

Stimulus Package Provides Increased Aid for SNAP Participants

Simply put, no one should go hungry in America. To ensure this, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, commonly known as the stimulus package, provides an additional \$300 million for States to administer the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.

The new law automatically increases benefits to current recipients on their electronic benefits cards. For example, most four-person households will receive an \$80 increase in their monthly SNAP allotment to spend on groceries. And as more and more hard-working individuals and families face difficult choices between purchasing groceries or paying bills, SNAP is an important resource in reducing the stress of food insecurity.

The funding increase brings additional benefits to increasingly stretched budgets. SNAP also provides a significant boost to local business. For every \$5 in new SNAP benefits, \$9.20 is generated in total economic activity.

To help achieve healthier lifestyles, SNAP-Ed is an important nutrition education resource to persons participating in and eligible for SNAP. The effort improves the likelihood of healthy food choices within a limited budget and encourages active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid.

FNS and anti-hunger advocates must reach the highest-need communities, reduce participation barriers, implement proven outreach strategies, and communicate to audiences the additional resources clients can access. Low-income Americans need to understand that healthy eating is one of the best sources of preventive healthcare, and that SNAP benefits not just themselves but the entire community.

Unexpected day-to-day circumstances have put more and more Americans in vulnerable, often unforeseen positions. The good news is help is available with the presence of Federal programs like SNAP – where everyone has the opportunity to eat right, even when money is tight.