

Using This Tool Kit

This tool kit contains a set of checklists you can use to assess how well your community uses USDA's nutrition assistance programs. These checklists will help you spot potential barriers to participation that may cause eligible people to miss out on benefits—and from which your whole community would benefit. The checklists highlight a variety of ways to strengthen these program operations in your community.

For example:

- Does the food stamp office in your community make it convenient for working families to apply for food stamps by providing evening and weekend hours and by informing working people of their possible food stamp eligibility? Does any group or coalition in your community help the local food stamp office reach out to potentially eligible working people?
- Does the school lunch program in your community take advantage of direct certification for certain students, reducing paperwork for both families and schools? Do your schools integrate student meal programs with nutrition education activities, helping children develop healthy lifelong eating habits? Do they offer a school breakfast?
- Does your community have active programs of public information, outreach, and service to low-income pregnant women and families with young children about their potential eligibility for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits? Are systems in place to refer potentially eligible women to WIC, especially during early months of pregnancy? Do community groups participate in these activities?
- Do day care providers in your community take advantage of the Child and Adult Care Food Program to provide nutritious meals and snacks to the children and adults in their care?

Give Us Your Feedback:

Please tell us what you think about this tool kit and share with us stories of your success. Does it meet your needs? Can we improve it? What would you like to see that isn't here? In particular, we would like to gather practical examples of communities that make the kinds of efforts identified in this tool kit. Send your comments and stories to:

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