

# FNS Cross Program Regional Meeting

April 25-26, 2007  
Southwest Region



Learn more about FNS cross-program activities at: [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)

*"We are committed to working across programs and using collaborative approaches in improving the health of families in the Southwest Region."*



William Ludwig  
Regional Administrator  
Southwest Region




## Introduction

The Southwest Regional Office of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) motivated participants to invest in partnerships at their cross-program nutrition education meeting on April 25-26, 2007. FNS program staff and partners from across the region came together in Dallas, Texas to discover how they could get a better return on their nutrition education efforts through collaboration.




### Conference Goal:

Highlight cross-program and comprehensive nutrition education strategies and initiatives to promote healthy eating and lifestyles among population groups served by the federal nutrition assistance programs.

### Objectives:

-  Provide networking opportunities for State and local representatives of FNS Programs to enhance partnerships through collaboration.
-  Highlight successful partnership initiatives to enhance collaboration techniques in State and local agencies.
-  Share best practices and lessons learned to strengthen SNAP initiatives and program collaborations.

## Registrant Profile

-  Over 100 people registered for the meeting, representing five States.
-  FNS programs represented included: the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, Child Nutrition programs, Food Stamp Program, and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.
-  Key organizations and partners included: Cooperative Extension Service; food banks, social services, state health departments, and Texas A&M University.



## Session Highlights



*Under Secretary Nancy Montanez Johner addressed "Making Connections to Make a Difference".*

### What Attendees Found Most Beneficial

*"...vision, direction, communication, collaboration and organization."*

*"Dr. Mullis' presentation!"*






*"Esther Phillips' motivational speech was excellent!"*

*"Interesting speakers...good variety."*

*"I liked the sharing and goal setting in the SNAP networking session."*

The Honorable Nancy Montanez Johner, Under Secretary for USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, opened the meeting and re-emphasized the agency's commitment to cross-program collaboration, *"connecting nutrition efforts across the nutrition assistance programs can make a difference in the lives of FNS program participants."* The meeting also featured presentations on FNS' vision for State Nutrition Action Plans (SNAPs), national cross-program initiatives, collaborations involving Indian Tribal Organizations, State agency panels and networking sessions.

Presentations and speakers included:

-  *National Level Initiatives: Making Connections a Reality*, Judy F. Wilson, Director, Nutrition Services Staff, Office of Research, Nutrition and Analysis, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
-  *Celebrating Partnerships for Healthy Eating and Lifestyles*, Rebecca Mullis, Department of Foods and Nutrition, University of Georgia
-  *Opportunities for Collaboration with CDC*, William Dietz, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
-  Nutrition Collaboration Among Indian Tribal Organizations
  - *Fresh Ways to Mix it Up*, Melinda Newport, Director, Nutrition Services, Chickasaw Nation
  - *Investing in Communities for Healthy Outcomes*, Ruby Wolf, WIC Director, Pueblo of Zuni
-  *The Benefits of Nutrition Collaboration*, State Agency Panel





## SNAP Activities

During a SNAP Networking Session, States worked to revitalize their SNAP by:

- Identifying ways to improve SNAP in their State
- Reviewing and updating their SNAP objectives to make them more measurable and specific
- Identifying barriers and lessons learned through past collaborative efforts
- Adding new members to the SNAP team

A stunning close to the conference was a motivational speech entitled "Let's Connect in a SNAP" that was presented by Esther Phillips, the Deputy Regional Administrator. Ms. Phillips brought the crowd to its feet with these words:

*"When we make opportunities like this week's meeting happen...when we connect our words and hearts and minds and work... we open the door to even greater opportunities. Opportunities to change lives...to lift each other up...and in doing so, improve the lives of the people we serve in a SNAP."*



*Arkansas works on revitalizing their State Nutrition Action Plan*



*Meeting participants get moving to activities from "The Adventures of Zobeя Searching for a Rainbow" by Texas WIC*

