



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**

July 21, 2008

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

Midwest Region

77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
20<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL  
60604-3511

Dear Colleague:

Congress will soon begin consideration of the 2009 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Programs affected by the reauthorization bill include WIC, the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs. The reauthorization process provides Congress with a regular opportunity to examine the programs' operation and effectiveness and consider potential changes to the laws governing the programs. In anticipation of this process, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is gathering information to help clarify the needs and concerns of our program cooperators, participants, and partners at the state and local levels. I am pleased to invite you to participate in this process.

Representatives from state agencies, local program offices, professional organizations, industry, and advocacy groups, as well as program participants, their families, and other

interested parties located within the states of the Midwest Region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin) are invited to attend a listening session in **Chicago on September 10, 2008, from 1:00 – 4:00 pm at the Ralph Metcalfe Federal Building, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Room 331.** During the listening session, FNS representatives from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Midwest Region will have the opportunity to hear the recommendations for program change presented by invitees. This listening session will be one important piece of a larger FNS information-gathering initiative.

All comments presented at the listening session will be considered during the reauthorization process. While not required, participants are strongly encouraged to provide written copies of their comments. Attendees may choose to focus on, but are not limited to, issues within the following themes:

- Strengthening program management;
- Improving nutrition services;
- Ensuring all eligible seniors, women, and children have access to program benefits; and
- Advancing technology and innovation.

I hope that you will be able to join us on September 10 to share your vision and perspectives on these vitally important nutrition assistance programs. If you decide to attend, please fax the attached form to (312) 353-0171 or e-mail it to [publicaffairs@fns.usda.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@fns.usda.gov) by **August 22, 2008**. (RSVP is mandatory for attendance.) An agenda is also attached to assist you in planning your day.

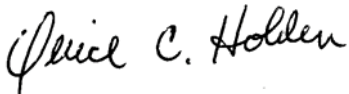
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To allow as many presenters as possible to provide comments, please limit oral presentations to three to four minutes. Space is limited and speakers will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis at registration. Finally, as the session is held in a federal building, please be prepared to show official photo identification (e.g., driver's license) for entrance.

If you are unable to attend, I recommend that you submit your recommendations at <http://www.regulations.gov> FNS published a Federal Register notice to solicit comments on the above themes and include the opportunity to submit comments online, by fax, or by postal mail. FNS must receive all comments by October 15, 2008. If you have any questions, please contact Lawrence Rudmann, Director of Public Affairs, at [publicaffairs@fns.usda.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@fns.usda.gov) or (312) 353-1044.

Thank you for your consideration and for the important role you play in making a positive difference in the health and nutrition of our Nation's children.

Sincerely,



OLLICE C. HOLDEN  
Regional Administrator

Attachments:

*Listening Session Agenda*

*RSVP Form*

*Federal Register Notice*