work; invest time to develop trust.

*Nicole Christensen, FNS Outreach Grantee
Food Change, New York City*

Fostering of partnerships is difficult, however, vitally important. Partnerships are beneficial for agencies, especially to underserved populations and community organizations that work with these populations. As for Vietnamese Social Services, it has a positive effect and brings growth to our Somali, Vietnamese, and Burmese immigrants and refugees.

*Thao Dao, FNS Outreach Grantee
Vietnamese Social Services*

The best tool is the power of the relationship.

*Jose Humphreys
Esperanza USA*

Section IV. The Right Materials for Diverse Audiences

How Are Materials Important in Food Stamp Program Outreach?

Once you have identified your target audience and have community partners on board to help you, one of the next steps is to make sure you have the materials to conduct outreach. Your materials must tell the story—that there is a program that can help individuals and their families with their unique nutrition needs.

What Culturally Competent Materials Already Exist?

A wealth of translated FSP information—from forms and brochures, to flyers and fact sheets—is available on the FNS web site. To view translations and to print out the materials, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm>. Also, be sure to check out your local food stamp office to see what materials are available.



How Do I Go About Creating My Own Culturally Competent Materials?

Materials should be tailored to reflect the demographics and cultural backgrounds of the intended audience. This should be evident in how they look, what they say, and the manner in which actions and people are depicted. As a rule of thumb, keep information simple and be sure to provide a description of the program, how to get it, where to ask for help, and where to use the benefits.

Is There a Way To Test Materials To Make Sure They Are Culturally Competent Before I Use Resources for Reproduction and Distribution?

Yes. That's where your community partners can help! Call on their expertise and ask them to review draft materials and point out areas that could be problematic given the intended audience. Also, partners can assist by helping to assemble small groups of the intended audience to test materials for unbiased feedback. This may seem a bit time-consuming on the front end, but it can go a long way in mitigating costs associated with "fixing" inappropriate materials later on. Keep in mind that some feedback about the materials may have more to do with preferences than possible barriers. For example, while paper quality or brochure colors are important considerations, your goal in testing for cultural competence is to identify wording, graphics, or other content that could be a barrier to someone understanding or taking part in your program.

How Can I Find Good, Reliable Translation Services on a Shoe-String Budget?

If you are trying to reach a certain segment of the population because of their predominance in the community and need for service, chances are other organizations and programs are, too. Local universities and colleges, community partners, and other neighborhood programs and services are all good resources for obtaining low-cost translation and interpretive services.

What Is the Best Way To Ensure That My Materials Reach the Intended Audience?

The importance of the mode of delivery cannot be overstated when communicating health messages to certain audiences. Through your needs assessment, you identified trusted messengers or sources of information about food and nutrition. In your community, these sources could be peers, elders, spiritual leaders, business leaders, or medical professionals. They can help distribute materials or steer you toward appropriate distribution points. Grassroots outreach through faith-based organizations may also play a critical role in reaching intended audiences, particularly in African-American, Asian, and Hispanic communities, where churches and related organizations often play a central role.

Knowing the preferred language will help you decide whether or not to *transcreate* or adapt your materials or to provide information in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, or video.



What Are Some Other Ways of Reaching My Target Audience?

Don't rely solely on written materials to get the word out! Printed materials are the least preferred mode of communication—and that goes for most Americans today. Among diverse populations, surveys consistently reveal that word of mouth, phone calls, or face-to-face and peer-to-peer communications are the most desired forms of communication. Consider asking volunteers from partnering organizations to help spread the word. Public service announcements (PSAs) are another way to get free publicity for your program. Most stations will run a select number of PSAs at no cost; however, there is stiff competition for airtime. There is no guarantee that your ad will be chosen and, if it is, that it will air during a time when your target audience(s) is listening or watching. Generally, paid advertisements are run during the most desirable time slots.

- By participating in community events, such as health fairs, supermarket openings, or anniversary promotions, your chances of reaching large numbers of people are pretty good. But you'll still need to check beforehand to make sure that the event reaches the population you want to connect with, and that it is usually well-attended and conducive to disseminating food stamp information. A block party or festival with loud music might be popular with the intended audience and well-attended, but at the end of the day, you'll probably find most of your materials on the ground or in the trash. Look to your community partners, clients, and even event organizers for help to identify the most worthwhile events.
- Another way to personally touch clients and individuals who are potentially eligible for food stamps is by using the promotora model. Promotora, the Spanish word for "promoter," is a model for outreach that uses a lay worker who lives in the targeted community to educate residents. Their expertise? The knowledge they have of the community rather than their formal education, and the established level of trust they have with residents—something an "outsider" would have difficulty gaining—coupled with some basic training in a specific health issue or food stamp outreach. The promotora model can use both male and female outreach workers, depending on the target population, and can be successful in reaching all minority communities, particularly immigrants.

Could This Happen at Your Organization?

Real life Stories of Culturally Incompetent Interactions.

For the past 2 years at the Henson Community Health Fair, Maria has talked with Mr. Williams, who stops by her table with his son to talk about the Food Stamp Program and whether or not she thinks he might be eligible. Each year, Maria invites Mr. Williams to have a seat at her table, where she gives him an application and asks him to read and complete it to get the process started. But Mr. Williams says he's in a hurry--his son has football practice--and that he doesn't have time to do it right here, but that he'll fill it out at home and mail it back to the office in the next few days. Maria never hears back from Mr. Williams, that is, until the next year's health fair where he hangs around her table asking for the same information.

Reluctance in filling out paperwork or signing documents can be a sign that an individual may have difficulties with reading, writing, or comprehension. This can be hard to spot because often they will go to great lengths to avoid the embarrassment of asking for assistance. For instance, Mr. Williams was trying to find out as much information as he could without having to read anything, and he had a good excuse for not filling out the application onsite, where his problem might have become apparent. Some people even carry around newspapers and magazines to throw off anyone who might be suspicious.

To help the individual, and most importantly avoid causing embarrassment, outreach workers can acknowledge that the process can get overwhelming and offer to go over a brochure with the person—point by point—or read through the application—question by question—and write the answers, if necessary. This presents a win-win situation—it meets the goals of both the outreach worker and the individual, in an efficient, professional, and respectful manner.



Section V. Getting to the Root of It: How To Work With Minority Media

What Are Minority Media?

Today there is an abundance of media outlets that specifically target one or more ethnic populations, races of people, or age groups. Local demographics typically will drive the need for and preponderance of minority media in a given geographic area. In the case of media that target African-Americans and Hispanics, there are well-established outlets in most big cities and urban areas across the country. Asian media are emerging in those same areas, as well. Building relationships with media that specifically target your audience can be important to communicating the benefits of the FSP.

Why Is it Important To Use Minority Media?

Minority media are another trusted messenger for reaching diverse audiences about the FSP. Minority media highlight news and events of particular importance to their audience. In addition, in-language media provide an invaluable service for those who do not speak English. Further, minority media personalities tend to be well-respected and credible sources on issues that affect their community. Minority media are also more likely to use public service advertising and news that target their audience. Topics concerning health and education are of primary importance for the audience as well as the media.

I Know Radio and Television Are Popular Media, but What About Newspapers and Magazines?

Print outlets, like newspapers and magazines, are still a very popular medium for older people across all racial and ethnic groups. For some cultures, newspapers are also a link to the community and to the country of origin and serve as a resource guide. Print also allows for further explanation of topics that cannot be fully covered on radio or television.

How Should Facts and Figures Be Presented to Minority and Targeted Media?

It's okay to use statistics, but do not rely on facts and figures alone to tell your story. Prove your story's relevance to your target audience. Make sure your statistics and data focus on the target audience, as well. Keep in mind that sources and spokespeople should be credible with groups you are trying to reach. If possible, bring statements from community leaders as testimonials for your story and consider including real-life examples of how the program can be used.

Beyond Sending Out Materials Regularly to Media, How Else Can I Build Relationships With Minority Media in My Area?

You may find that editors and staff at many minority media outlets are actively involved in the community and sit on numerous committees and local boards. In short, they make great advocates for your organization beyond today's story.

How Can I Find the Minority Media in My Area?

To ensure that your media contact list is up-to-date on minority or targeted media in your area, go to your local library or check online for media directories, such as Bacon's, or do a general Internet search. It's also worthwhile to go into the communities you want to reach and check out what free papers are available—ethnic supermarkets and restaurants are a good place to pick up a few—or visit a local newsstand for a broad range of local media. Chambers of Commerce may also have information about local media.



Steps for Working With Minority Media

STEP 1 | IDENTIFY MEDIA OUTLETS

Outlets should be those with readers or listeners who represent your target audience.

STEP 2 | UNDERSTAND WHAT IS NEWSWORTHY

Stories that are newsworthy to minority media will have a sense of immediacy and offer fresh, new information that will impact their audience's lives.

STEP 3 | DEVELOP STORY ANGLES

One story can be presented from different perspectives, which will make it more appealing to the media and their audiences.

STEP 4 | PITCH YOUR STORY TO REPORTERS

Decide how best to present your story—in a press release or letter. For examples of both, look at the Outreach Toolkit at:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/partners/4_partners_partnerships.pdf.

STEP 5 | FOLLOW UP!

This is an important step to getting your story covered in mainstream or minority media given the amount of information most media outlets receive and the ever decreasing number of reporters available to cover stories.

Kernels of Wisdom:

I participate on a weekly talk show for the Haitian community. It's a 20-minute question- and-answer, call-in show that has a cultural theme each week. My job is to tie that theme into a nutrition-focused topic.

Food Stamp Outreach Grantee

We cover everything that affects and benefits the Hispanic community. We are always interested in initiatives that benefit the Hispanic community. Personally, I prefer receiving information via e-mail. And we always appreciate good quality photos.

Mary Aviles, Hispanic editor, EFE News Service (national news agency)



Recently, we've been covering stories about how Hispanics are the minority group that's been able to overcome poverty the fastest, according to studies. I think there needs to be more education on the program. There are families that qualify for food stamps, and yet don't take advantage of it. Others don't take advantage of their right because they're scared they'd draw criticism and that they'd be labeled as lazy and as irresponsibly having too many kids.

Jose Carrera, El Dia (Houston)

Our biggest pet peeve is old news. We also don't like it when we are given little time before an event. We value information that affects the Hispanic community: education, crime, etc. Sometimes we get information that is unrelated to Chicago or to Hispanics.

Arely Padilla, reporter, La Raza (Chicago)

Almost all our reporters are native Chinese speakers, and some may not speak English well or at all. Therefore, we prefer translated, in-language fact sheets and releases.

Emerson Chu, Southern Chinese Daily News (Houston)

If organizations have big presence in our communities, then we are more likely to cover news about that organization. By participating in our events and supporting our communities, they will appear credible, trustworthy, and recognizable in our particular ethnic community. Consequently, our community will be more interested in their news.

Yunju Choi, News Korea (Dallas)

A story doesn't have to apply exclusively to Asian communities to be relevant to our publications. It can be a story that affects populations regardless of ethnicity, but if it is somehow relevant to our ethnic communities, our readers may well be interested.

Abelardo Mogica, Philippine Mabuhay News (National City)

While we cover news that is relevant to the Asian community, we prefer to get news that is specifically relevant to our target nationality group. As a Japanese publication, our ideal news relates to the Japanese population specifically.

Jacob Marolies, Yomiuri Shimbun, (New York City)



Section VI. Culturally Competent + Customer Service: Two Peas in a Pod

The focus of this toolkit is on outreach, but really that is only the first step in ensuring that more diverse audiences participate in the FSP. Outreach efforts can be undone in a matter of seconds with a negative encounter at the first point of contact with the FSP. If individuals or families are met with insensitivity, lack of courtesy and respect, bias, or even discrimination, we may lose a potential participant.

After a negative encounter, clients may experience:

- Feelings of being unwelcome, unwanted, and not valued
- Fear of further contact with the office or agency
- Fear that complaining about negative experiences with staff will compromise service or benefits
- Anger, frustration, and insult. Thus, they may refuse to initiate further contact.
- Confusion about completing paperwork, following instructions or next steps because clients did not understand acronyms used by an eligibility worker.

After a negative encounter, organizations may experience:

- Loss in time and resources due to missed appointments or errors on paperwork
- Loss of clients due to negative first impressions or word-of-mouth
- Frustrated staff due to lack of training and knowledge of appropriate ways to handle certain situations
- Possible filing of a grievance or report of discrimination based on a bad experience with a first point of contact

Steps for Being Culturally Sensitive in the Application Process

- Support and obtain professional development and training for frontline and eligibility staff on diversity and cultural and linguistic competence. Share articles and other materials that will help in this effort.
- Emphasize customer service and courtesy. Accurate information should be provided in a respectful and timely manner.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of outside resources that may exist, and how and when it is appropriate to access those resources.
- Develop written guidelines for handling situations that are procedural in nature, such as accessing TTY or language-line services and interpreters.



- Train and retrain frontline workers on your agency’s policies and procedures regarding communication issues, such as serving individuals who speak little or no English.
- Identify bilingual staff or those who have an affinity with other cultures in your agency who can make a connection with individuals whose primary language is not English.
- Train and retrain frontline workers on how to serve individuals who have special communication challenges, such as a limited literacy level.
- Do not assume that supervisors are knowledgeable about the behaviors, attitudes, and skill sets necessary to work effectively with diverse populations. They may also need training.
- Consider cross-training with an organization that can teach you about a specific culture. In return, you can teach them about the food stamp application process so they can relay this information to their constituents.

Quick Tips for Communicating With Clients and Families

At the heart of cultural competence is learning to communicate effectively with individuals and their families. Here are a few tried and true suggestions:

- When working with people different from yourself, it’s important to put your own personal biases aside. Keep an open mind and don’t jump to conclusions. Because a person speaks with an accent does not mean they are not a native-born citizen. Take time to learn about the person you are speaking with, which demonstrates respect and an understanding of cultural competency.
- Establish rapport. In many cultures, it is important to establish some type of relationship before discussing business. Taking a few extra moments to ask questions and learn more about an individual and his/her family often makes an enormous difference in the long run.
- While developing rapport, refrain from discussing topics, such as personal relationships, or behaviors that may be misinterpreted. As a practice, avoid making jokes or displaying questionable posters or artwork in your office or workspace.
- If you don’t know what their native language is, use the “I Speak” document available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm>, which lists, in 34 different languages, the words “I Speak.” Give this document to your clients so they can point out for you which language they speak when they spot it.
- Respect personal space. When you first meet with potential clients, ask them to sit where they feel the most comfortable. This will allow people to choose the personal distance that makes them most comfortable. Similarly, refrain from casually tapping or touching someone, which in some cultures can be perceived as being too familiar.
- Identify the decisionmaker. Find out who the influential parties are and how they make decisions.



It may be important to ask, “Do you want to discuss the FSP with other members of your family?”

- Send a message through children but do not use children as interpreters. For many parents who don’t speak English well, their children often serve as conduits for information. They can take home what they received in school—for instance, information on summer programs or the FSP. However, some caution must be taken if a parent brings a child to a meeting to serve as an interpreter. Children may be able to informally convey casual conversation points. However, eligibility for a government program is different. Children may not understand the meaning of technical words such as income and resources. Also, parents may not feel comfortable discussing certain information such as household income in front of their children.
- Ask questions and listen to the answers. Asking questions shows that you really are interested in what a person has to say and his or her perspectives. But pay attention. Do not interrupt your client or try to put words in his or her mouth.
- Check for understanding. In some cultures, people are reluctant to ask questions of authority figures. Explain that asking for clarification is acceptable—then ask follow up questions to determine whether they correctly understood you. Ask open-ended questions to ensure the information has been adequately understood.
- Learn greetings and titles of respect in other languages that you commonly encounter.
- Write numbers down. People easily confuse numbers spoken in a new language.

