

SNAP Outreach Funding

Funding Integrated Service Delivery

Under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp program), states may conduct outreach, screening and application assistance activities and receive 50 percent federal reimbursement. States may contract with nonprofit organizations to provide outreach services and may also claim non-federal funds spent by nonprofits for reimbursement. While SNAP outreach funds may only be used for outreach and screening for SNAP, agencies can develop a methodology for assigning a portion of the costs of multi-benefit outreach and screening.

Elements of Integrated Service Delivery							
Infrastructure		Core 1: Employment and Career Advancement		Core 2: Income Enhancements and Work Supports		Core 3: Financial and Asset Building	
Case Management		Job Training		Tax Preparation		Financial Coaching	
Research & Evaluation		Case Management (for employment)		Income Supports	●	Savings and Asset Building Programs	
Technology	●	Job Retention Support		Supportive Services/ Human Services Referrals			
				Financial Aid			

State and Nonprofit Examples

Ohio Benefit Bank: The Ohio Benefit Bank conducts outreach and screening for a range of income support programs, including SNAP (Food Assistance), cash assistance (Ohio Work First), Medicaid and children's health insurance, child care subsidies, energy assistance, tax credits and financial aid. It is implemented by the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF), with outreach and screening conducted by faith-based and community groups and public agencies at sites across Ohio. OASHF has determined that 70 percent of questions asked on the screening tool are required to assess eligibility for SNAP benefits; therefore, 70 percent of the costs of the screening are claimed as SNAP outreach expenses. These activities are included in the state's approved SNAP outreach plan. The 50 percent non-federal funds come from state general revenues provided to the Ohio Benefit Bank and from private foundations.

California Association of Food Banks (CAFB): CAFB manages California's SNAP outreach activities. The outreach plan includes activities of community partners, including food pantries. Community partners are reimbursed 33 cents for each dollar spent on SNAP outreach. The state retains the remaining 17 cents of federal reimbursement to support activities such as the statewide food stamp information line. The plan also includes activities of the 2-1-1 agencies which provide screening and referral to multiple benefits. 2-1-1's cost portion was determined through a time study, showing that the 2-1-1 agencies spent at least \$12 on the SNAP portion of each call that included a SNAP referral. This figure is used to calculate the SNAP share of 2-1-1 costs.

Atlanta Community Food Bank: Georgia has included nine community based organizations in the Georgia SNAP Outreach Plan, including the Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB). ACFB provides outreach and application assistance using the state’s online COMPASS system. This system allows clients to apply for SNAP benefits and also screens for other benefit eligibility. It has two full-time staff who work on outreach and application assistance. One works as a mobile screener, bringing a computer to worksites or other locations to do on-site benefits enrollment. ACFB staff also follow-up with the state agency when applications are not approved. Georgia is adding a provider module to COMPASS, which will allow the third-party organizations to check on the status of applications that they help clients submit. ACFB’s expenses are claimed as state spending, and the state passes through the full 50 percent reimbursement.

Eligibility and Targeting

Only the state agency responsible for administering the SNAP program can receive reimbursement for administrative costs, including outreach. FNS is clear in its outreach guide that states may contract with nonprofit organizations to provide services and may enter into agreements to claim nonprofit expenditures for reimbursement.

Under a separate competitive grant program -- SNAP outreach grants—FNS has in recent years provided funding for nonprofits and public agencies other than SNAP agencies to conduct SNAP outreach. These grants are relatively small (in 2009 the maximum award was \$75,000) and are targeted to populations that are underrepresented in the SNAP program, such as the elderly, working poor families, and legal immigrants.¹ In FY 2010, FNS did not award outreach grants.

Federal Funding: Outreach costs claimed under SNAP administration are not reported separately. There is no statutory cap, but costs must be “reasonable and necessary.”

Type of Program: Partial reimbursement of state expenditures.

Agency with Jurisdiction: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

Match Required: FNS reimburses states for 50% of administrative costs, including outreach expenses.

SNAP benefits are available to low-income individuals and families. These benefits are among the few income and work supports available to workers without children. In general, eligibility is limited to those with a gross monthly household income of 130 percent or less of the federal poverty line and net monthly income of 100 percent or less of the federal poverty line. However, many states have adopted categorical eligibility, which allows them to waive gross income limits and asset limits for some or all recipients.²

Services/Program Support

States are strongly encouraged to submit outreach plans. One of the strategies states can use to reach out to those potentially eligible for SNAP benefits is partnering with nonprofit organizations. Thus, these organizations can be reimbursed for SNAP outreach activities. Organizations must enter into agreements with their state agencies to provide SNAP outreach services and can then be reimbursed by their states from FNS funding, for 50 percent of SNAP outreach activities. Reimbursable activities include marketing efforts such as brochure distribution and on-site individual assistance, which can include SNAP application assistance, screening and/or use of online benefits tools.³

Non-Federal Funds

State SNAP agencies are reimbursed 50 percent for allowable administrative program costs that are “reasonable and necessary,” including outreach costs. Spending claimed for reimbursement can include state agency cash, cash contributed by other non-federal public agencies, and in-kind donations from public agencies. To count, funds cannot originate from or be claimed under another federal program and cannot be used as match or maintenance of effort for another federal program, unless specifically allowed under the other program.

Private cash donations may not be claimed as part of a state agency’s expenditures unless a waiver has been approved. However, when a state contracts with a private entity to provide SNAP outreach services, funds held by that entity are not considered “private cash” and do not need to be “donated” to the State agency. The contractor may spend the cash on approved outreach activities and submit its billings to the state agency. The state agency reports these expenditures and receives reimbursement from FNS. It then reimburses the contractor under the terms of the contract. Depending on what is negotiated between the state and the contractor, the state may fully reimburse the contractor for its costs (using state money for the non-federal share), pass through the full amount of the federal reimbursement (using the contractor’s funds as the non-federal share), or may retain a portion of the federal reimbursement.

Private in-kind donations such as use of space, equipment or volunteer time from private entities cannot be claimed. However, donations from other public entities, such as community colleges, can be claimed.

Program Limitations

States may not “recruit” individuals to participate in SNAP. This is defined as carrying out activities intended to persuade an individual who has made an informed choice not to apply for SNAP benefits to change his or her decision. Outreach workers may not “campaign” on behalf of specific applicants or recipients, but may help provide support or explain terminology as part of the certification interview.⁴

The following activities are not reimbursable with federal funds under SNAP, although they are permitted if funded through other mechanisms:

- Acting as an “authorized representative” for applying for SNAP benefits, receiving the benefits, or food purchasing; and
- Transporting clients to and from the SNAP office, or providing tokens or vouchers for transportation.

Detailed information on what costs are and are not allowable can be found in the SNAP State Outreach Plan Guidance, issued by FNS.⁵ Time and effort reporting is required for all paid staff and volunteers supported by the outreach plan.

State Contacts

SNAP is typically operated by state human services agencies or child and family services agencies. A list of state agency websites is available at: <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=618>

¹ “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Fiscal Year 2009 – Outreach Grants. Summary of Funded Projects,” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, June 25, 2009, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/grants/2009/2009-summary.htm>.

² “Frequently Asked Questions, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, November 02, 2010, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/faqs.htm>.

³ “Leveraging Partnerships to Fund SNAP Outreach.” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Strategic Initiatives, Partnerships and Outreach, April 19, 2010, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/outreach/documents/federal-funding.pdf>.

⁴ “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) State Outreach Plan Guidance,” U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, May 26, 2009, http://www.fns.usda.gov/SNAP/outreach/guidance/Outreach_Plan_Guidance.pdf.

⁵ Ibid.