

Proposed Action **for** SNAP-Ed in 2010

Through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), USDA provides nutrition education (SNAP-Ed) to help participants, applicants and potentially eligible persons choose a healthy diet and active lifestyle consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. As the nation faces unprecedented rates of unemployment, hunger and obesity, it is vital to unlock the full potential of this program by reducing barriers and limitations and increasing the effectiveness of nutrition education.

ASNNA believes an administrative memo to address three key barriers would significantly enhance the reach and impact of SNAP-Ed. Making these changes could advance the Obama Administration's goals to eliminate childhood hunger, modernize FNS Nutrition Programs, and develop a comprehensive effort to reduce obesity and improve health.

TARGETING: Targeting requirements for SNAP-Ed exclude the majority of eligible low-income families. This ranges from 50% in large states to 90% in rural states based on current census data that is sorely out-of-date.

- Allow states to direct education activities based on a state's needs assessment and use commercial market segmentation methods to increase the number of geographic locations that qualify for SNAP-Ed.
- Allow purchase in outlets that reach the highest percentages of SNAP-Ed audiences in each media market, as with commercial marketing.
- Expand targeting approaches including "buffer zones" around census tracts; allow more proxy sites based on local and state data.
- Eliminate advance approval of mid-year changes in service locations such as low-resource census tracts, schools, food stores, and proxy sites.

SYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE: Present Guidance limits the use of comprehensive, social marketing models. It restricts physical activity, food security and mass media programs, and disallows almost all environmental policy and systems approaches to increase access to healthy food and safe physical activity in low-income settings. Harmonize SNAP-Ed activities with those of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

- Allow non-capital expenditures for systems and environmental changes.

- Promote community and school gardens, salad bars and other approaches that increase the availability, affordability and appeal of healthy foods in low-resource communities, schools and worksites.
- Educate farmers' market managers about SNAP and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT).
- Educate community leaders about how to increase access to healthy foods. Engage SNAP-Ed participants in community food assessments and empower them to strive for greater access to healthy foods they can afford.

CATEGORICAL SILOS: Eliminate barriers among USDA programs. Allow SNAP to function as the cornerstone of America's nutrition safety net by helping to fill gaps and complement efforts of other programs. Encourage joint projects and shared materials; avoid duplicative administrative costs. Hungry and malnourished Americans need all USDA's nutrition programs to step up.

- Allow SNAP-Ed to work with sister state and local agencies to improve, market and help increase participation in under-used nutrition programs like SNAP, school breakfast, school lunch, summer meals, child and adult care, and congregate meals for the elderly.
- Encourage SNAP-Ed staff to work hand-in-hand with other partners on ARRA initiatives for low-income communities, including new CDC projects for nutrition, physical activity and obesity prevention.