



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain Plains Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Suite 903
Denver, Colorado 80204-3585
303-844-0312

August 4, 2008

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, the Special Milk Program, the Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program, and the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. 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.

I invite 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 10 states of the Mountain Plains Region to attend a listening session in **Denver, Colorado, on Thursday, September 11, 2008, from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. in the Boettcher Auditorium at the Colorado History Museum, 1300 Broadway.**

During this session, FNS representatives from the regional and national offices will have the opportunity to hear the recommendations for program change presented by invitees. 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.

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. Please be sure to state your name and organization, and which programs you will be addressing. An agenda is also attached to assist you in planning your day.

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If you are able to attend, please fill out the attached RSVP form and return it to the Mountain Plains Regional office no later than September 5 in one of the following ways:

- E-mail: Listening.Session@fns.usda.gov
- Fax: 303-844-2065
- Mail: c/o Bart Bushman
USDA Food and Nutrition Service
1244 Speer Blvd., Suite 903
Denver, CO 80204

If you are unable to attend, we welcome you to submit your recommendations to our office directly, using the above contact information. FNS must receive all comments by September 30, 2008. If you have further questions, please contact Bart Bushman at 303-844-0310.

Both sign-language and Spanish interpreters will be available, and the venue is accessible to disabled persons.

I hope you will be able to join us on September 11 to share your vision and perspectives on these vitally important nutrition assistance programs.

Sincerely,

DARLENE L. BARNES
Regional Administrator

Attachments:
Session Agenda
RSVP Form

Parking Information: The entrance to the Colorado History Museum is located on the south side of the building, facing 13th Street. The Boettcher Auditorium is located on the main floor, just to the right of the information desk as you enter. Parking is available in the Civic Center Culture Complex Parking Garage (cost is \$8 maximum), located at 12th and Broadway next to the Denver Art Museum. Two open lots are also available (\$4 for full day) and are located at 12th and Acoma.