Eight Common Mistakes To Avoid

1. Disrupting home and work schedules when conducting education and outreach activities.
2. Dismissing cultural preferences, customs, and traditions when discussing health and nutrition.
3. Assuming others perceive things the same way you do.
4. Getting “right down to business.” In many cultures, socializing is an important first step before discussing business or personal matters.
5. Conducting interviews or discussing personal information in an open setting. Receiving assistance from outside agencies is an embarrassment in some cultures, and may be better discussed behind closed doors.
6. Misreading silence for confusion or lack of knowledge. Allow for a short period of silence or reflection. Rather than asking if the person understood what was discussed, ask open-ended questions as you probe for understanding.

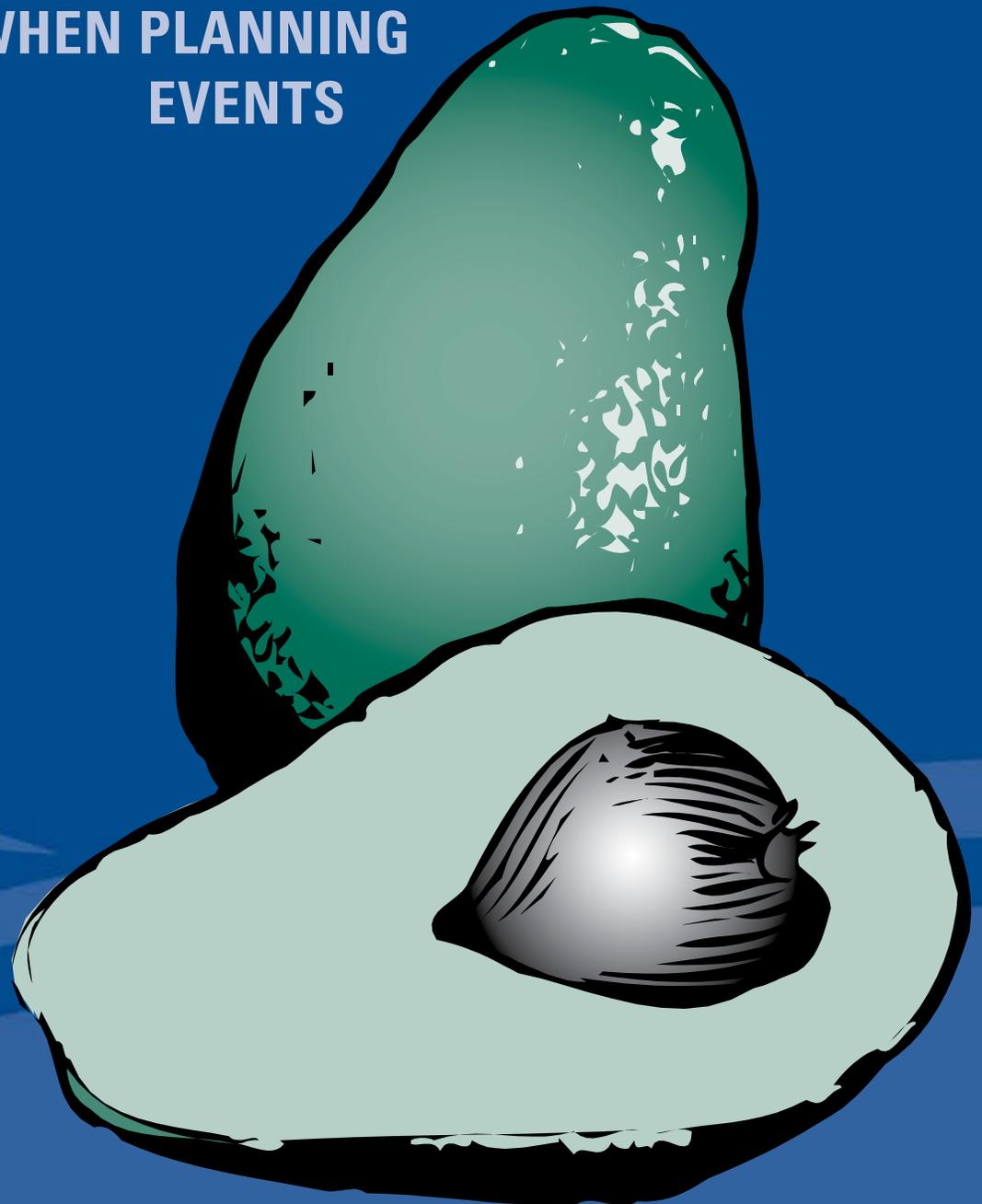


7. Ignoring the importance of such factors as age, gender, or position in family when asking for decisions.
8. Making assumptions based on stereotypes. Examples:
 - Ms. L. has a Hispanic surname and speaks with an accent. She arrives for a community-sponsored workshop on how to apply for food stamps. When she approaches the sign-in table and gives her name to the staff person, she is promptly asked to step to the side and wait a moment. The staff person speaks slowly and in a loud voice. Ms. L immediately knows that the staff person assumes she cannot speak English, and has gone to get someone who is bilingual to help out. Although she is pleased that they are making the effort to provide translators for individuals who require this level of language assistance, she wishes they had asked about her specific needs.
 - Ms. T is African-American. She stops by the FSP booth at a citywide festival and asks where in her community she can find out more about applying for food stamps. She notices that instead of asking where she lives, the outreach worker assumes she lives in a predominately African-American section of town and immediately refers her to a location in that area. This infuriates Ms. T because she does not live in that area and must point that out before receiving the correct information.



AVOIDING PITFALLS

WHEN PLANNING
EVENTS



MEDIA EVENTS, PRESS CONFERENCES AND INTERVIEWS

When is a media event or press conference appropriate?

Media events or press conferences are used to convey information and attract attention. They allow you to deliver time-sensitive news to many media outlets at once. Because events involve a lot of time, and because attendance and coverage aren't guaranteed, think carefully before you make a decision to move forward.

What should I consider when deciding whether a media event is warranted?

- Is there a visual element to your news? Keep in mind what will look good in a photo or on TV. (Refer to page E 4 for event pictures.)
- Is there an alternative format to deliver your news that would be equally or more effective, such as a press release? Is your event newsworthy, timely, and of interest to the media? (See “Five Components of a Newsworthy Story” on page C 6 of the “Media Outreach” section.)
- Will an event offer reporters special advantages, such contact with as experts, officials, and other important local figures?

What are some examples of things that might warrant an event or press conference?

- Formation of new and important partnerships;
- Opening of a new facility;
- Announcement of a new program;
- Release of an important study or survey; or
- Announcement of the receipt of a new grant.

At what time should I plan the media event?

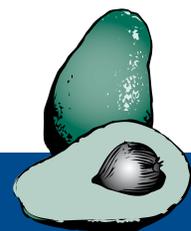
Check your local calendar listings before planning an event to make sure it doesn't conflict with another major media event. The optimal time to schedule a media event or news conference is 10 a.m. This allows time in the morning for the assignment editor to review the story options for the day and to assign a reporter to your event. Remember, TV and radio producers need time to edit the story for broadcast, and newspaper reporters need time to write.

Consider also that your event might be more successful at certain times of the year, for instance when school's out and children no longer have access to a school lunch program, or around the holidays when people are sensitive to hunger issues.

Where should I have the media event?

The location of your event should be relevant to the issue or story being presented. Hold your event in a central location, near the media, to help facilitate coverage. Take the time to scout your location before you choose it, and visit it a few times again before you host your event. Make sure there is nearby parking for news vans, as crews often carry heavy equipment to and from the event site.

Anticipate what equipment will be necessary and make sure there is adequate space for equipment at your location. If you expect cameras or radio reporters, you must have a podium and microphone. In many cases, television and radio reporters tape their own microphones directly onto the podium. Be sure there is room for a table for press releases, statements, and check-in.



- **Outdoor events:** Consider the weather and noise and arrange for an alternate indoor site.
- **Indoor events:** Think about space. You will need room for TV cameras and other media, guests, and your own audiovisual equipment. Know beforehand where electrical plugs and light switches are located.

Whom should I invite?

Consider inviting community leaders, including the mayor, local council members, or notable nutritionists to speak at a news conference. Work with your local food stamp office to select speakers and develop the invitation list. Not only will this make your event more appealing to the media, but it demonstrates that improving nutrition in your area is a community effort.

The media usually take an interest in the human side of an issue. See if you can identify a family that has a positive story to tell about its experience.

How should I invite the media?

The most common way to invite media to a press conference is with a media advisory (see example at the end of this section). The advisory gives enough details about the event to pique an outlet's interest, but not so many that it gives away the entire story.

Send your advisory to the assignment editor or reporter one to two days before your event. On the morning of your event, follow up with the reporter or assignment editor and be sure to include on-site contact information, such as cell phone numbers and exact site location. Assignment desks often do not know whom they will send until the day of the event.

What else do I need to do in advance?

- Prepare signage such as banners and podium signs that can be placed prominently in front of the cameras and photographers. Be sure to properly position signage (you do not want it blocked by speakers, equipment, etc.).

EXAMPLES OF VISUALS

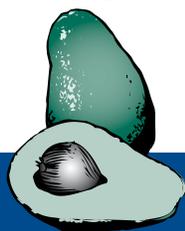
INFORMATIONAL VISUALS

- Pie charts and graphs from new research, such as charts that show the number of people in your area who are eligible for food stamp benefits, but not receiving them.
- Backdrop, like a large sign with the organization name; or the backdrop might be something that conveys information — like shelves of food at a food bank

SYMBOLIC VISUAL

- A table display of healthy foods to demonstrate the foods that a family of four could buy with food stamps in a month.

- Spokesperson(s): Assign one or two spokespersons, such as the head of your organization or a local dignitary, to speak and/or answer media questions at the event. Brief your spokespersons beforehand and make sure they are approved to speak in front of the press. In addition to having official spokespersons, the media will be attracted to a story that puts a human face on the issue of hunger. Because some people may not want others to know they are using food stamps, approach this issue with sensitivity and prudence. Be sure all your spokespersons speak clearly and are easily understood.
- Prepare an agenda. Decide the order of the speakers, the length of their remarks, and who will act as master of ceremonies. Keep each person's remarks to no more than 10 minutes and plan on having no more than three speakers.
- Prepare your press kits. Include the following in your press kit:
 - Agenda
 - Fact sheet
 - Bios of speakers and interviewees
 - Copies of any graphs, charts, and other visuals
 - Photographs
 - Brochures



- List your event in your local community calendars. See the end of this section for an example. Larger cities also have a local Associated Press (AP) office that you can call. Ask to have your event put on their calendar, known as the Daybook. There is a State-by-State listing of AP bureaus at the end of this section.
- Call the press as a reminder prior to the day of the event.

What should I do on the day of the event?

- Set up a table for media and guest sign-in and press kit distribution.
- Greet the guests as they arrive and provide them with assigned seating and other pertinent information.
- Start on time, even if attendance is sparse.

What should I do after the event?

- Send thank-you notes or letters to the guests and special speakers.
- Follow up with media who were not able to attend — ASAP. Send press kits to reporters who couldn't attend the event. Place follow up calls and ask reporters if they are interested in conducting a phone interview with one of the spokespersons.
- Monitor and collect news articles

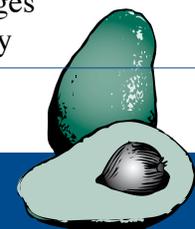
What are some examples of events I could host?

Here are some examples of events to generate coverage of hunger issues and food stamp benefits, as well as simple, inexpensive visuals to use, and spokespersons to offer for interviews.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW STUDY FINDINGS	
LOCATION:	A community center, community or faith-based organization, food bank
INTERVIEWEES:	Head of your organization, mayor, council members, nutritionist, recipients of food stamp benefits
VISUALS:	Graphs and charts

A "DAY IN THE LIFE" GROCERY SHOPPING	
LOCATION:	A supermarket. The idea would be to have local media "shop" for a family of four with a limited budget so they can understand what it is like to buy nutritious food when money's tight.
INTERVIEWEES:	Recipients of food stamp benefits, grocery store manager, nutritionist
VISUALS:	Food, use of the EBT card

COOKING DEMONSTRATION FOR RECIPIENTS OF FOOD STAMP BENEFITS	
LOCATION:	A food bank, culinary school, kitchens at schools, faith-based or community center, supermarket
INTERVIEWEES:	A nutritionist, recipients of food stamp benefits, a local dignitary, a chef from a well-known local restaurant
VISUALS:	Good, healthy food being prepared, a nutrition chart, images of people learning about how to eat well and economically



SAMPLE EVENT SETUP

1



2



(Spanish)



(English)

3

1 An eligibility worker with the United Way of New York City helps an individual at a Food Stamp Program prescreening event in Chinatown.

Photo credit: United Way of New York City

2 & 3 FoodChange eligibility workers hold a healthy cooking demonstration at a local grocery store and provide shoppers with information on the Food Stamp Program.

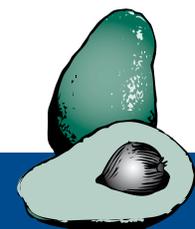
Photo credit: FoodChange



ASSOCIATED PRESS (AP): STATE-BY-STATE LISTING

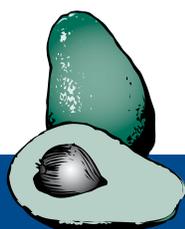
STATE	CITY	PHONE
AK	Anchorage	(907) 272-7549
AL	Montgomery	(334) 262-5947
AR	Little Rock	(501) 225-3668
AZ	Phoenix	(602) 258-8934
CA	Los Angeles	(213) 626-1200
CO	Denver	(303) 825-0123
CT	Hartford	(860) 246-6876
DC	Washington	(202) 776-9400
DE	Dover	(302) 674-3037
FL	Miami	(305) 594-5825
GA	Atlanta	(404) 522-8971
HI	Honolulu	(808) 536-5510
IA	Des Moines	(515) 243-3281
ID	Boise	(208) 343-1894
IL	Chicago	(312) 781-0500
IN	Indianapolis	(317) 639-5501
KS	Topeka	(785) 234-5654
KY	Louisville	(502) 583-7718
LA	New Orleans	(504) 523-3931
MA	Boston	(617) 357-8100
MD	Baltimore	(410) 837-8315
ME	Portland	(207) 772-4157
MI	Detroit	(313) 259-0650
MN	Minneapolis	(612) 332-2727
MO	St. Louis	(314) 241-2496
MS	Jackson	(601) 948-5897

STATE	CITY	PHONE
MT	Helena	(406) 442-7440
NC	Raleigh	(919) 833-8687
ND	Bismarck	(701) 223-8450
NE	Omaha	(402) 391-0031
NH	Concord	(603) 224-3327
NJ	Trenton	(609) 392-3622
NM	Albuquerque	(505) 822-9022
NV	Las Vegas	(702) 382-7440
NY	New York	(212) 621-1670
OH	Columbus	(614) 885-2727
OK	Oklahoma	(405) 525-2121
OR	Portland	(503) 228-2169
PA	Philadelphia	(215) 561-1133
RI	Providence	(401) 274-2270
SC	Columbia	(803) 799-6418
SD	Sioux Falls	(605) 332-3111
TN	Nashville	(615) 373-9988
TX	Dallas	(972) 991-2100
UT	Salt Lake City	(801) 322-3405
VA	Richmond	(804) 643-6646
VT	Montpelier	(802) 229-0577
WA	Seattle	(206) 682-1812
WI	Milwaukee	(414) 225-3580
WV	Charleston	(304) 346-0897
WY	Cheyenne	(307) 632-9351



