



Promotion of the Food Stamp Program in the context of Food Stamp Nutrition Education

Partners of the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* conduct Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) activities with food stamp nutrition education eligible (FSNE-eligible) individuals in diverse locations throughout the state, including schools, health departments, food pantries, community health centers, worksites, health fairs, cultural events, churches, grocery stores, and farmers' markets. Food stamp eligible families face economic barriers to consuming the new, higher amount of fruits and vegetables needed every day for good health. Promoting the Food Stamp Program (FSP) furthers the *Network's* goals by providing families with additional food dollars that can be used to purchase more fruits, vegetables and other under-consumed nutritious foods.

The terms "Food Stamp Outreach" and "Food Stamp Promotion" are often used interchangeably. Funded partners must distinguish between Food Stamp Promotion activities which are FSNE-allowable and Food Stamp Outreach which is not. Outreach may be conducted only with separate funding and record keeping. The USDA has specific definitions for each which are described below.

FSNE Food Stamp Promotion

"A brief message providing information on the availability, benefits, and application procedures for the Food Stamp Program, preferably with information on local application sites, (or a toll-free number, or other useful information on how to find services). When FSNE is provided to low-income persons not participating in the Food Stamp Program, by virtue of approved waivers, a critical component of the nutrition message must be to provide an educational message about the availability and benefits of the program and how to apply. This should be done in the context of nutrition education, meaning the Food Stamp Program should routinely be referenced in nutrition education sessions and on materials as an important source of nutrition assistance to help low-income persons achieve a better diet." (Please note: USDA refers to this as the "Public Education Outreach Message" in USDA 2007 FSNE Guidance)

Activities where the primary objective is to determine eligibility or help people enroll in the FSP or other USDA nutrition assistance programs such as school breakfast, lunch, summer meals, child care, or after school snacks, are not allowable FSNE activities. To be allowable under FSNE, food stamp promotion activities cannot stand alone, but must be part of and integrated within a larger educational program. Brief messages are one way of conducting food stamp promotion, and the *Network/USDA* attribution message, such as the excerpt cited below, is an example of this: "The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact [enter your local office or toll free number (1-877-847-3663), or other useful information to help identify how to get services]." Other examples include, but are not limited to:

- Including information about the FSP in the context of nutrition education classes
- Leading FSNE participants through nutrition education activities to identify food stamps as a means to extend a household budget and increase the affordability of healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables
- Distributing federal and state food stamp brochures as a part of nutrition education activities. The USDA food stamp brochures are FREE and may be ordered at: <http://foodstamp.ntis.gov/>, but they cannot be duplicated or printed using FSNE funds. Local food stamp office locations and contact information may be added to these national brochures
- Publicizing 888-328-3483, the toll free number that contains both nutrition education and food stamp referrals
- Promoting Outreach services and local agencies at which they are available
- Partnering with non-FSNE funded entities, such as food stamp offices, food banks, WIC agencies, hospitals and health centers, retail food stores, or *Network* Food Stamp Outreach subcontractors, to have them present or display detailed information on applying for food stamps as a part of nutrition education activities.

Food Stamp Outreach

“Providing information or assistance to individuals who might be eligible for the Food Stamp Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/>) in order to help them make an informed decision whether to apply for the Program. State FSP agencies seeking Federal funding for Outreach activities may annually submit an Outreach plan for FNS approval.”

The *Network* partners with the California Association of Food Banks and Central Valley Health Network to conduct Food Stamp Outreach activities. For a complete list of the California Association of Food Banks and Central Valley Health Network subcontractors conducting Food Stamp Outreach activities, and for more information about this component of the *Network*, please visit: <http://networkforahealthycalifornia.net/outreach>.

Please contact your *Network* Program Managers regarding specific contract activities.