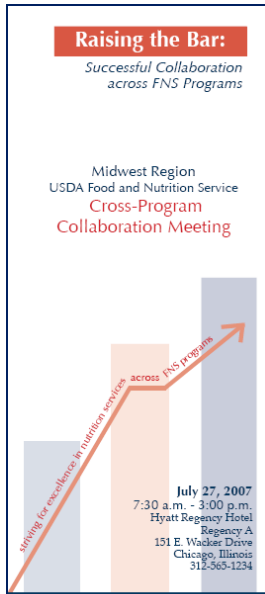


# FNS Cross Program Nutrition Education Meeting Midwest Region July 27, 2007

## Introduction

The Midwest Regional Office of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) encouraged States to raise collaborative efforts to a new level during its cross-program nutrition education meeting on July 27, 2007. FNS program staff and partners from across the Region gathered in Chicago, Illinois to participate in a series of interactive sessions inspired by the meeting theme, "*Raising the Bar: Successful Collaboration across FNS Programs*". The one-day conference featured examples of successful collaborations, networking opportunities and ways to enhance State Nutrition Action Plans (SNAPs). The following report summarizes meeting highlights.



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



*"... we need to make the best possible use of every dollar we invest in these important programs. To do that, we need to raise the bar in coordinating our efforts across the Nutrition Assistance Programs."*

*-Ollice Holden,  
Regional  
Administrator,  
FNS Midwest  
Regional Office*

### Meeting Goal:

To set the stage for achieving a higher level of collaboration and integration of nutrition education approaches across USDA's nutrition assistance programs; and to identify strategies for establishing cross-program collaboration as the customary operational process for all FNS' programs.

### Objectives:

State and Local representatives of FNS' programs will:

- Learn about model collaborative projects that have enhanced the efforts and outcomes of FNS programs
- Learn about the ingredients for building successful, sustainable collaborations and the value of such collaborative relationships
- Be informed about the expectations for cross-program collaboration that will be incorporated into the operational environment of FNS' nutrition assistance programs.
- Network with colleagues to set goals for new, creative and/or re-energized collaborative initiatives involving FNS programs.





*Meeting attendees discuss cross-program nutrition education materials at educational displays.*

## Registrant Profile

- 129 people registered for the meeting including representatives from all six States in the Region.
- FNS programs represented included:
  - Food Stamp Program and Food Stamp Nutrition Education providers;
  - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC);
  - WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program; and
  - Special Nutrition/Child Nutrition Programs including School Meals, Summer Food Service and Child and Adult Care Food Programs, and the Commodity Assistance Programs.
- Key organizations and partners present included:
  - America's Second Harvest
  - The Governor's Office of Ohio
  - Share Our Strength – Operation Frontline
  - Greater Chicago Food Depository
  - Food Bank Councils: Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin
  - Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
  - American Red Cross Regional Food Distribution Center
  - FDA Office of Health Promotion
  - YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

## Session Highlights



*Keynote Speaker Rebecca Mullis discusses how audiences benefit from collaborative approaches.*

Meeting attendees learned more about FNS' new cross program initiative targeting low-income mothers, titled *"Loving Your Family, Feeding their Future . . ."* Dr. Anita Singh from the FNS National Office provided an overview of the initiative and an interactive display enabled attendees to experience the materials "up close".

Dr. Rebecca Mullis, Professor and Department Head of the College of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Georgia, offered strategies for strengthening and maintaining partnerships in her keynote address. She described partnering as creating the potential for synergy:

*"The simultaneous action of separate agencies which together have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects."*



## SNAP Activities

During a unique session that featured roundtable discussions on effective collaboration, attendees divided into five groups to identify innovative ways to enhance collaboration across FNS programs in the following areas: increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among children; reducing obesity in children and youth; increasing access to food and improving food security; promoting nutritious diets and physical activity; and developing creative strategies for breastfeeding promotion. Each table determined issues and challenges relating to their topic and then generated ideas on how programs could work together.

The meeting also included sessions on FNS' vision and expectations for SNAP and examples of SNAP implementation, including a popular presentation on Michigan's SNAP efforts.



*Dr. Anita Singh shares what SNAP implementation looks like across the nation.*

### What Attendees Found Most Beneficial

*"Learning about activities in other States."*

*"Networking with other States."*

*"The opportunity to visit poster sessions."*

*"Specific program ideas and examples from local programs."*

*"Seeing Michigan's resources including their SNAP."*

## Conference Evaluation

Approximately 33% of attendees completed a conference evaluation. Seventy-four percent of respondents felt the meeting was "effective" based on the conference goals and objectives as well as their own expectations.

## Follow Up Activities

The FNS Midwest Regional office plans to share a summary of the collaborative ideas generated by the roundtable discussions with attendees.