REGIONAL/STATE RADIO NETWORKS

ORGANIZATION	CITY	STATE	PHONE	FAX	MAIN E-MAIL
Alaska Public Radio Network	Anchorage	AK	(907) 263-7448	N/A	news@aprn.org
Alabama Radio Network	Birmingham	AL	(205) 439-9600	(205) 439-8390	N/A
Arkansas Radio Network	Little Rock	AR	(501) 401-0200	(501) 401-0367	N/A
Pacifica Radio Network	Berkeley	CA	(510) 849-2281	N/A	contact@pacifica.org
Connecticut Radio Network	Hamden	CT	(203) 288-2002	(203) 281-3291	N/A
Florida's Radio Networks	Maitland	FL	(888) 407-4376	(407) 916-7425	news@frn.com
Georgia News Network	Atlanta	GA	(404) 607-9045	(404) 367-1134	N/A
Radio Iowa	Des Moines	IA	(515) 282-1984	(515) 282-1879	Radiolowa@Learfield.com
Illinois Radio Network	Chicago	IL	(312) 943-6363	(312) 943-5109	N/A
Network Indiana	Indianapolis	IN	(317) 637-4638	(317) 684-2008	info@network-indiana.com
Kansas Information Network	Topeka	KS	(785) 272-2199	(785) 228-7282	info@radionetworks.com
Kentucky News Network	Louisville	KY	(502) 479-2222	(502) 479-2231	N/A
Louisiana Network, Inc.	Baton Rouge	LA	(225) 383-8695	(225) 383-5020	N/A
National Radio Network	Framingham	MA	(508) 820-2430	N/A	N/A
Michigan Radio Network	Lansing	MI	(517) 484-4888	(517) 484-1389	miradio@ameritech.net
Minnesota News Network	Minneapolis	MN	(612) 321-7200	(612) 321-7202	newsroom@mnnradio.com
MissouriNet	Jefferson City	MO	(573) 893-2829	(573) 893-8094	Info@Missourinet.com
Mississippi News Network	Jackson	MS	(601) 957-1700	(601) 956-5228	N/A
Northern Broadcasting System	Billings	MT	(406) 252-6661	(406) 245-9755	nbs@northernbroadcasting.com
North Carolina News Network	Raleigh	NC	(919) 890-6030	(919) 890-6024	N/A
North Dakota News Network	Fargo	ND	(701) 237-5000	(701) 280-0861	dakotaneWS@qwest.net
Ohio News Network	Columbus	OH	(614) 460-3850	(614) 460-2822	N/A
Oklahoma News Network	Oklahoma City	OK	(405) 840-9489	(405) 858-1435	N/A
Radio Pennsylvania Network	Harrisburg	PA	(717) 221-2883	(717) 232-7612	radiopa@radiopa.org
South Carolina News Network	Columbia	SC	(803) 790-4300	(803) 790-4309	N/A
South Dakota News Network	Pierre	SD	(605) 224-9911	(605) 224-8984	dakotaneWS@qwest.net
Tennessee Radio Network	Nashville	TN	(615) 664-2400	(615) 687-9797	N/A
Texas State Network	Arlington	TX	(800) 683-5558	(817) 543-5572	tsn@tsnradio.com
Virginia News Networks	Richmond	VA	(804) 474-0000	(804) 474-0167	N/A
Wisconsin Radio Network	Madison	WI	(608) 251-3900	(608) 251-7233	info@wrn.com
West Virginia MetroNews	Charleston	WV	(304) 346-7055	(304) 346-8262	newsroom@wvmetronews.com
United Stations Radio Network	New York	NY	(212) 869-1111	(212) 869-1115	info@unitedstations.com
USA Radio Network	Dallas	TX	(972) 484-3900	(972) 241-6826	newsroom@usaradio.com



GETTING TO THE CORE

OF MEDIA RELATIONS
AND OUTREACH



HOW TO'S FOR MEDIA RELATIONS AND OUTREACH

The previous sections of this Toolkit have mentioned a variety of tools you can use to conduct outreach for increasing participation in the Food Stamp Program. This section provides the specific, practical information you need to put these tools to use:

- Interviews
- Press releases
- Pitch scripts and letters
- Proclamations
- Media advisories
- Calendar listings

The section that follows will give you the scoop on another very important communication tool — public service announcements.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWS

Following are interview tips that you or your organization’s Food Stamp Program spokespersons can use.

Before the Interview

- Know the reporter, publication/program, interview format, and audience. Go online and look up recent articles written by the reporter and ask your colleagues if they know anything about the outlet or reporter.
- Know your goal for the interview. For instance, do you want to publicize a prescreening event? Let people know about your 800 number?
- Know what you want to say. Review the talking points on page 14 of the “Introduction” section.
- Develop 3-5 key talking points to ensure your message is related.
- Jot down likely questions and appropriate answers.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS



- Buy preparation time by asking to call the reporter back if the deadline allows.
- Establish an “interview atmosphere” and mindset. Set yourself up in a quiet room with no distractions and have your talking points in front of you. Do not think it’s any less formal because it is over the phone.
- Use notes.
- For radio, speak visually — use words to paint pictures. For instance: “The number of hungry people in Pleasantville could fill the football stadium three times over.”

TELEVISION INTERVIEWS



- For men, a dark suit and blue shirt works best. For women, avoid solid black or white, and busy patterns. Bright colors are fine.
- Sit erect, but not stiff, and slightly forward in the chair. Unbutton suit jacket when seated.
- Resist the urge to shout into the microphone. Speak and gesture naturally.
- Talk to the reporter or interviewer, not the camera.
- Keep a pleasant expression; smile when appropriate.
- Hold your “interview attitude” from the moment you are lit until the interview is completely over and you are sure the camera is off.



INTERVIEW DO'S



- ☺ Asked about a problem? Talk about a solution. For examples, see the Q&A document in the “Introduction” section on pages 15 and 16.
- ☺ Answer the question you wish they had asked. “Bridge” to a related point you want to make. For example:
 - ◇ **Q:** *Why are so many people going hungry?*
 - ◇ **A:** *It's a complicated issue, but the important thing is that people can get the nutrition support they need through food stamp benefits.*
- ☺ Speak in headlines. Speak in short, succinct statements that will make good quotes. Offer a conclusion first, briefly and directly, and back it with facts or proof points. For example:
 - ◇ *“The Food Stamp Program has made big changes recently that make it easier to find out about the program. You can call 1-800-221-5689 to learn more about benefits and how to apply.”*
- ☺ Speak clearly. Avoid jargon and bureaucratese.
- ☺ Be engaging, likable.
- ☺ Even if a reporter uses a negative statement or slurs, frame your reply as a positive statement.

INTERVIEW DON'TS



- ☹ Do not fake your expertise. If you do not have the answer to a question, assure the reporter you will find and provide the needed facts in a timely manner (please provide an approximate time to expect the call), or offer to assist the reporter in finding another source.
- ☹ Do not overlap the interviewer’s question; begin your answer when the reporter is finished.
- ☹ Do not be provoked. Keep cool.
- ☹ Do not lie to a reporter. If you aren’t comfortable responding to a particular question, simply say that you have “no comment.” However, if you can, refer them to another appropriate source for the information or let them know you will find out for them.
- ☹ Do not over-answer. Short answers are better than long.
- ☹ Do not let false charges, facts, or figures offered by a reporter stand uncorrected.
 - ◇ **Q:** *Why would someone go to the trouble of applying for food stamps if the benefits are only \$10 a month?*
 - ◇ **A:** *On average, monthly benefits vary from \$86 per person to almost \$200 per household. This additional support will help low-income households purchase nutritious foods necessary for a healthy diet.*
- ☹ Do not fall victim to hypothetical situations and “A or B” dilemmas.



MEDIA PITCH SCRIPT

What is a pitch script?

A pitch script is an outline of the key points you need to cover during a phone conversation with a reporter or assignment editor. You can use this pitch script to talk to a reporter before or after sending them a media advisory about an upcoming event.

How much time will I have to make my pitch?

Often you only have 30 - 90 seconds to make your pitch, so you must use them wisely. Practice your pitch aloud once or twice before calling.

Should I read from my script?

No, do not read directly from the script as you talk. The script is to be used as a starting point.

Where can I find food stamp participation data to use in my pitch?

You can find updated participation data on the FNS web site at www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fspmain.htm and at www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/participation.htm.

What if the reporter cannot attend?

If the reporter cannot attend, ask if you can send a photograph or perhaps arrange a phone interview with one of your spokespersons afterwards.

PITCH SCRIPT TEMPLATE

Following are two examples of pitch scripts. The ineffective script does not provide the reporter with enough details to cover the event and does not present a case. The effective script politely asks if the reporter has time to talk and efficiently outlines pertinent event information.

INEFFECTIVE PITCH:

"Hi! I just wanted to tell you that Hunger Organization will be holding an event on Monday. The antihunger group works with members of the community to provide food stamp benefits and..."

EFFECTIVE:

"Hello, my name is XX and I am calling from the Hunger Organization. Is this a good time?" [Or, "Do you have a minute?" If not, ask when you can call back.]

"Because XX low-income elderly people in [NAME OF STATE/TOWN/CITY] are living on the edge of hunger, Hunger Organization is kicking off a 'Benefit Bus' tour on Monday to help the older population in [NAME OF STATE/TOWN/CITY] access food stamp benefits without the bother of finding transportation to a local food stamp office.

"This bus tour will span X days and X locations. [Have additional details handy, such as a media advisory, in case you are asked questions about

the event.] Food stamp outreach coordinators will be on hand to provide a checklist of all necessary paperwork needed to apply, and to conduct prescreening for benefit eligibility.

"I hope you'll agree that this is something you or your station/paper would be interested in covering. May I fax or e-mail you a media advisory? [Or, I have faxed/e-mailed you a media advisory about this event to provide you with additional information.]" If you have any questions about the event or our program, or need to reach us, my name is XX and my number is XX." [For voicemail, repeat name and number.]



PITCH LETTER

What is a pitch and what are some examples of a pitch?

A pitch is contact with a journalist or editor to introduce story ideas or other salient information. “Pitching” most often refers to media outreach efforts to obtain coverage; however, outreach efforts to place PSAs or secure partnerships are also forms of pitches.

WHEN TO USE A PITCH LETTER



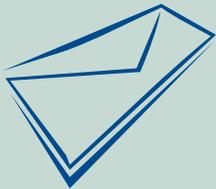
A pitch letter makes the case for covering a specific story, especially a story that is “evergreen” or is not tied to a specific event and can be written at any time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PITCH LETTER



More than a phone call, the pitch letter allows you to outline what you are doing and why it is valuable. A good pitch letter (see template on page F 5) has staying power. If it doesn’t generate a story today, it may tomorrow.

THE FORMAT OF A PITCH LETTER



A pitch letter can be used in a variety of formats — mail, fax, e-mail. If you choose to send a pitch letter via mail, put it on your letterhead. The points outlined in the “Developing and Selling the Story” section of this toolkit will also come in handy as you create your pitch letter.



PITCH LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear [NAME OF REPORTER],

Have you ever had to decide whether to buy medicine for your sick child or buy food? Have you ever had to choose between paying the heating bill and having enough food for dinner? Every day, thousands of low-income people in [NAME OF STATE/TOWN/CITY] grapple with issues like these. But they don't have to.

There are XX people living on the edge of hunger in [NAME OF STATE/TOWN/CITY]. The Food Stamp Program helps low-income Americans purchase nutritious, healthy food. However, only half of those eligible to receive food stamp benefits are currently enrolled.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] is kicking off a food stamp outreach effort in [NAME OF STATE/TOWN/CITY] by *[Describe the activity you would like the media to report on, such as hosting a health fair or prescreening event, volunteering, distributing informational flyers, promoting events, etc., And be sure to use language to get their attention]*. The goal of this outreach effort is to ensure that everyone who is eligible for the Food Stamp Program knows about it and is able to access benefits.

Food stamps are a win-win for low-income families and individuals, as well as for the local economy. By helping them defray the costs of groceries, food stamp benefits allow recipients to purchase more healthy and nutritious food. These benefits also help local retailers and the local community by bringing Federal dollars into the area.

Given some of your recent stories, I thought you would be interested in learning more about our community outreach effort, and I look forward to speaking with you in further detail. I can be reached at (XXX) XXX-XXXX to answer any questions you may have or provide you with background information.

Best regards,

[YOUR NAME]
[TITLE]
[CONTACT INFORMATION]

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MEDIA ADVISORIES

What is a media advisory?

A media advisory is a one-page document loaded with information about the who, what, when and where of your planned event — without giving away the entire story.

What goes out first, the media advisory or the press release?

The media advisory is sent in advance of a press release.

What is the goal of a media advisory?

The goal is to get your event on the media’s calendars and planning books. Using your organization’s letterhead, write your advisory in a way that will interest the press, without giving away so many details that they get the full story without having to attend the event.

How do I write a media advisory?

As demonstrated in the template below, begin with a headline that informs the media that something important or “newsworthy” is happening, followed by a secondary heading with additional facts.

When should I distribute the media advisory?

See page C 7 of the “Media Outreach” section for more information on when to distribute a media advisory.

WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION SHOULD I INCLUDE IN THE ADVISORY?	
WHAT	As in a press release, the first sentence should describe the purpose or “what” of your event in a uniquely newsworthy way. Like your pitch, the media advisory should have a “hook” or angle to get the attention of the media.
WHEN	The “when” section outlines the specific date and time of the event.
WHO	The “who” section lists event attendees in order of prestige — for example, a State official would be featured before a local official.
WHERE	The “where” states the exact address of the event, and includes directions and parking information if necessary.
WHY	The “why” section provides background information for the media, including relevant statistics and a brief description of your organization. This section should also reference other resources, if available, such as a web site, video clips or radio sound bites.



MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [NAME OF DESIGNATED MEDIA CONTACT]
 [(AREA CODE) PHONE #]
 [CELL# or E-MAIL]

HUNGER ORGANIZATION TO LAUNCH “BENEFIT BUS” TOUR

*Food Stamp Prescreening Events at Assisted Living
 Complexes Help Low Income Seniors Determine Eligibility*

WHAT: A “Benefit Bus” Tour will hit the streets of Rochester, stopping at assisted living complexes across town to provide low-income seniors with information about the Food Stamp Program and help them determine whether they are eligible to receive benefits. This is part of an ongoing food stamp outreach effort by Hunger Organization.

WHEN: Tuesday, April 12, and Wednesday, April 13, 2005, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Tuesday: Baywinde Senior Campus
 550 Latona Road
 Rochester, NY
 Wednesday: Gables at Brighton
 2001 S. Clinton Avenue
 Rochester, NY
*** For directions or parking information, please contact Jane Doe.*

WHO: Bob Smith, Mayor, City of Rochester
 Dana Jones, Director, New York State Health Department
 Mary Mack, Executive Director, Hunger Organization
 Food Stamp Outreach Prescreeners, Hunger Organization

WHY: Hunger is an important issue in this community, and Hunger Organization is working to ensure that Rochester residents who are eligible for the Food Stamp Program know about it and are able to access food stamp benefits.

As the cornerstone of the Nation’s nutrition assistance safety net, the Food Stamp Program helps low-income families and individuals purchase nutritious and healthy food by providing much-needed temporary help.

