



USDA Food and Nutrition Service
Leveraging Partnerships to Fund SNAP Outreach
Contact: partnerships@fns.usda.gov
Last revised: 04/19/10

Leveraging Partnerships to Fund SNAP Outreach

Synopsis

The following paper outlines a strategy for States to fund SNAP outreach activities without using State funds by leveraging the resources of community organizations and for community organizations to obtain reimbursement for their SNAP outreach activities. This approach can help provide food to needy families, offer relief to overburdened social services offices, and stimulate the local and state economy.

Introduction

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and many non-profit organizations share the mission of promoting access to important programs including SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) which addresses the food and nutrition needs of low-income Americans. Although many assistance programs such as SNAP have seen increased participation in recent years, there are still millions of individuals eligible but not participating in these programs and billions of dollars in unclaimed benefits. Working together to leverage the outreach and individual assistance efforts of local non-profit organizations and of the SNAP outreach network yields benefits for low-income families, community organizations, the social service offices responsible for the administration of these programs, and the local and state economy.





Allowable Outreach Activities

Outreach Efforts:

Non-Profit Organization

State/Local Agencies

<p>Media Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mailers • Local PSAs • Church bulletins • NGO newsletters • Newspaper advertisements • Articles and Op-Eds • Promotion at community events 	<p>Media Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local PSAs • Posters/signage at local service centers and retail outlets <p>Client Communication--SNAP households with income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailers included with SNAP notices regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EBT card - Quarterly reports - Recertification <p>Online Benefit Screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readily available applications for prospective SNAP clietns • Referrals for services offered by partner non-profit
---	--

Individual Assistance:

Non-Profit Organization

State/Local Agencies

<p>Point of Contact with clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote SNAP onsite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brochures - SNAP applications • Provide SNAP screening and application assistance using online benefit tools 	<p>Social Service Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote services offered by non-profits onsite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brochures - Applications and guidelines • Provide orientation/training to non-profit staff on online benefit tools • Provide resources at non-profits for SNAP eligibility screening and application processing • Host co-sponsored events at a local SNAP office
--	---

For more information regarding allowable activities and policy guidance, please refer to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service’s State Outreach Plan and Policy Guidance materials: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/guidance/stateplan.htm>.



Funding

If community organizations choose to conduct SNAP outreach, screening, and application assistance, they can be reimbursed for these efforts with federal funds. Without any contribution of state funds, local non-profits can be reimbursed up to 50% of their expenses related to the provision of approved outreach activities. Staff time and expenditures on marketing efforts like media buys, printing materials, and postage costs are all allowable expenditures. In-kind contributions are not allowable.

How? A non-profit organization enters into an agreement with the State agency responsible for SNAP to provide SNAP outreach services. The State agency includes this agreement as part of its SNAP Outreach Plan submitted to FNS. If the State has no money to contribute, then the agreement between the State Agency and the non-profit organization would be to reimburse the non-profit the federal share (roughly 50%) of the cost of services rendered, less any administrative costs used by the State agency. For example, if a non-profit had an agreement with its state department of social services and spent \$20,000 on its outreach efforts with half the time and resources spent on SNAP-related efforts, then the non-profit could invoice the State for \$10,000. If the State can contribute \$5,000 in State resources, then the Coalition can be reimbursed the full \$10,000 with 50% coming from State funds and 50% coming from FNS. If the State is not able to contribute the \$5,000 and the non-profit spent non-federal money to provide the services, then the State can still draw down the federal share of \$5,000 and reimburse the non-profit for that amount. In this example, a non-profit organization which funds its outreach activities with non-federal dollars spends half of its effort on SNAP outreach activities and is able to grow its budget for these services by 25%.

Conclusion

These difficult economic times, characterized by high unemployment and increasing poverty, place a tremendous strain on State and local governments responsible for programs designed to provide assistance to those in need. Demand for services increases while state revenue decreases, and many States are struggling to avoid cutting administrative costs such as systems development and maintenance and staff resources. Funding sources available to community organizations including donations, grants, and government contracts are also shrinking. Now is the time to try this innovative approach which operates within the current boundaries of law and regulation and requires little more than trust and commitment across the private and public sectors.

For additional information on partnerships please contact partnerships@fns.usda.gov