

**SCOPE** ■ State

**PROGRAM** ■ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

**PRACTICE** ■

State agencies and their community nonprofit and local government partners can receive matching federal funds to create and implement Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach and application assistance plans. The federal funds cover up to 50 percent of the cost of approved activities. State SNAP agencies must submit plans for U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service's (USDA-FNS) approval.

**WHY** ■

Building education and application assistance partnerships with state SNAP agencies is one of the most effective ways to close the SNAP participation gap, reduce hunger, and strengthen SNAP services. Many eligible SNAP households are unaware of the program, their possible eligibility, and rules that would remove barriers to their applying.

Among the many supportive activities possible are:

- targeting unserved households and groups by combining: education, pre-screening, application assistance, and follow-up;

- providing special attention to groups (e.g., seniors, working families, Latinos) with low participation rates;
- identifying and advancing critical outreach activities in partnership with state agencies and community partners; and
- promoting networking and partnership building for more extensive and effective outreach.

Outreach plans can include mid-certification and recertification assistance for current SNAP recipients and unserved, eligible households.

Anti-hunger advocates and others also can form valuable partnerships with a range of new groups (such as those serving seniors, working families, or college students), thus expanding their reach into other communities.

These activities also help generate much-needed economic activity in neglected communities.

**KEY STEPS** ■

To learn how your state can submit an outreach plan for approval, check out the [\*USDA-FNS SNAP State Outreach Plan Guidance\*](#).<sup>i</sup> It offers application templates and timetables, and clarifies policies about allowable activities, funding, and more.

Examples of federally reimbursable SNAP outreach activities include:

- developing and distributing SNAP information;
- conducting eligibility pre-screenings;
- providing application support; and
- training others on permissible outreach activities.

## TIPS

- States have until August 15 each year to submit annual plans to USDA-FNS for the upcoming fiscal year lasting from October 1 to September 30, but can amend during the year; and
- Community partner application deadlines fall earlier in the year than the August 15 deadline, so check with your state agency.

To leverage the 50/50 federal reimbursement, state agencies and community partners can seek matching funds from a variety of private and public sources, e.g., private foundations, food retailers, business or labor partners, private donors, and local or state governments.

## SPOTLIGHT

As part of the Tennessee SNAP outreach plan, the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD) accesses state and federal resources to help low-income seniors apply for SNAP. Only an estimated 43 percent of Tennessee's eligible seniors benefit from SNAP. Local area agency on aging staff help connect seniors to a range of programs and services--housing, counseling, health, and transportation. As part of the SNAP outreach plan, they also help improve the food security and nutrition of seniors by connecting them to SNAP.

Through monthly SNAP access calls hosted by the Tennessee Justice Center, TCAD staff and other SNAP education and application assistance stakeholders share lessons learned for reaching seniors and helping them get SNAP benefits.

## CHALLENGE

Not all state agencies have developed SNAP outreach plans, leaving anti-hunger advocates in those states without access to available federal funding and outreach resources. Only state agencies have standing to submit a plan that can be a source of federal matching funds for outreach in the state.

## LESSONS

Advocates can work with the governor's office and state SNAP agency leadership to encourage the state to develop a SNAP outreach plan. State legislation also can establish a pathway for a state to implement an outreach plan that meets USDA-FNS criteria.

## MORE RESOURCES

Sample legislation:

- Nebraska SNAP Outreach Statute: [\*Nebraska Revised Statute 68-1017.02 2 \(a\)\(b\)\(c\)\(d\)\*](#); <sup>ii</sup> and
- Colorado SNAP Outreach Statute: [\*Colorado. 26-2-301\(4\) Food Stamps\*](#). <sup>iii</sup>

## RESOURCES TO MAKE YOUR CASE

- FRAC's [\*SNAP webpage\*](#);
- FRAC's [\*Combating Food Insecurity: Tools for Helping Older Adults Access SNAP\*](#); and

■ [The FRAC Advocate's Guide to the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(D-SNAP\).](#)

**For technical assistance, contact:**

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For more on ending hunger, read FRAC's [A Plan of Action to End Hunger in America](#).

## SPOTLIGHT

New York invests \$3 million annually in the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP). Hunger Solutions New York manages NOEP and has significantly increased SNAP outreach across the state. According to NOEP year-end analysis, the state's investment in SNAP outreach, which is matched with federal SNAP outreach funds, helped connect more than 32,700 households to SNAP by the end of the program year in June 2018.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2017). *SNAP State Outreach Plan Guidance*. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach>. Accessed on May 10, 2019.

<sup>ii</sup> Nebraska Legislature. (n.d.). *Nebraska Revised Statute 68-1017.02 2 (a)(b)(c)(d)*. Available at:

<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=68-1017.02>. Accessed on May 10, 2019.

<sup>iii</sup> Colorado Legislature. (n.d.). *Colorado Statute 26-2-301(4)*. Available at:

<https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/olls/crs2016-title-26.pdf>. Accessed on May 10, 2019.