Visit www.hungerorganization.org and/or www.fns.usda.gov/fjsp/outreach.htm for additional resources.

**FIND THIS
 TEMPLATE
 on the
 accompanying
 disc!**



SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY: HUMAN SERVICES COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

MEDIA ADVISORY
September 23, 2002
For Immediate Release

Contact(s): Terry Coble, Policy Director
305-576-5001, ext. 17 / 786-473-9936 (cell.)
terryc@hscdade.org
Daniella Levine, Executive Director
305-576-5001 Ext. 19 / 305-467-4015 (cell.)
daniellal@hscdade.org
Human Services Coalition of Miami-Dade County

“Measuring and Overcoming Poverty in Miami-Dade County” Miami leaders announce a new campaign to help families achieve economic independence

What income does a family in Miami need to meet basic needs? What types of subsidies and supports are in place to help Miami families make ends meet? What is being done to help lift the earnings of low-income working families in Miami?

These are the kinds of questions that will be answered at a briefing to release a report on the cost of living in Florida and to kick off a campaign to help Miami families on their path to economic security.

The briefing will be held at:

10:00a.m., Tuesday, September 24, 2002
South Florida Workforce Little Havana One Stop Career Center
3525 NW 7th Street
Miami, FL
305-643-6730

Briefing speakers will discuss:

- The findings of The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Florida report.
- The launching of the **Greater Miami Prosperity Campaign** and the **Food Stamp Outreach to Working Families** project to increase the use of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Food Stamps to lift families towards economic self-sufficiency.

Speakers will include:

Diana Pearce, Researcher and Report Author, University of Washington
Honorable Manuel A. Diaz, Mayor, City of Miami
Hon. Eric M. Bost, Under-Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Hodding Carter, President and CEO, John S. & James L. Knight Foundation
Peter W. Roulhac, Chair Elect, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
Daniella Levine, Executive Director, Human Services Coalition of Dade County
Maureen Golga, Self-Sufficiency Project Organizer, Wider Opportunities for Women

Sponsors of this event are: Human Services Coalition of Dade County, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, and Wider Opportunities for Women, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit.



**SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY:
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR MADISON COUNTY, INC.**



*Helping People
Help Themselves*

3 East Main Street
P.O. Box 249
Morrisville, NY
13408
315-684-3144
800-721-2271
Fax: 315-684-9650

112 Center Street
P.O. Box 384
Canastota, NY
13032
315-697-3588
800-280-4717
Fax: 315-697-3690

6 Cambridge Avenue
P.O. Box 249
Morrisville, NY
13408
315-684-7862
866-684-7862
Fax: 315-684-9940

Working Solutions
1286 Upper Lenox
Ave.
Oneida, NY 13421
Located in the
Wal-Mart Plaza

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 384
Canastota, NY
13032
(315) 363-2400

Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.

www.capmadco.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Terri Granger
Outreach Coordinator
Phone: 315-684-7862
Fax: 315-684-9940

OUTREACH SITES SET AS HOLIDAYS DRAW NEAR

Morrisville, NY – Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc. in conjunction with Madison County Department of Social Services have set the following dates and locations for Food Stamp Outreach. Those who are interested in applying for Food Stamps, or inquiring about other programs, may do so at these locations.

Thursday, December 4, 2003
9:00 – 12:00 noon
CazCares, Cazenovia, NY

Tuesday, December 9, 2003
10:00 – 1:00
DeRuyter Free Library, DeRuyter, NY

Thursday, December 11, 2003
2:00 – 4:00
Hamilton Food Cupboard, Hamilton, NY

Wednesday, December 17, 2003
11:00 – 1:00
Brookfield Baptist Church, Brookfield, NY

Representatives from Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc. and Madison County Social Services will be available to assist all who are interested in applying.

For more information, contact Terri Granger at 315-684-7862 ext. 23.

Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc. (CAP), one of more than 1,100 Community Action agencies throughout the U.S., has four accessible offices throughout Madison County. CAP is working to alleviate poverty and empower low-income families in order to improve their quality of life. Driven by a mission that focuses on helping people help themselves to achieve their fullest potential, through identifying and building on strengths, CAP administers a variety of programs and services related to financial self-sufficiency throughout the population of Madison County. Last year CAP served nearly 5,000 individuals. For more information, please call 315-684-3144.



HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

TIP 1

THE HEADLINE - The headline of your press release should be as dramatic as possible without sounding exaggerated. Will your program affect the community in a big way? Think about what will grab the attention of a news reporter. Your headline will tell the news.

TIP 2

WRITING STYLE - The upside-down pyramid is a standard style of news writing. The broad base at the top of the pyramid represents the most newsworthy information in the story, and the narrow tip at the bottom represents the least newsworthy information in the story. This enables the story to be shortened by cutting from the bottom without losing the most important details. Similarly, when you write a press release in the upside-down pyramid format, you put the most newsworthy information at the beginning and the least newsworthy information at the end.

TIP 3

PARAGRAPH ONE - The first paragraph states the news or announcement and includes supporting information. Make sure you have addressed the who, what, when, where, and why of the story.

TIP 4

PARAGRAPH TWO - A quote often starts the second paragraph and delivers a major message point of your effort. It can state an opinion and add a human element to the story. Generally, the person writing the release will draft a quote to effectively communicate the point.

TIP 5

USE OF QUOTES - Quotes must be approved by the person to whom the quote is attributed. Quotes are often adjusted to respond to that person's concerns, tone, and style. Be sure to make the quotes conversational and brief; this increases their chances of being picked up and repeated. You should not quote more than two people. Quoting from too many sources causes confusion.

TIP 6

PARAGRAPH THREE - This paragraph contains more information on the event or announcement. You could include interesting and relevant facts that are a part of your main message. You can amplify your message with another quote either from the same spokesperson or from a different source. Be sure the quotes are conversational and brief.



TIP 7

LAST PARAGRAPH - This paragraph should tell the public what you want them to know about your organization. For example, how long it has been in the community and/or how people can contact you.

TIP 8

LOCAL OR REGIONAL MEDIA - You will be writing for local or regional media, so your press release should provide details about how the news affects your community. Your local news outlets will be more interested in a story whose impact is felt locally. That said, you should also provide some national context — like information about food stamp benefits, trends, and national studies.

TIP 9

ACRONYMS, JARGON, AND TECHNICAL LANGUAGE - Do not use acronyms, jargon or highly technical language in your press release.

TIP 10

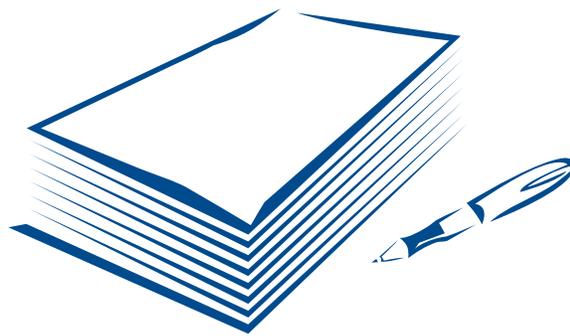
LENGTH OF PRESS RELEASE - Your press release should be to-the-point and a maximum of one to two pages. Few reporters will read beyond a second page. A press release is not the right forum to issue thank-you's and acknowledgements.

TIP 11

PROOFREAD YOUR RELEASE - Always make time to review and edit your release. Correct all spelling and typographical errors. Have someone unfamiliar with the program look over the release to see if the messages are clear to them.

TIP 12

LETTERHEAD - Print the release on your organization's letterhead so that it looks official.



PRESS RELEASE LAYOUT TIPS

1

CONTACT INFORMATION - Always include up-to-date contact information on your press release in the upper right-hand corner. The contacts you list should be easily accessible; you may wish to include more than one person. Because reporters often work on tight deadlines and may need to reach your contact immediately, consider including a cell phone number on your release.

2

PARAGRAPH ONE - The first paragraph of your press release should include the city from which you are releasing the information and the date.

3

SPACING - To ensure ease of reading, use at least a space and a half or double space between lines. Make sure you leave enough margin space, at least ¾", for reporters to make their own notes.

4

FORMAT - If your press release is more than a page, you should write “- more -” at the bottom of the page to indicate that it continues. You should also write “Page Two” in the upper left-hand corner of the page so that reporters can follow the release easily. Finish the release by inserting “###” at the end.



PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
[DATE]

1

CONTACT:
[Your Name or appropriate contact]
[AREA CODE AND PHONE #]
[OPTIONAL: CELL #/E-MAIL]

**[HUNGER ORGANIZATION] AND [CITY GROCER]
KICK OFF “FILL THE CART” CAMPAIGN**

*Outreach Effort Underway to Educate [YOUR COMMUNITY] Low-Income Families and Individuals
about Nutrition and Food Stamp Program Purchase Power*

2

[YOUR CITY, STATE, DATE] – [HUNGER ORGANIZATION] and [CITY GROCER] kicked off the “Fill the Cart” campaign today – a major outreach initiative to increase enrollment in the Food Stamp Program. Working together, the two will educate [YOUR COMMUNITY’S] low-income families and individuals about nutritious and healthy food which can be purchased using food stamps. [CITY GROCER] has also developed a recipe book highlighting sample healthy menus and an easy-to-use shopping list featuring nutritious items that can be purchased using food stamp benefits. The recipe book will be distributed at local [CITY GROCER] stores, farmers markets and health fairs.

(Add specific details about outreach effort)

“[INSERT QUOTE HERE],” said [YOUR ORGANIZATION’S] Executive Director, president or spokesperson.

3

The Food Stamp Program is a win-win for the [CITY] community – for both residents and retailers. Funded with Federal dollars, each \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates almost twice that amount in economic activity for the community. For a household of four, the average benefit is about \$200 a month. Research shows that low-income households participating in the Food Stamp Program have access to more food energy, protein, and an array of essential vitamins and minerals in their home food supply. *(Add other relevant information on the event of announcement – i.e. interesting/relevant statistics, economic benefit, EBT card versus paper coupons.)*

“[INSERT SECOND QUOTE HERE],” said [food stamp office contact, partner, or another key community leader.]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] is community-based organization serving the [NAME OF AREA] community for 25 years. [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] raises awareness about the nutrition benefits of the Food Stamp Program through outreach including prescreening events, cooking demonstrations and a toll-free information hotline. For more information about the Food Stamp Program, and what you can do in [NAME OF CITY/TOWN] to help further [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]’s mission, call [PHONE NUMBER OF ORGANIZATION] or visit [YOUR WEB SITE, if applicable].

4

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**SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE:
VERMONT CAMPAIGN TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER (PAGE 1)**

**Vermont Campaign to
End Childhood Hunger**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Erik Filkorn
(802) 434-3331
filkee@gmavt.net

**VERMONT CAMPAIGN TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER LEADING
EFFORT TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
*Federal Research Grant Provides Funds to Launch vermontfoodhelp.com
Statewide Outreach Intensified***

Burlington, VT—September 26, 2003—The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger (VTCECH) has joined forces with the University of Vermont and the Vermont Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition and Health Access (PATH) to create vermontfoodhelp.com. The site is the central element in a statewide effort to reach the estimated 44,000 Vermonters who qualify for benefits under the federally funded Food Stamp Program but are not currently using it.

“There are many misconceptions about food stamps that keep people from participating in the program, and we’re hoping this website and our accompanying informational campaign can help overcome them,” said Robert Dostis, Executive Director of VTCECH. “Vermontfoodhelp.com is a convenient and discreet way to help Vermonters to understand how the program works, learn if they qualify, and to simplify the application process for this important nutrition program.”

The program is being funded by a U.S. Department of Agriculture Technology Research Grant awarded in September, 2002. The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger has created a coalition of public and private resources to develop the website, informational materials for use in hundreds of locations statewide, and a public information campaign that will run for a year. The website was designed and built by Bluehouse Group of Richmond in cooperation with UVM. PATH will be tracking whether new applicants have visited the website, and

MORE

180 Flynn Avenue • Burlington, VT 05401 • Phone: 802-865-0255 • Fax: 802-865-0266 • www.vtnohunger.org



**SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE:
VERMONT CAMPAIGN TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER (PAGE 2)**

(continued)

vermontfoodhelp.com

9/26/03

Page Two

will provide feedback to UVM on its effectiveness in educating potential program users.

"The Food Stamp Program is our primary resource for combating hunger in Vermont, and with this new website, people can learn about the program and its eligibility requirements in privacy," said Eileen Elliott, Deputy Secretary of Agency of Human Services. "Partner agencies and service organizations will be able to use the website as a guide in consultations with clients, helping them understand what their benefits might be, and what they can be used for. Vermontfoodhelp.com is going to help us qualify many more food stamp recipients."

The statewide campaign includes an effort to publicize the over 500 public-use computers around Vermont. "We hope that our outreach will help overcome the 'digital divide' and encourage low-income households to take advantage of the benefits of the Internet," said Brad Blackwell, coordinator of the vermontfoodhelp.com program. The site is intended to be easy to use and is confidential.

"While our primary goal is to increase participation in the program, the research component is equally important," said UVM Extension Nutrition Specialist Linda Berlin. "Through this website we can gain valuable knowledge about the barriers that prevent people from taking advantage of the Food Stamp Program. What we learn from this project will serve as a model as other states advance."

###



**SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE:
HUMAN SERVICES COALITION**

For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Daniella Levine, Executive Director
Human Services Coalition
305-576-5001 Ext.19
305-467-4015 (cellular)

FOOD FOR ALL: A Building Block for Community Prosperity
Community Leaders Convene to Address Growing Problem of Hunger

Miami, FL – July 28, 2003 - On July 30, 2003 at 4:00 p.m. and July 31, 2003 at 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m., local and national advocates will meet to discuss the growing dilemma of hunger in Miami-Dade and the country. The **Food For All** Summit will take place at Temple Israel, located at 137 NE 19th Street, Miami, FL.

The Summit is designed to bring awareness and attention to the South Florida community concerning the issues of hunger, poverty and health related concerns. Daniella Levine, Executive Director of Human Services Coalition of Dade County, a coalition member, observes, “Far too many people in the United States and Miami-Dade are going hungry or living on the edge of hunger. Improvements to and effective use of Federal nutrition safety net programs and enhanced coordination and innovations at the local level can address this situation and help ensure that no one in the community is forced to go hungry.”

Food for All has been generated through the efforts of a coalition of community groups, including the Allegany Franciscan Foundation, Alliance for Human Services, and Human Services Coalition (HSC). Participants include Miami-Dade Commissioner Jimmy Morales, New York City Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, Roberto Salazar, head of the Federal Food and Nutrition Service in the Bush administration, Ellen Vollinger from the Food Research Action Center and Modesto Abety of the Children’s Trust. Virgil Conrad, Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will present a signed proclamation to end hunger (Wednesday, 5 p.m.). This event will draw attention to the grave hunger crisis facing Miami-Dade County and the State of Florida.

Over a Fellowship dinner, the advocates will hear from those directly affected by hunger and helped by existing programs. After an evening of presentations to learn about the issues, the attendees will spend Thursday in smaller groups developing solutions to the problem.

The goal is to draw from Federal, State and local resources to end hunger in South Florida. According to Daniella Levine, “The community is coming together to develop a strong action agenda – together we can make Miami #1 in community prosperity instead of #1 in poverty!”

Founded in 1996, the Human Services Coalition of Dade County (HSC) works to empower individuals and communities to create a more just society by promoting civic engagement, economic fairness and access to health and human services. At the heart of these efforts is a belief that individuals, families and communities will be strengthened through increased public awareness and civic involvement in improving systems of care. HSC is a membership-based coalition composed of over 6,000 members, representing community groups, faith-based organizations, policy makers, businesses and individuals. For more information, please contact us at 305-576-5001 or visit www.hscdade.org.



