



the
Chickasaw
Nation HEADQUARTERS

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Bill Anoatubby
Governor

Jefferson Keel
Lieutenant
Governor

September 24, 2008

Ms. Lillie F. Ragan, Assistant Branch Chief,
Policy Branch/Food Distribution Division
Food & Nutrition Service/USDA
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 506
Alexandria, VA 22302-1594

Dear Ms. Ragan:

In response to correspondence from Mr. Roberto Salazar, administrator, outlining a new administrative funding methodology for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the following comments are offered. The conscientious work of the national FDPIR Funding Methodology Work Group is appreciated, as is the prompt decision of the administrator in employing a solution for FY08 implementation.

The goal that the proposed methodology be easily understood, having as few variables as possible while still ensuring reasonable equity, was successfully achieved. The simple straightforward method proposed will allow program managers to more easily make accurate projections for future years. Likewise, USDA's conducting opportunities for tribal consultation in each region regarding this important initiative demonstrates the United States Department of Agriculture's earnestness in proceeding thoughtfully in this process.

We were pleased to see that the additional appropriation overall for the FDPIR in FY08 allowed all tribes to be held harmless in the implementation process. Based on the increased emphasis on each region's share of national participation, as well as the factoring in of the number of FDPIR programs in each region, the southwest region finally achieved the resources warranted. Subsequently, the Chickasaw Nation FDPIR, historically one of the four most underfunded programs in the country, benefitted significantly from the new methodology.

The resulting 30% increase in funding allowed us to add key staff positions that enhance the quality of services we are able to offer our clients, and to affirm our existing staff with full implementation of the new fair market compensation initiative applied throughout the Chickasaw Nation in FY08. The expanded resources we are able to devote to client outreach and customer service, as well as to nutrition education have strengthened the quality of meaningful interventions with which we are able to support families as they strive to provide nutritious meals and a healthier future.



God Bless America!

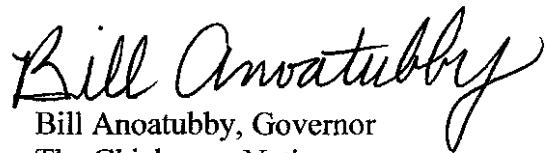
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Additionally, retaining the opportunity for negotiation with our FNS regional office was valuable in considering the periodic one-time expenses programs need to update equipment or improve infrastructure for delivery of services. Our regional office demonstrated a great deal of diligence in these negotiations and the need to retain the spirit and intent of the original initiative in their funding decisions.

The new funding methodology is a significant step forward in ensuring more equitable funding for all programs in the future. Mr. Roberto Salazar's leadership in realizing this long overdue need for more objectivity in appropriating funds and his subsequent commitment to the long and tedious analysis necessary to bring justice to the process will positively impact all FDPIRs for years to come.

If more information is needed, please call Ms. Melinda Newport, director of nutrition services, at (580) 436-7296.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Anoatubby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation