



USDA ANNOUNCES EFFORTS TO INCREASE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

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Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA will award grants of up to \$5 million to improve access to and increase participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - formerly the Food Stamp Program.

"The health of our nation - of our economy, our national security, and our communities - depends on the health of our families," said Vilsack. "These grants will allow us to improve access and increase participation in our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that serves as a vital resource to the most vulnerable Americans. Breaking down barriers to participation will help this Administration deliver on its goal of reducing hunger and improving nutrition across the country."

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 authorized USDA to award \$5 million in grants for state and local government and private non-profit organization projects to simplify SNAP application and eligibility systems and improve access to SNAP benefits by eligible households.

This year, USDA is interested in funding projects that apply a process improvement process (PIP) to the State agency's application, certification and recertification procedures to make them more efficient and effective. The Department is also interested in funding projects that involve a partnership between a State agency and one or more private non-profit organizations.

The deadline to submit grant proposal applications is June 23, 2010.

"Our programs are enhanced by the creativity and support of our partners at the State and local level who work every day to end hunger in America," said Under Secretary for Food Nutrition and Consumer Services Kevin Concannon. "Increasing participation in this critical program and reaching more children and families in need will move us one step closer towards achieving our goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015."

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service oversees the administration of 15 nutrition assistance programs that touch the lives of one in four Americans over the course of a year. The largest program, SNAP, puts healthy food on the table for more than 38 million people it serves each month, half of whom are children.

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