WHAT IS A PROCLAMATION?

Who issues a proclamation?

Proclamations are usually issued by mayors, county commissions, governors, city commissions, State legislatures, and other public officials to recognize a local cause or achievement.

Why and when should an organization request a proclamation?

Organizations can use a proclamation to get more publicity when conducting events or outreach efforts. The timing is best around a major event or when undergoing a big media push.

How is a proclamation issued?

Your organization may submit a proclamation request. You may privately approach a mayor, State legislator, or city commissioner to sponsor your request. Provide draft language that you would like the issuing body to consider. That often helps to move the process forward. If the proclamation is to be issued at a public gathering, such as a city commission meeting, you may need to file the request a month or more in advance, depending on the rules of the issuing body.

What steps should be taken to issue a proclamation?

Once you have determined which public official(s) you would like to ask to issue a proclamation, it will be important to research whether any guidelines exist. This information can often be found on the officials' web site, or can be obtained by calling a public affairs liaison. In many cases, you can apply for a proclamation by mail, e-mail, or personal delivery.

What does a typical proclamation say?

The language in the proclamation should be crafted to drive home key points about your organization, your special outreach effort, and the value of the Food Stamp Program. The proclamation template on page F 18 can provide some helpful language.

What does a typical proclamation look like?

Oftentimes, a proclamation is printed on heavy-weight paper and affixed with a seal and official signatures. Your organization can proudly display it.



PROCLAMATION TEMPLATE

FOOD STAMP AWARENESS DAY/WEEK/MONTH

[TIMING TO BE PROCLAIMED]

By the [INSERT TITLE OF LOCAL OR STATE OFFICIAL...Such as Mayor of/Governor] of

[INSERT CITY/TOWN/STATE]

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS the Food Stamp Program is the cornerstone of the Federal nutrition assistance safety net, providing more than 8.2 million households and 21 million low-income Americans with nutrition assistance;

WHEREAS, hunger is a problem that affects families and individuals, including children and the elderly;

WHEREAS almost half of those eligible for food stamps are currently not receiving the benefits they need, and [INSERT STATE/LOCAL STATISTIC, IF POSSIBLE];

WHEREAS, each \$5 in new Federal food stamp benefits generates nearly double that in economic activity;

WHEREAS, the Food Stamp Program is modern, with benefits now delivered via electronic (EBT) cards;

WHEREAS, food retailers who accept food stamp EBT cards are important partners fighting hunger in our community;

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture and the State of [INSERT NAME OF STATE] are working to simplify the food stamp application process;

WHEREAS, the STATE/CITY/TOWN of [INSERT NAME] is participating in the Food Stamp Program's national outreach effort by conducting an awareness effort to help constituents determine potential eligibility and inform them on how to apply;

NOW, THEREFORE, I (INSERT OFFICIAL'S NAME AND TITLE) do hereby proclaim (TIMING – DAY, WEEK, MONTH) (SPECIFIC DATE) as "Food Stamp Awareness Day/Week/Month" and call upon the community and partner organizations to celebrate with appropriate ceremonies to acknowledge these efforts.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand on this [INSERT DAY AND MONTH, YEAR]



Signature of Official



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION: FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (PAGE 1)

Fresno County Board of Supervisors
December 14, 2004

WHEREAS, the County of Fresno is committed to promoting healthy eating, good nutrition, and active lifestyles; and

WHEREAS, in November 2002, the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) revealed that more than 2.24 million low-income adults in California cannot always afford to put food on the table and, as a result, almost one out of three of these adults (658,000) experience episodes of hunger; and

WHEREAS, the ranks of food-insecure Californians include not just the most impoverished but: working adults, the elderly with fixed incomes and many families; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity and poor nutrition pose substantial risks to health resulting in large costs to society through increased needs for medical care relating to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, etc., and impede education and work productivity; and

WHEREAS, nutrition education and access to quality food improve health, education, and employment outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2003 American Community Survey indicates that Fresno County has the seventh-highest poverty rate of all counties in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Food Stamp Program was first established as the Food Stamp Plan in 1939 to help needy families and a lagging economy during the depression era and was revised in 1961 with additional changes made in 1977; and

WHEREAS, the Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense against food insecurity and malnutrition; and

WHEREAS, fifty-one percent of all food stamp recipients are children and nine percent of recipients are age 60 or older; and

WHEREAS, the Food Stamp Program supports local farmers and Federal benefit dollars could potentially contribute an additional \$88 million to Fresno County's economy, with an economic multiplier effect of 1.84, resulting in an economic gain of \$161.9 million annually; and



**SAMPLE PROCLAMATION:
FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (PAGE 2)**

WHEREAS, Fresno County’s Department of Employment and Temporary Assistance has successfully improved business practices that resulted in a significant increase in the Food Stamp Program Accuracy rate from 85% in Federal Fiscal Year 2000 to 96% in 2003; and

WHEREAS, California’s food stamp participation rate is the lowest in the Nation, but Fresno County is actively addressing access to food stamps in the County and has increased outreach activities that resulted in an 80% increase in the nonassistance Food Stamp Program participation from Fiscal Year 1999-00 to 2003-04; and

WHEREAS, Community Food Bank is undertaking a partnership with Fresno County, the Congressional Hunger Center, Fresno Metro Ministry, Foodlink for Tulare County, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Western Region Office and other County businesses and organizations to continue to increase County residents’ access to the Food Stamp Program through widespread outreach efforts and cooperation with Community Based Organizations.

Now, THEREFORE, as the Food Stamp Program contributes to the current and future health and well-being of the people of Fresno County, Be It Resolved, that we the members of the Board of Supervisors do hereby proclaim the year leading to the 2005 holiday season as Food and Nutrition Access Year in Fresno County. We call upon the communities of Fresno County to work with State and Federal agencies to improve access to the Food Stamp Program to strengthen this region’s people and economy and to improve the health of our county.

ADOPTED by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors this 14th day of December 2004.

Susan B. Anderson, Chairman

Phil Larson

Judith Case

Henry Perea

Bob Waterston



THE COMMUNITY VOICE: THE EDITORIAL SECTION

What is the editorial section?

The editorial section is the section of the paper in which the editors of the paper and others express their opinions on important issues facing the community. This section of the newspaper is typically well read by key community leaders and decision makers who can help ensure the success of your efforts. Below are several tips for getting your messages and information on these pages. Keep in mind that the more you can tie your outreach efforts in to local happenings, the greater the likelihood of getting published.

What is a letter to the editor?

Letters to the editor are written by readers in response to an article that appeared within the past few days and submitted for publication in the newspaper. Keep on top of local news coverage around hunger, poverty, or families in need. This type of news coverage provides an opportunity for you to respond with helpful information.

What if no one contacts me about my letter to the editor?

If you have sent your letter to the editor and have not heard anything within a week, make a follow up call to check on its status. Be aware that editors receive hundreds of letters and may not immediately respond. A letter to the editor on a specific topic has a better chance of being published if more than one person or group responds. This is a good time to rally your partners and ask them to write to the paper as well; each letter, however, should be individually drafted. Form letters are usually ignored.

What is an opinion-editorial (op-ed)?

An op-ed is an article written by someone expressing their opinion about an important issue. Op-eds are submitted by community members. Editors decide which to print in the paper. Op-eds are an excellent forum to let people know about the benefits of the Food Stamp Program because they allow you to share your point of view with much greater detail and persuasion than a short letter will permit.

What if no one contacts me about my op-ed?

Due to limited space, not every op-ed that is submitted can be printed. Most op-ed editors will respond to your submission within a week or two. If you have not heard back in that time frame, or if your piece is particularly time-sensitive, it is perfectly acceptable to call and ask about its status.

TIPS TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

- Check out the newspaper's guidelines for publishing letters to the editor, usually printed on the editorial page itself.
- Begin by referring to the article to which you're responding, including its title and the date it appeared in print.
- Resist the urge to say everything you know. Keep your letter concise and make one clear point. Refer to the talking points at the end of this section for useful language.



TIPS TO GET AN OP-ED PUBLISHED ON THE VALUE OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

- **Learn the rules.** Research the newspapers’ specific rules about submissions, such as word count, before you start writing. This information may be posted on the outlet’s web site.
- **Make contact.** Call the editorial page editors of the newspapers and talk to them about your column idea. They may have ideas about the direction you are taking that will increase the likelihood of being published.
- **Use a hook.** Include a “hook” or catchy aspect in your piece. Has there recently been a news story about hunger that would make an op-ed on the Food Stamp Program timely? Perhaps there is new data on local poverty rates, or a special event coming up that will provide a hook.
- **Use examples.** Capture the reader’s interest with illustrations, anecdotes, and personal stories. These persuasive tools help explain complicated issues and bring the human element to your op-ed.
- **Stick to facts and solid arguments.** Avoid alienating readers with inflammatory or accusatory remarks.
- **Make a specific recommendation.** State your opinion on the issue.
- **Make a unique point.** Offer a new point of view even if the newspaper itself editorialized recently about hunger or poverty.
- **End with a bang.** Summarize your argument and leave readers with information, advice, or an idea they or the community can act on, such as a challenge to increase enrollment of their neighbors and family members who are eligible.

What is an editorial board meeting?

Most newspapers have editorial boards who determine the position that the newspaper will take in its printed editorials. These representatives from the newspaper meet regularly to consider those positions. Meeting with this board as a group or with individual board members allows you to influence editorial coverage of hunger and food stamp issues. As a result of an editorial board meeting, a reporter may be assigned to cover the issue, or an editorial may appear in the paper.

Also consider joining an advisory board, county board, or nutrition board, if one exists in your community. Look to this group of individuals to present hunger and other related topics to the editorial board. There is a chance there will be no immediate outcome, but the meeting will introduce you and your partners to influential individuals at the paper, and position you as a knowledgeable source about the Food Stamp Program. These are important relationships to cultivate, so follow up with new information from time to time.



POINTERS TO SET UP AN EDITORIAL BOARD MEETING WITH A NEWSPAPER



- **Plan your timing.** You'll grab a few minutes of a board member's precious time in the same way that you'll get the attention of a beat reporter: a strong peg to a current news story.



- **Make an appointment.** Call the newspaper and ask who organizes editorial board meetings. In most instances, an assistant will either connect you directly to a board member or ask you to send a letter or e-mail outlining your request. Most papers reserve regular hours for the board to meet, generally between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The meetings are usually held in a small conference room at the newspaper's offices.



- **Assemble a team.** Rally your partners. Assemble a diverse group to meet with the editorial board, with each person having different perspectives and experiences related to food stamps and hunger. Participants might include the head of a local food bank, a local grocer, and an elected official. Let the newspaper know ahead of time whom you are bringing.



- **Rehearse your presentation.** Designate one person to act as the spokesperson and introduce the issue (e.g., "Many people go hungry unnecessarily and aren't receiving the food stamp benefits they need. When people use food stamps, everyone in the community benefits."). Limit your remarks to 15 or 20 minutes.



- **Leave written information behind.** After the presentation, the members of the editorial board generally ask questions (see the Q&A at the end of this section for helpful hints). Be sure to leave written information about your organization, hunger, how food stamps can help and their positive impact on your community, etc.



SAMPLE OP-ED: URBAN JUSTICE

ANOTHER VOICE

Stamp Out Myths About Food Stamps

Program costs city nothing, helps in several ways

By Shelly Reed

It is a common myth that Food Stamps drain money from the economy. In fact, they do just the opposite. When people use Food Stamps in your neighborhood they are providing business for grocery stores, bodegas and markets, and they are fueling the economy and creating jobs.

So where is the money coming from? Food Stamps are funded by the federal government, not by local or state budgets. The money is out there, and if you don't use it in your community, then people in some other community will.

A recent report from the New York City Council, looking at the USDA 2004 "Funding Overview," estimated that the city could receive as much as \$900 million in additional federal funds if all eligible New Yorkers applied for Food Stamp benefits. And according to the Nutrition Consortium of New York State, the city could be losing more than \$1 billion in revenue per year due to program underutilization. It estimates that for every Food Stamp dollar used, \$1.84 is generated in economic activity.

As of last September, only 54.5 percent of

eligible individuals were receiving Food Stamps, and since 1995 Food Stamp participation by the eligible population went down 36.6 percent.

Also, Food Stamps, by providing a needed economic boost for individuals in danger of losing their homes, can prevent new cases of homelessness.

East Side State Sen. Liz Krueger says, "Food Stamps is a win-win for low-income New Yorkers, our retail sector, and the public at large, by decreasing hunger and increasing food sales." She further asserts that "the Federal Food Stamp program brings hundreds of millions of dollars into New York City's economy by providing money for food for low-income New Yorkers, who immediately spend the funds at local stores, creating jobs and generating revenue in the local economy."

According to the West Side Campaign Against Hunger, at the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, located on West 86th Street and West End Avenue, only 37 percent of 9,000-plus households that came in for emergency food were receiving Food Stamps. That was during a time when the pantry saw both increased demand and decreased supplies of

food.

Food Stamps are an underutilized resource for many reasons. Some people are embarrassed to apply, but food stamps are not a handout, they are an entitlement, and with the new food card, which works like a debit card, there are no longer embarrassing coupons to rip out while in line for groceries.

Statistics provided by the city's Human Resource Administration reflect that more than half of Food Stamp recipients in New York City do not receive public assistance or income from Social Security. They are the working poor. And there are a great number of these working poor, elderly and disabled individuals living on the Upper East Side and Upper West Side who are unaware that they may be eligible for Food Stamps.

By letting go of any negative perceptions of Food Stamps, we can encourage these individuals to apply. In doing so, we can improve both our local economy and the lives of potential Food Stamp recipients.

You can now apply online, at <http://www.otda.state.ny.us>.

Shelly Reed works with the nonprofit Urban Justice Center in the Homelessness Outreach and Prevention Project.



PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY CALENDAR LISTINGS

Newspapers, radio and TV stations, and local access/community cable TV channels often have time or space set aside for a calendar listing of public events happening in and around a city or State. This publicity is free and easy to obtain.

Most media outlets that have a calendar section assign a specific staff member — usually a calendar editor — to receive submissions and compile the listings.

Respect the media outlet's deadlines. A general rule of thumb is to submit listing information a few weeks in advance; however, it is best to contact the specific outlet to determine timing and preferences (fax, e-mail, U.S. mail) for receiving calendar information. This is also a perfect opportunity to inquire whether or not the outlet accepts corresponding images and, if so, what the preferred format is (hard copy, JPEG, TIF) and the resolution or image size needed.

If you are submitting a calendar listing by U.S. mail, it is recommended that you send a cover letter and listing two to three weeks before the event date. Remember to put your letter on your organization's letterhead; if you are submitting an image along with your letter, be sure to include a sample caption.

A CALENDAR LISTING SHOULD CONTAIN:

- **Who**
- **What**
- **Where**
- **When**
- **Contact name and phone number**
- **Cost, if any**



COMMUNITY CALENDAR LISTING TEMPLATE

[DATE]

Dear Community Calendar Editor,

Too many low-income individuals and families in [NAME OF STATE/CITY/TOWN] are not getting the food they need. In fact, [X NUMBER] low-income people in our community are at risk for hunger and poor nutrition, and many of these are children. Studies indicate that, nationally, about 50 percent of those eligible for food stamps are not getting the benefits they need. Here in [NAME OF STATE/CITY/TOWN], [INSERT STATE/LOCAL STATISTIC, IF POSSIBLE].

The Food Stamp Program is the cornerstone of the Federal nutrition assistance safety net. Today, the program provides more than 8.2 million households and 21 million low-income Americans with nutrition assistance.

To increase enrollment at the [STATE/LOCAL] level, [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] has embarked on a major outreach effort to help low-income individuals and families learn about their eligibility for food stamp benefits and how to apply. On [DATE AND TIME], [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] will be [EVENT INFORMATION DETAILS] at [LOCATION].

Please include the following notice in your community calendar listing. If you have any questions about our program, please contact me at [PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you.

[CONTACT NAME]
[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

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**SAMPLE COMMUNITY CALENDAR LISTING:
FARMER'S MARKET GENERIC**

Food Stamp Prescreening at Farmer's Market

Millions of low-income people are eligible to receive food stamp benefits, but only about half are enrolled in the Food Stamp Program. Community Partnership will be conducting food stamp eligibility prescreening at the Farmer's Market on Wednesday, September 23, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., to help interested persons determine whether they qualify for food stamps. Stop by to learn more about the program. A few minutes of your time can help put healthy and nutritious food on your table. For more information, please call (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

**SAMPLE COMMUNITY CALENDAR LISTING:
PROJECT BREAD**



Food assistance for seniors

Are you struggling to put food on the table? Elderly and disabled people are able to apply for food stamps by mail. And recent changes have increased the benefit level for many Social Security recipients.

Call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline at 800-645-8333, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., to see if you are eligible for food stamps or find out about other food resources in the community. Bilingual staff are available. Or visit www.gettingfood-stamps.org.



ANOTHER **BERRY**
GOOD IDEA

FOR OUTREACH



RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAS)

What is a public service announcement?

Public Service Announcements, or PSAs, are public service messages that broadcasters air free of charge as part of their community service programs. Media outlets are required to donate airtime for PSAs.

Does the FSP have PSAs that my organization can use?

The FSP has a number of radio PSAs available for you to provide to local media outlets. All of the PSAs use messages that relate to target audiences. Like the national paid advertising, these messages also encourage people who are eligible for food stamp benefits to apply.

Where can I find PSAs?

Included in this toolkit is a disc of PSAs that you can share with local radio stations. You can also listen to them, and stations can download them, at www.fns.usda.gov/cga/radio.htm. Feel free to customize these PSAs with your own toll-free number and local message. At the end of this section, you will also find scripts of these same PSAs that you can produce and adapt locally.

Can FNS' paid radio ads used be used as PSAs?

No. The FNS ads were negotiated exclusively for commercial use, not for PSA distribution.

What are my chances of placing PSAs?

Because radio stations can accommodate only a limited number of these “free” advertising spots, and because there are many groups that want to increase awareness of their causes, pitching and placing PSAs can be challenging work. However, because the Food Stamp Program offers such a tangible benefit to the community, the chances are good that the PSAs will be used. Ask the reporter for a contact at the station who is responsible for PSA placement.

How do I pitch a PSA?

As with a news story, the best way to pitch PSAs is to call or send a letter to the PSA director at the radio station, present the local problem or situation, and show how you are providing a solution. EXAMPLE: “There are 100,000 hungry men, women, and children in Anytown. Many of these people may be eligible for food stamp benefits, but don’t know it. Food stamps can help them put good, healthy food on the table. At the same time, the local economy benefits from food stamp purchases.”

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO PITCH PSAs?

PSAs can be used at any time of year, but your pitch to radio stations will be more effective if you can find a “hook” to encourage them to run the announcements. This could include:

END OF SCHOOL

In communities that don’t participate in the Summer Food Service Program, many children who receive at least one full, healthy meal a day during the school year lose that safety net in summer, when school is out.

HOLIDAY SEASON

People are acutely aware of hunger and nutrition issues around the holidays.

DURING NATIONAL OR LOCAL “AWARENESS” WEEKS OR MONTHS

Some awareness weeks may make audiences more receptive to food stamp information — for example, National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (which is the week before Thanksgiving) and National Nutrition Month (March).

WHEN PAID ADVERTISEMENTS ARE RUNNING

Paid advertisements from the national media campaign may be running in your area (you can find out by visiting www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/out-reach.htm). If paid advertisements are airing locally, use that information to leverage your PSA request.



10 STEPS IN PLACING PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The steps in placing Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are similar to pitching regular stories to your local media.

STEP 1 | Compile Media List

Compile a media list of stations that are likely to have audiences who may be eligible for food stamp benefits and that are also likely to run PSAs. Gather contact information and add it to your list. Many stations have PSA directors who are responsible for determining which PSAs the station will air and when. (See the Media Outreach section of this toolkit for more information about media lists.)

STEP 2 | Background Information

Before pitching your PSAs to a local radio station, learn more about the radio station, its programming (country, news, etc.), and its audience. Check out the station's web site. The more informed you sound about the importance of food stamp messages to the station's audience, the more effective you will be. (See the Media Outreach section of this toolkit for more information about researching news outlets.)

STEP 3 | Make Introductory Calls

Make introductory pitch calls before sending your PSAs to the radio stations. Use these initial calls to double-check your contact information and build a rapport with public service and community affairs professionals. Ask for information about PSA submission requirements, such as format or length.

STEP 4 | Make the Pitch

A sample pitch script is provided in this toolkit. The script provides an outline of the key points you need to cover during a phone conversation or voicemail message with the community or public affairs contact. Use the script as a reference to make sure you cover all of the important points. Practice your pitch aloud at least once before calling. Do not read directly from the script as you talk. Downloadable radio PSAs are available on the FNS web site (www.fns.usda.gov/cgalradio.htm).

STEP 5 | Deliver PSAs to Stations

Consider personally delivering your PSAs and a cover letter to the stations on your list. If you have not yet established a relationship, mail your materials. Follow up about a week later.

STEP 6 | Make Follow up Calls

If needed, continue placing follow up calls for several weeks to find out if your announcement will run.

STEP 7 | Provide Additional Information

Once you begin pitching your PSAs, some radio stations may request more information about food stamp benefits or your work to reduce hunger. The Media Outreach section of this toolkit contains media and messaging materials to help prepare your spokesperson.

STEP 8 | Measure Success

Ask your contacts at the radio stations if they can provide you with specific information on when and how many times your PSA was aired. Track the success of your effort by identifying any increase in the number of calls to your toll-free number during the period when the PSAs ran.

STEP 9 | Present Findings

Compile your evaluation findings into a memo or presentation to share with your organization.

STEP 10 | Take It to the Next Level

Based on the success of your PSA campaign, you may want to consider a formal partnership with the station, perhaps along with a commercial underwriter such as a grocery store. For more information about partnerships, see the Partnership section of this toolkit.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT PITCH SCRIPT TEMPLATE

(Note: This sample script targets stations with elderly audiences.)

“Hello, my name is XX and I am calling from [YOUR ORGANIZATION]. Is this a good time? (If not, ask when you can call them back.) You may not be aware that XX elderly people in [NAME OF STATE/CITY] are having trouble putting food on the table, and are not taking advantage of help that they qualify for.

“[YOUR ORGANIZATION] is hoping you will help us address this situation by broadcasting PSAs about the Food Stamp Program. By spreading the message about food stamp benefits, older members of our community will learn more about the program and how to enroll.

“Is this something you think you or your station would be interested in using? I’d be happy to send you some sample PSAs. Please feel free to contact me at XX if you have any questions about the Food Stamp Program or the PSAs. Again, my name is XX and my number is XX.”

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RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATE COVER LETTER FOR A LOCAL EVENT

To: Public Affairs Director
 From: [NAME & ORGANIZATION]
 RE: [CITY/STATE] Food Stamp Program Outreach Effort (You can add additional information like “To Help Elderly Access Benefits”)
 DATE: [DATE]

Only about half of those eligible to receive food stamp benefits are currently enrolled. In [STATE/CITY/TOWN], low-income seniors are feeling the pinch due to bills and other expenses, and are not getting the proper nutrition. By defraying the cost of groceries, food stamps allow recipients to use their limited incomes on other important basic needs like housing, medical costs, transportation, and utilities.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION] is kicking off a “Benefit Bus” tour on [DATE] to help seniors in [STATE/CITY/TOWN] access food stamp benefits without the challenge of finding transportation to a local food stamp office. This bus tour will span X days and X locations from [TIME]. Food stamp outreach coordinators will be on hand to prescreen seniors and provide a checklist of necessary paperwork.

Below are scripts for PSAs notifying your listeners about upcoming enrollment activities. We would appreciate it if your station would read these announcements as often as possible before the event kicks off on [DATE] and throughout the [TIME FRAME OF EVENT]. Thank you in advance for helping connect seniors in [STATE/CITY/TOWN] to the nutrition assistance they need.

RADIO (15 seconds)

Food stamps help you buy the groceries you need. You may qualify and not know it. [YOUR ORGANIZATION]’s “Benefit Bus” tour will stop at assisted living locations in [NAME OF CITY/TOWN] from [DATE] to [DATE]. Find out more by calling XXX-XXX-XXXX.

RADIO (30 seconds)

With bills and doctor visits, expenses can add up quickly. Sometimes, that makes it hard to put good food on the table. Food stamps help you buy the groceries you need. You may qualify and not know it. Eligibility for food stamps is based on income and other expenses. For most seniors, the benefit is enough to make a real difference.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION]’s “Benefit Bus” tour will stop at assisted living locations in [NAME OF CITY/TOWN] from [DATE] to [DATE]. Find out more by calling XXX-XXX-XXXX.

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RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATE COVER LETTER USING USDA-PRODUCED PSAs

To: Public Affairs Director
From: [NAME & ORGANIZATION]
RE: Food Stamp Program Outreach Effort
DATE: [DATE]

Have you ever had to choose between paying the heating bill or having enough food for dinner? Have you been faced with the impossible choice of buying medicine for your sick child or food for the family table? Every day, thousands of people in [NAME OF STATE/TOWN/CITY] grapple with issues like these. But they don't have to.

The Food Stamp Program helps low-income people purchase nutritious, healthy food. However, only half of those eligible to receive food stamp benefits are currently enrolled.

At [YOUR ORGANIZATION], we are working hard to raise awareness about food stamp benefits in our community. Many people have a difficult time making ends meet. By helping out with the grocery bill, food stamp benefits allow recipients to use their limited income on other important basic needs like housing, medical costs, transportation, and utilities. We are interested in working with your station to inform listeners about the Food Stamp Program and how to enroll.

In addition to PSA scripts and readers, taped PSAs are available. We can send you these fully produced spots via e-mail or on a CD. We would appreciate it if your station could roll these announcements into your programming and air them as often as possible. *(Mention how you will follow up with the station and how they can contact you.)*

Thank you in advance for helping our community "eat right when money's tight."

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**SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT
COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM OF MADISON COUNTY INC.**



*Helping People
Help Themselves*

3 East Main Street
P.O. Box 249
Morrisville, NY
13408
315-684-3144
800-721-2271
Fax: 315-684-9650

112 Center Street
P.O. Box 384
Canastota, NY
13032
315-697-3588
800-280-4717
Fax: 315-697-3690

6 Cambridge Avenue
P.O. Box 249
Morrisville, NY
13408
315-684-7862
866-684-7862
Fax: 315-684-9940

Working Solutions
1286 Upper Lenox
Ave.
Oneida, NY 13421
Located in the
Wal-Mart Plaza

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 384
Canastota, NY
13032
(315) 363-2400

Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.

www.capmadco.org

LIVE ANNOUNCER READ COPY AND INSTRUCTIONS

ANNOUNCER: Food Stamps Make America Stronger

Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc., and Madison County Department of Social Services, announce the launch of the County's Food Stamp application website - www.MadisonCountyFoodStamps.org

www.MadisonCountyFoodStamps.org allows MADISON COUNTY RESIDENTS to find out if they are eligible for Food Stamps and to submit a Food Stamp application online.

If you or someone you know would like more information about Food Stamps, log on to www.MadisonCountyFoodStamps.org or call Toll-free 1 – 866 – 684 – 7862

COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR MADISON COUNTY

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT READERS

What are “readers”?

“Readers” are brief announcements promoting the Food Stamp Program. Readers are given to radio stations so that their on-air talent can read them live whenever time permits.

SAMPLE READERS

:10 SECONDS

SAMPLE 1

The Food Stamp Program helps low-income people eat right when money’s tight. Call 1-800-221-5689 today. (6.5)

A message from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (3.5)

SAMPLE 2

The Food Stamp Program can help you or someone you know to eat right when money’s tight. Call 1-800-221-5689 today. (6.5)

A message from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (3.5)

:15 SECONDS

SAMPLE 1

The Food Stamp Program can help stretch your budget at the grocery store. It’ll help you eat right when money’s tight. Call 1-800-221-5689 today. (11.5)

A message from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (3.5)

SAMPLE 2

Keeping up with the fast pace of life takes eating right, especially when money’s tight. If you have low income, consider the Food Stamp Program. Call 1-800-221-5689 today. (11.5)

A message from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (3.5)

SAMPLE 3

Attention low-income seniors — the Food Stamp Program can help you eat right when money’s tight. Call 1-800-221-5689 for more information. (11.5)

A message from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (3.5)

Format for readers should include time for message and tagline.



PLANT THE SEEDS
REAP THE
BENEFITS



PROMISING PRACTICES

What is a promising practice?

“Promising practices” are everywhere. New ideas or refinements of existing ideas are continuously being implemented by State and local programs to educate and help individuals access their programs. Promising practices may involve big or little changes to existing projects to improve service delivery. They may or may not have evidence of positive results from evaluations; in fact, they might just have a general intuitive appeal rather than a proven effect. Promising practices sometimes prompt completely different ideas. Sometimes, promising practices are those “A-ha!” moments — something that makes sense but you did not think significant right away. Unfortunately, practical knowledge in one community that could lead to significant improvements in another often goes unshared.

Who is compiling our promising practices?

The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is compiling promising practices to assist States, local agencies, community and faith-based organizations, and others to share their best ideas.

Why is the FSP sharing the practices?

FSP’s collection of promising practices is an effort to find and share outreach or customer service models that can help increase participation in the FSP. Through this collection of promising practices, timely information on program and policy innovations is disseminated so that all stakeholders may benefit from the experiences of their peers across the country. The sharing of ideas can stimulate program changes, spark creative exchanges, and serve as a launching pad for the next generation of program innovations. It can inspire a dynamic examination of ways to improve service delivery systems for people eligible for, applying for, and participating in the FSP.

Whom can I contact for more information?

The project’s name and a contact person are listed by each promising practice. The FSP has developed an informal process of collecting promising practices. We encourage you to get in touch with the listed contact people for more details. The web site is updated continually so check back often.

PROMISING PRACTICES ARE ONLINE

Go to: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach and click on “Promising Practices.”

? ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW IDEA?

On the web site, you will find information that you can use in your own project. You can learn about promising practices from around the country as well as from other programs.

? WHO CAN USE THE WEB SITE?

The web site is for State and local food stamp agencies as well as Federal/State program staff, volunteers, community members, policymakers, funders, researchers, or anyone else who wants to develop a project or improve the quality of their existing programs.



How can I share my promising practice?

Submit your practice to us through the FNS web site. Tell us about something new you did or how you put an innovative twist on an existing idea. Go ahead and brag about the response you received — from your co-workers, managers, or your customers. This is an opportunity to shine while you give others ideas to improve or develop their projects. Worried that your idea may not be new? Not to worry; something that is “old hat” to some may be a complete revelation to others.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PROMISING PRACTICES

MEDIA OUTREACH

Vermont – Partnering with Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger and Vermont Grocer’s Association, the State food stamp agency held a press conference at a supermarket to announce changes in the FSP that make it easier to apply.

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

California – In partnership with the local food bank, Alameda County Social Services facilitated periodic Food Stamp Program outreach trainings for organizations interested in helping their own clients apply for food stamps. Participants received a training manual complete with tools and resources to help them get started in their own food stamp outreach efforts.

California – Alameda County Food Bank provided on-site “Food Stamp Enrollment Clinics” for clients of other community-based organizations. Bilingual staff from the food bank prescreened clients for potential eligibility and assisted them in completing the application.

Connecticut – The State agency sent mailings to soup kitchens, food pantries, and shelters to ask them to make food stamp applications and information available to their customers.

New York – The Korean Grocers Association in New York City published food stamp information in Korean.

Pennsylvania – Pathmark grocery stores in underserved areas of Philadelphia hosted eligibility prescreening events.

Virginia – Americorps volunteers in rural counties of the State went door to door to provide information on FSP. They talked to people about food stamp benefits while grocery shopping, hosted outreach gatherings, prescreened for potential eligibility, and helped complete application forms.

USING PSAS

California – The Food Bank of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties aired television ads to market the nutrition and health benefits of the FSP.

California – The Food Bank of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties developed a 5-minute video in English and Spanish that answers 12 commonly asked questions about food stamp benefits. The video was distributed to health and social service agencies on California’s central coast.



DISASTER OUTREACH:

THE HEAT IS ON

– REACHING OUT AFTER A DISASTER



DISASTER OUTREACH

OUTREACH FOR THE DISASTER FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

What is the Disaster Food Stamp Program (DFSP) and how does it operate?

After a natural or man-made disaster occurs and a Presidential declaration of disaster with a provision for individual assistance has been made, State agencies can request approval from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to operate a DFSP to provide temporary food assistance to households. FNS approves operation of the DFSP once grocery stores are operational and telecommunications and electricity have been restored, as DFSP benefits are delivered on Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, which require telephones and electricity for redemption. Generally, States request and FNS approves operation of the DFSP a week or more after a disaster has occurred.

The DFSP helps people buy food when they are experiencing economic hardships as a result of the disaster (loss of jobs, loss of food because of power outages, damages to home and personal possessions, etc.). Although every State agency maintains a general DFSP Plan for use in time of disaster, State agencies do tailor DFSP policies and procedures to fit the community's specific needs following each disaster, so every DFSP is unique.

How does the DFSP differ from the FSP?

The DFSP is different from the FSP in some important ways:

- Families who are not normally eligible for the FSP may be eligible for the DFSP. During the eligibility process, a household's short-term, disaster-related expenses are considered.
- Students, strikers, noncitizens, and persons subject to work requirements are not barred from the DFSP as they are from the FSP.
- Rules surrounding verification, income, and resources are relaxed.

- Recipients receive the maximum food stamp benefit for their household size.
- The period to apply for the DFSP is short, generally 1 week.
- State agencies may operate mass application sites at fairgrounds, stadiums, or other easily accessible locations that can serve large populations. For very small disasters, State agencies may operate the DFSP out of social services offices. All applications for the DFSP are distributed to prospective clients and collected at these sites.

How are ongoing FSP participants aided in a DFSP?

Aid to FSP participants will depend upon the disaster. Your State agency may decide to issue replacement benefits for lost or damaged food. Additionally, a supplement or additional benefits may be provided to ensure participants receive the maximum level of benefits for their household size. Sometimes these benefits are paid automatically – in other cases, participants need to complete an affidavit attesting to disaster losses to qualify.

Why should my agency conduct outreach during disasters?

Since each DFSP operation is unique and many participants are first-time applicants, your agency must be prepared to clearly communicate what benefits are available, who is eligible, how to apply, and how to use food stamp benefits. Because the DFSP generally operates for a 1-week period, providing timely and detailed information is essential.

In addition, FSP participants may need to know how to verify food loss for replacement benefits, how to obtain supplemental benefits, or whether or not benefits will be automatically replaced.



Because the days following a disaster are often chaotic, news about the DFSP might be overshadowed by other disaster-related issues, or misinformation might be circulated. Ongoing outreach is essential to correcting misperceptions and providing factual information to disaster victims about the nutrition benefits to which they may be entitled.

Why should my agency partner with community and faith-based organizations during disasters?

Some disaster victims will turn to trusted organizations in the community for information and help. Affected people may already be interacting with these organizations for other needs, such as clothing, shelter, or medical care. These organizations are in a position to help your agency provide accurate information about the DFSP to potentially eligible individuals.

Additionally, community and faith-based organizations might have personnel in parts of the affected areas where your staff are not present. They may also have other resources that are useful during disasters, such as media contacts, Web sites, toll-free numbers, and translators.

How can my agency involve these community organizations in our disaster preparedness discussions?

Convene a “get-ready” meeting before a disaster occurs. Invite grocers, community organizations, and faith-based groups. At this meeting, consider conducting a needs assessment. A needs assessment will identify existing outreach services and resources in your community. It will also provide your agency with a better understanding of the number and nature of diverse groups in your community. In addition, it will help you identify geographic areas most prone to disasters, or communities, locations, and neighborhoods that may need unique assistance in the aftermath of a disaster, such as language assistance. Information identified in the needs assessment will not only help you effectively prepare to coordinate outreach efforts during a disaster, but will also reinforce cooperation for ongoing outreach.

Can my State agency include a DFSP contingency plan in its State outreach plan?

Yes. A State outreach plan may include contingency plans for food stamp outreach during a disaster. Preparation is critical to adequate disaster response. It enables a State to quickly implement activities that have been carefully planned.

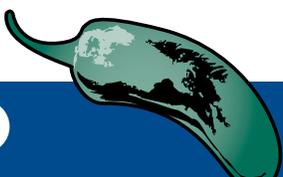
During a DFSP, what outreach activities can be reimbursed by FNS?

To be eligible for reimbursement, partners must secure approval from the State agency in advance of implementing any DFSP outreach activities. Allowable outreach activities during a disaster may include:

- Distributing information about the DFSP to disaster victims;
- Funding a toll-free number;
- Distributing information to media outlets;
- Translating DFSP outreach materials into other languages;
- Prescreening activities that do not involve accessing the State eligibility system or existing client case files;
- Distributing and helping prospective participants fill out DFSP application forms at disaster sites; and/or
- Greeting prospective participants at DFSP application entrances and directing them to appropriate areas.

How can I learn more about the DFSP?

For complete information on operating a DFSP, please see the Disaster Food Stamp Program Guidance on the FNS Web site: http://www.fns.usda.gov/disasters/response/DFSP_Handbook/handbook.htm



BEFORE A DISASTER STRIKES

STEP 1 | DEVELOP A PLAN

Convene or participate in a “get-ready” meeting with community and faith-based partners.

- Explain how the DFSP can provide food assistance to those adversely affected by disasters, whether man-made or due to natural causes.
- Explain how disaster victims already enrolled in the regular FSP may be assisted with replacement benefits.
- Discuss strengths and needs of each partner in terms of disaster response.
- Discuss what community partner staff can and cannot do during a disaster.
- Plan and document how you will work together to prepare for potential future disasters. Be very specific about the best ways to get the word out, how that can be done in an emergency, and who will do it.
- Develop a contact list of participating members with multiple ways of reaching each party in the event of a disaster. Identify who will be responsible for periodically updating this information and on what schedule.
- Discuss what resources, such as toll-free numbers or Web sites, can be shared in the event of a disaster.

STEP 2 | DEVELOP OR UPDATE A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- If your community has not conducted a needs assessment, take steps to complete one. Consider if volunteers or staff will complete the needs assessment.
- If your community has previously conducted a needs assessment, reevaluate the findings and update corresponding next steps.
- Identify existing outreach services and resources in your community.
- Identify partners with special expertise, such as ethnic media contacts or translators.
- Identify vulnerable populations in your community, such as those in certain geographic areas or those with particular language needs, who may be most affected by potential disasters or who will need extra support accessing help following the disaster.

10 STEPS TO PLAN FOR DFSP OUTREACH

- 1 | Develop a plan
- 2 | Develop or update a needs assessment
- 3 | Add language to State Outreach plan
- 4 | Describe outreach activities in the State DSFP plan
- 5 | Plan for media activities
- 6 | Maintain good relationships with partners
- 7 | Implement activities in your outreach plan
- 8 | Develop new partnerships
- 9 | Connect DSFP victims to FSP
- 10 | Thank staff and partners and share lessons learned



STEP 3 | ADD LANGUAGE TO THE STATE OUTREACH PLAN

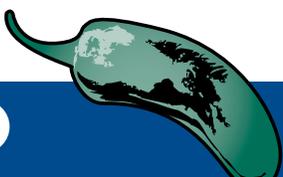
- Develop a State outreach plan and add a contingency plan for outreach activities to respond to a disaster.
- If you already have a State Outreach Plan, add a contingency section for outreach for the DFSP.
- Include a list of allowable activities and identify which agency will handle each activity. Advanced planning improves your disaster response. Knowing you have the tools and resources in place will reduce stress and improve your ability to respond to a disaster, when or if it occurs.
- Include drafts or template materials that your State might use as part of your media response.
- Maintain a hard copy of the contingency plan in a secure offsite location. If there is a disaster, you might not have access to a computer or your office.

STEP 4 | DESCRIBE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES IN THE STATE DFSP PLAN

- Describe your disaster outreach activities in your State DFSP Plan. If your State does not have an outreach plan, provide sufficient details on outreach activities and contacts. If your State agency has an outreach plan, make references to that plan.
- Develop templates of outreach materials, such as flyers, posters, and a Web page, so that they can be finalized quickly when needed. Consider the alternatives for printing and distributing in an emergency situation.
- Maintain a hard copy of the plan in a secure offsite location. If there is a disaster, you might not have access to a computer or your office.
- Identify a community liaison whose sole responsibility during a disaster is to coordinate and share information between the State agency and community partners.

STEP 5 | PLAN FOR MEDIA ACTIVITIES DURING A DISASTER

- Develop and articulate State policy on who initiates or handles media inquiries in your State DFSP Plan and State Outreach Plan.
- Identify State spokesperson(s) in the plans. There may be more than one contact.
- Develop a list of media outlets (television, radio, or print) for the DFSP. These outlets can inform your audience of details about the DFSP when it is implemented. Include phone numbers, fax numbers, and addresses so that you have multiple ways to reach the media.



STEP 6 | MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS

- Keep in touch with your community and faith-based partners. Check with them periodically to confirm their roles and responsibilities and to update your contact lists.
- If your State contracts outreach activities to organizations, contractual oversight will require more frequent contacts.
- Consider holding a practice drill, role-playing game, or table-top exercise to practice what you will do in the event of a real disaster.

WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES

STEP 7 | IMPLEMENT ACTIVITIES IN YOUR OUTREACH PLAN

- Make contact with outreach partners and implement your contingency plan.
- Provide accurate and consistent messages to your partners via the community liaison, especially as you make changes to the application process, application sites, or other aspects of the program that affect applicant eligibility and access.
- Remind State employees in disaster areas of media procedures. This is important because you may have employees from other States with different media policies.

STEP 8 | DEVELOP NEW PARTNERSHIPS OR CONDUCT ADDITIONAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- Initiate partnerships with new organizations to meet unanticipated needs.
- Expand outreach activities, if needed. Don't feel limited. You may conduct necessary activities even though they are not referenced in your State Outreach Plan.



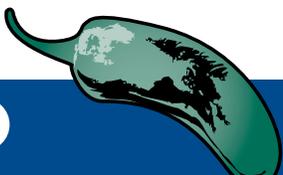
WHEN THE DISASTER IS OVER

STEP 9**CONNECT DFSP VICTIMS TO
THE REGULAR FSP**

- DFSP recipients who wish to apply for the regular FSP will need to follow the normal food stamp application process. Some households may have questions about FSP requirements or may need assistance in filling out application forms or securing verification documents. Others may need other types of assistance such as clothing or household goods. Your partners can play an important role to help you provide the services your client might need during this stressful time.
- Let the media and other opinion leaders know how the DFSP and regular FSP responded to the needs of families and the broader community.

STEP 10**THANK STAFF AND PARTNERS FOR THEIR EFFORTS
AND SHARE LESSONS LEARNED**

- Recognize employees and partners for a job well done.
- Make changes to your outreach and disaster plans based on what worked and what didn't work.
- Visit the FNS Web site and prepare promising practices for disaster outreach:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/promising/Default.htm>



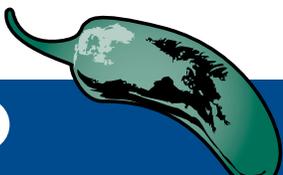
10 IDEAS FOR DFSP OUTREACH

- 1 **Inform the media.** Use the media to spread messages about the availability of the DFSP. Be sure the identified spokesperson has the timely and correct information and an updated media list. Be sure to follow your State's procedures.
- 2 **Coordinate with other responders.** Identify the liaison to other first (disaster) responders in the community. Be sure that they have the correct information about your DFSP and can share it with disaster victims they serve.
- 3 **Engage grocery store partners.** Provide information to grocers to post, distribute in grocery bags, or announce in stores.
- 4 **Enlist faith- and community-based partners.** Enlist the help of your partners to distribute information (who can apply, when, where) about the DFSP or to perform other duties as described in your State Disaster or State Outreach Plan(s).
- 5 **Use community volunteers.** Engage volunteers to perform activities such as answering the State/local toll-free number, distributing informational materials at grocery stores, and monitoring food stamp lines to make sure potential applicants are in the correct line at disaster sites.
- 6 **Enlist community translators.** Work with community translators to translate news releases for ethnic media and informational materials and to serve as interpreters during food stamp interviews.
- 7 **Provide a toll-free number.** Set up cellular phones to use as DFSP informational numbers if land lines are not working.
- 8 **Use the remote telephone feature.** Use the remote message feature of your telephone system, if available, to announce DFSP information. If this is not available, contact FNS to ask about using the national toll-free number remote messaging feature and/or contact your State FSP EBT provider to ask if a message can be added to the customer service phone line.
- 9 **Post DFSP information on your Web site.** Provide basic information, such as who may qualify, where and when to apply, and types of verification documents, if needed.
- 10 **Develop new outreach partnerships.** Develop new outreach partnerships to provide DFSP information to disaster victims, based on what is occurring in your community.



WEB-BASED RESOURCES

FNS Disaster Assistance Home Page	http://www.fns.usda.gov/disasters/disaster.htm
FSP Disaster Handbook	http://www.fns.usda.gov/disasters/response/DFSP_Handbook/handbook.htm
Outreach State Plan Guidance	http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm
Partnership Section in State Toolkit	http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/tool-kits_state.htm
FNS press releases	http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/PressReleases/PressReleases.htm
FRAC Disaster Handbook	http://www.frac.org/pdf/dfsp05.pdf
Louisiana press releases	http://www.dss.state.la.us/departments/dss/Press_Releases.html



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

[Date]

[Name of Appropriate Contact]
[Area Code and Phone Number]
[Cell Phone]

Disaster Victims Now Eligible for Food Stamp Assistance

[City, State] – Many victims of *[disaster]* are now eligible for benefits from the Disaster Food Stamp Program.

[Quote about significance of nutrition assistance following a disaster,] said [State official.]

The United States Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service has approved a Disaster Food Stamp Program (DFSP) to allow victims of *[disaster]* in *[eligible geographic area]* to receive nutrition assistance. Eligible households will receive an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card to use to purchase food at retail locations. Eligibility criteria for the DFSP are different than for the regular Food Stamp Program (FSP.) Residents who have experienced *[describe unique disaster elements that may make residents eligible for the DFSP]* may be eligible. Other eligibility factors include *[list eligibility criteria.]*

Applications for the DFSP will be accepted until *[date.]* Residents of *[eligible geographic locations]* can apply for disaster food stamp benefits at the following locations and times:

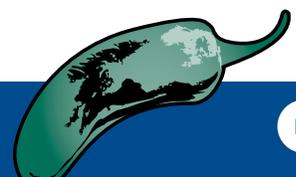
Location: *[address]*

Hours of Operation: *[hours]*

Those seeking to apply for benefits from the DFSP are encouraged to bring verification of identity and residency, if possible, with them when they apply. If the applicant’s documents have been lost in the disaster, DFSP staff can provide guidance on how applicants can prove their identity. *[List other documents that should be available at application or other information about needed verifications.]*

More information about the DFSP is available on *[Web site address and toll-free number.]*

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

[Date]

[Name of Appropriate Contact]

[Area Code and Phone Number]

[Cell Phone]

Deadline To Apply for Disaster Food Stamp Program Is *[add when]*

[City, State] – Victims of *[disaster]* are reminded that they have until *[deadline]* to apply for nutrition assistance from the Disaster Food Stamp Program (DFSP). The DFSP enables those who have experienced loss, such as *[list criteria]*, as a result of the *[disaster]* to receive food stamp benefits on an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card to purchase food at retail stores.

[Quote about the importance of applying before time runs out.] said *[State official]*. *[Quote about how many benefits have been issued to date.]*

Residents of *[geographic location]* may be eligible for nutrition assistance from the DFSP. Provisions of the DFSP are different from the regular FSP, so those affected by *[disaster]* in the designated locations are encouraged to apply to find out if they may be eligible for benefits under this program.

Applications will be accepted at the following locations until *[deadline.]*

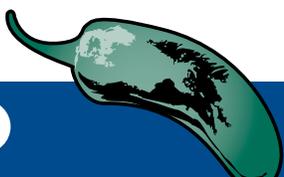
Location: *[address]*

Hours of Operation: *[hours]*

Those seeking to apply for benefits from the DFSP are encouraged to bring verification of identity and residency, if possible, with them when they apply. If the applicant’s documents have been lost in the disaster, DFSP staff can provide guidance on how applicants can prove their identity. *[List other documents that should be available at application or other information about needed verifications.]*

More information about the DFSP is available on *[Web site address and toll-free number.]*

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10

A BUNDLE OF RESOURCES

AND INFORMATION



FOOD STAMP PROGRAM (FSP) OUTREACH MATERIALS FROM USDA

Informational Food Stamp Program Resources Translated into 35 Languages

Five basic FSP documents have been translated into 35 languages and are easily downloadable for simple copying and distribution. An “I Speak” document is also available which allows a person to indicate to a caseworker or advocate what language he or she speaks so that accommodations can be made.

The following documents are available:

- **“Food Stamps Make America Stronger” (Questions and Answers About Getting and Using Food Stamps)**, *FNS-313* – A brochure that provides useful information about the FSP.
 - **“Public Charge”** – A notice to reassure immigrants that receiving food stamps will not make them public charges, so that it will not affect their immigration status.
 - **“Immigrant Eligibility Questions and Answers”** – A series of facts of interest to immigrants about eligibility for food stamp benefits, based on changes in the 2002 Farm Bill.
 - **“Documents Needed to Apply for Food Stamps”** – A list (in English and the target language) of documents that may be needed to prove eligibility for food stamp benefits.
 - **“Fact Sheet on Eligibility”** – Ten facts about the FSP for elderly (60 and older) and disabled persons.
- ▶ View and download at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm



“Food Stamps Make America Stronger” (Questions and Answers about the Food Stamp Program)

A basic brochure about FSP benefits, this resource highlights eligibility requirements and how to apply. Available in 35 languages.

- ▶ Download at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm> (English version) or www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm (in other languages)
- ▶ Order printed copies (English and Spanish only) online at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm>; document number FNS-313.
- ▶ This publication is also included (in English and Spanish) on the enclosed DVD.





“Food Stamps Make America Stronger” Posters

Colorful posters featuring the theme “Food Stamps Make America Stronger” are available free via online order form. The posters direct people to the FSP national toll-free information line and are targeted to diverse audiences. Materials available in Spanish are identified.

- ▶ View and download PDF versions at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm>.
- ▶ Order copies online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm.
- ▶ Also included on the enclosed disc.

Document number FNS-333 (Crowd); FNS-335 (Girl); FNS-351 (Girl – in Spanish); FNS-337 (Senior Man); FNS-339 (Woman/Girl); FNS-341 (Black Male); FNS-343 (Senior Woman – in Spanish); FNS-345 (Hispanic Male – in Spanish); FNS-347 (Woman in Wheelchair); and FNS-349 (Veteran).

“10 Steps to Help You Fill Your Grocery Bag Through the Food Stamp Program”

This low-literacy flyer outlines 10 steps to follow to apply for food stamp benefits.

- ▶ View and download PDF version at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/10steps.pdf.
- ▶ The flyer is also included on the enclosed disc.

“Food Stamps Make America Stronger” Flyers

The “Food Stamps Make America Stronger” theme and FSP national toll-free information line are prominently displayed on these flyers, available free via online order form. Similar to the posters, these flyers are directed to diverse audiences. Materials available in Spanish are identified.

- ▶ View and download at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/info.htm.
- ▶ Order copies online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm.
- ▶ Also included on the enclosed disc.

Document number FNS-334 (Crowd); FNS-336 (Girl); FNS-352 (Girl – in Spanish); FNS-338 (Senior Man); FNS-340 (Woman/Girl); FNS-342 (Black Male); FNS-344 (Senior Woman – in Spanish); FNS-346 (Hispanic Male – in Spanish); FNS-348 (Woman in Wheelchair); and FNS-350 (Veteran).

“Food Stamps Make America Stronger” Bookmark

Vibrant in color, this bookmark promotes the FSP on-line prescreening tool and national toll-free information line in English on one side, and Spanish on the other.

- ▶ View and download at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/general.htm.
- ▶ Order copies online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm.
- ▶ Also included on the enclosed disc.

Document number FSP-16.



Food Stamp Application Envelope

Help potential recipients compile all of the necessary materials to apply for benefits with this handy envelope featuring a checklist of verification documents.

- ▶ Order copies online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm.
- ▶ Also included on the enclosed disc.

Document number FSP-02 (comes with FSP-01, “10 Steps to Help You Fill Your Grocery Bag Through the Food Stamp Program.”)

“Food Stamps Can Help You Now” Flyer

Featuring basic information about the immigrant eligibility restorations as a result of the 2002 Farm Bill, this flyer includes the national toll-free number and is available in English and Spanish.

- ▶ Download at: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/pdfs/FSPinsertoutline.pdf (English) or www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/pdfs/FSPinsertSPoutline.pdf (Spanish)
- ▶ Also included on the enclosed disc.

“Common Food Stamp Myths Concerning Elderly Households” Flyer

This flyer features 10 common myths about food stamp benefits and the elderly and refutes them with simple facts about the FSP.

- ▶ Download at: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/Translations/English/10mythsp1.pdf.
- ▶ Also included on the enclosed disc.

“Food Stamps Make America Stronger” Magnet

This magnet can be placed on a refrigerator to serve as a reminder about the nutrition benefits of food stamps. A maximum of 200 can be ordered at one time.

- ▶ Order copies online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/order-form.htm.

Document number FNS-367.

Food Stamp Program Photo Library

Groups are encouraged to download photographs for use in communicating FSP nutrition education and outreach messages. FNS requests that these pictures be used only for promotion, informational, and educational purposes of a nonprofit nature.

- ▶ Download at www.grande.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp_album.php.
- ▶ Order print-quality files by contacting FNS directly.

“Community Hunger Champions—Helping People Eat Right When Money’s Tight” Video

This eight-minute video introduces influencers at the regional, State and local level to the Food Stamp Program Media Campaign, familiarizes viewers with campaign messages, and showcases the important role eligibility workers play in ensuring eligible individuals obtain the benefits of the Food Stamp Program. This video is a companion piece to the toolkit and will help eligibility workers and community partners understand how they can work together and utilize the outreach materials developed by FNS.

- ▶ The video is available through FNS in VHS and/or DVD format.



FOOD STAMP PROGRAM (FSP) WEB RESOURCES

GENERAL INFORMATION

Main Food Stamp Program Web Page

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/

A starting point for general information about the FSP.

History of the Food Stamp Program

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/rules/Legislation/history.htm

Provides a brief history of the FSP from 1939 to the present.

Legislation, Rules, Waivers, and Certification Policy

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/government/legislation_rules_cert.htm

Includes a waiver database showing which States have received waivers of sections of FSP rules for specific purposes or to accommodate local conditions.

USDA Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

www.usda.gov/fbc/index.html

Background information about USDA's initiatives for faith-based and community organizations.

HealthierUS

www.healthierus.gov

A central gateway to credible, accurate information to help people lead healthier lives.

GENERAL FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OUTREACH RESOURCES

Main Food Stamp Outreach Web Page

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm

A starting point for information about food stamp outreach including information about developing and submitting an optional State food stamp outreach plan for FNS approval; the food stamp outreach coalition; and promising outreach practices.

Food Stamp Program Radio PSAs

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/radio/default.htm>

A compilation of USDA's FSP public service announcements (PSAs). Also included on the enclosed DVD.

Food Stamp Outreach Coalition Information

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm>

A core group of national antihunger advocacy groups, and other groups interested in promoting the health and nutrition benefits of the FSP. These organizations work to end hunger and improve nutrition at the national level through both advocacy and outreach to local antihunger projects.

Hunger Champions Information and Applications

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/default.htm>

Established to honor local offices that provide exemplary service in assisting eligible clients to obtain food stamps.

USDA Grant Information

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/grants.htm

Information about past and future research grants given by USDA to nonprofit organizations and others to improve access to the Food Stamp Program by low-income persons and families.

PRESCREENING AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

FNS Prescreening Tool (Step 1)

www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov

This simple, low-literacy online prescreening tool enables users to input their information privately and, based on their information, tells them if they might be eligible for food stamp benefits and how much they might receive.

Links to Downloadable Food Stamp Applications and Local Office Locators

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/>

Features a United States map. Click on a State to find links to that State's downloadable food stamp application, links to local office locators, and list of outreach providers.



RESEARCH, DATA, AND STATISTICS

Food Stamp Program Participation Data

www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/Participation.htm

Features data and studies about participation in the FSP and the characteristics of households receiving food stamp benefits. Also includes evaluation reports for past FNS outreach grant programs from 1993-1994 (see “Food Stamp Client Enrollment Assistance Demonstration Projects: Final Evaluation Report, July 1999”) and 2001 (see “Research Grants to Improve Food Stamp Program Access Through Partnerships and Technology: 2001 Program Evaluation Summary – September 2004”).

Economic Impact of Food Stamp Benefits

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/researchers/ers_reports.htm
www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr26/fanrr26-6/
www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/GeneralEconomy/linkages.htm

Links to studies about the economic benefits of food stamps. The research was conducted by USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS), which is USDA’s main source of economic information.

Impact of Food Assistance on Nutrition and Health

www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr19%2D3/

A comprehensive review that compiles and synthesizes published research about the impact of domestic food assistance programs on participants’ nutrition and health outcomes. There are several volumes to the report.

United States Census Bureau

www.census.gov

Vast amounts of data on income and poverty levels, including data by county and State.

INFORMATION FOR RETAILERS

General FSP Information for Food Retailers

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/retailers/default.htm

Main source of information about the FSP for food retailers including information about how to become an authorized retailer, frequently asked questions, and tips for food retailers about outreach.

Food Stamp Notes

www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/retailers/information.htm

Periodic newsletter (click on food stamp mailer) for authorized retailers participating in the FSP.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Food Stamp Nutrition Connection

www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/

Features resources related to food stamp nutrition education including lists of State and local food stamp nutrition education cooperators (“State Gates”).

Eat Smart. Play Hard.™

www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/About/overview.html

FNS campaign to motivate children to be active and eat healthy. Features fun activities for kids and information for caregivers. Free materials available.

Nutrition Education Resources

www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/National_FSNE.html

Links to national food stamp nutrition education resources including guidance for developing an optional State nutrition education plan and submitting it for FNS approval.



FOOTNOTES FROM INTRODUCTION

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation. Trends in Food Stamp Program Participation Rates: 1999 to 2002. By Karen Cunnygham. Project Officer, Kate Fink. Alexandria, VA: 2004. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/FILES/Participation/Trends99-2002.pdf>.

² Hanson, Kenneth, and Elise Golan (2002). Effects of Changes in Food Stamp Expenditures Across the U.S. Economy. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr26/fanrr26-6/fanrr26-6.pdf>. Note: The economic effect of increasing food stamp benefits was measured for the whole U.S. economy and may vary by location.³ Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs and the General Economy: Links to the General Economy and Agriculture (2002). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/GeneralEconomy/linkages.htm>. Note: Even though recipients spend all food stamps on food, the food stamps allow them to shift some of their previous cash expenditures on food to alternative uses.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (2004). <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/foodstamp.htm>. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/FILES/Participation/Trends99-2002.pdf>.

⁶ STARS Quarterly Management Activity Report, 10/23/04.

⁷ Fraker, Thomas M., Sharon K. Long, and Charles E. Post (1990). Analyses of the 1985 Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals--Volume I, Estimating Usual Dietary Intake, Assessing Dietary Adequacy, and Estimating Program Effects: Applications of Three Advanced Methodologies Using FNS's Four-Day Analysis File. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Available at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/FOODSTAMPREPORTS/FSP-11.PDF>.

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⁸ Fox, Mary Kay, William Hamilton, (editors) and Biing-Hwan Lin (2004). Effects of Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs on Nutrition and Health, Volume 3, Literature Review. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture: Economic Research Service, USDA, 2004. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr19%2D3/>.

⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation. Characteristics of Food Stamp Households: Fiscal Year 2003, FSP-04-CHAR, by Karen Cunnygham and Beth Brown. Project Officer, Kate Fink. Alexandria, VA: 2004. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/FILES/Participation/2003Characteristics.pdf>.

¹⁰ Gleason, Phillip, Peter Schochet, and Robert Moffitt (1998). The Dynamics of Food Stamp Program Participation in the Early 1990s. Alexandria, VA: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/FILES/Participation/DYNAMICS.PDF>.

¹¹ Rosenbaum, Dorothy and David Super (2005). The Food Stamp Program: Working Smarter for Working Families. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Available at <http://www.cbpp.org/3-15-05fa.htm>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Gleason P, Rangarajan A, Olson C. Dietary Intake and Dietary Attitudes Among Food Stamp Participants and Other Low-Income Individuals. Report prepared for the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, September 2000. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/Nutrition-Education/Files/FSPDiet.pdf>.

¹⁴ Obesity Costs States Billions in Medical Expenses. Press Release. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, January 21, 2004. http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/press/archive/state_obesity_1_2004.htm.

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¹⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation. *Characteristics of Food Stamp Households: Fiscal Year 2003, FSP-04-CHAR*, by Karen Cunyngnam and Beth Brown. Project Officer, Kate Fink. Alexandria, VA: 2004. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/FSP/FILES/Participation/2003Characteristics.pdf>.

¹⁷ Ibid.



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www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach.htm