



## 2011 Hunger Champions Awards

### 2011 SNAP Hunger Champions - Gold

#### **Ashe County Department of Social Services (DSS), Jefferson, NC**

To increase SNAP participation, Ashe County DSS, in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina hired an experienced eligibility worker with knowledge of the county to visit partner agencies in rural areas to pre-screen households and help them complete applications. Hearing from the outreach worker that benefits could be used to purchase seeds and plants for their gardens turned out to be a very important strategy in counteracting what they described as “mountain pride” and appealed to those who wished not to rely on others. Eventually, many accepted assistance from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary program, and others, in some cases doubling a household’s net income. In 1 year, SNAP participation increased over 10 percent. Over 50 percent of the completed applications contained a household member who is elderly. Ashe County DSS officials, recognizing the positive impact and increased effectiveness of having an outreach worker dedicated to rural areas of the county, decided to fund this position and continue the outreach collaboration after the food bank grant funding expires.

#### **Hanover County Department of Social Services, Ashland, VA**

Over the last 4 years, Hanover County made a concerted effort to “get the message out” to citizens about healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and the availability of SNAP. In addition to the many proactive changes they made in the office, they developed a childhood obesity prevention campaign that engaged four counties in the Chickahominy Health District. When the recession hit, they presented monthly “Stretch Your Dollar” workshops and developed a “making ends meet” resource guide that continues to be updated monthly. As a site for the Internal Revenue Service Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, the office partnered with Virginia Cooperative Extension to demonstrate cooking healthy, quick and easy meals while customers waited for their tax returns, and Master Gardeners distributed produce from their teaching garden to customers. When local faith-based pantries were exhausted they proactively developed additional partnerships outside the county which led to the formation of a collaborative, monthly, mobile food pantry in the county. Program participation over 4 years increased from 41 percent to 94 percent, and customer surveys administered biannually show a 92 percent satisfaction rate among recipients.

#### **Portland Metro Processing Center, Portland, OR**

For 5 years, Metro has participated in an outreach project that enables clients to apply for SNAP through Portland Public School welcome centers and charitable organizations. Applications are faxed into the branch for phone interviews, eliminating the need for clients to go to an office for intake. Metro was the first office in Oregon DHS to handle the on-line application and today processes almost 50 percent of all electronic applications submitted statewide while handling a local case load for 36,930 households. Metro is serving as the test site for an ambitious project to create totally paperless client case files. Over the last year, Metro has been using a new work model that has improved accuracy, boosted timely issuance of benefits, and increased weekly processing of applications by 29 percent and weekly interim change reports by 30 percent. The dynamic change is due to the practice of morning huddles, discussion of policy transmittals at each staff meeting, color-coded banked case files, and rotation of duties between support staff and eligibility worker teams to promote enthusiasm, cross-training, and accuracy.

#### **San Bernardino County Transitional Assistance Department, San Bernardino, CA**

With the primary goal of increasing the total number of households participating in SNAP, known in California as CalFresh, the San Bernardino County office set out to increase public awareness of the program and to increase access to CalFresh benefits. Their multi-faceted approach includes the use of Advance Eligibility Determinations, Customer Service Representatives in lobbies, and combining Medi-Cal and CalFresh intake case workers to bring about service efficiencies; increasing by 10 percent their participation in community health fairs/events and outreaching to seniors using portable lap top PCs; and placing kiosks at the county hospital as well as select district offices to provide direct

access to benefits. Technology has played a key role in their outreach and operational strategies. They implemented interactive voice response (IVR) enhancements that allow customers to obtain information without worker intervention and that automatically make calls to remind customers of missing information or upcoming appointments. In addition, they have expanded use of their website for SNAP information which they named C4Yourself and piloted an e-signature practice which saves time, paper, and imaging resources.

## 2011 SNAP Hunger Champions - Silver

**ACCESS Florida and Harvest Food Partnership, Ft. Pierce, FL** is recognized for operating a center with combined ACCESS staff and outreach counselors in partnership with Harvest Food Partnership, a faith-based organization. Food assistance, education programs, and life/crisis counseling can be obtained at one place.

**Area IV Human Services Centers, Ada, OK** is recognized for their focus on improvement by developing a shift from case-based to task-based work units. In their environment, this has increased timeliness and accuracy, reduced lobby wait time, increased customer/worker satisfaction, and has been adopted as a work model by other State offices.

**Berkeley County Department of Health and Human Resources, Martinsburg, WV** is recognized for increased efforts to outreach to seniors, 30 percent of whom are eligible for SNAP benefits and have never applied. Their partners, among them Public Radio, Meals on Wheels, and United Way, enhanced the reach of their dedicated staff.

**Buncombe County Department of Social Services, Asheville, NC** is recognized for surveying community agencies and customers to assess ways access to services could be improved. As a result, they opened a branch office in an underserved part of the county, developed a way to accept applications by telephone, trained partners' outreach workers to help enroll people on site at emergency pantries, expanded their use of 2-1-1, and other initiatives.

**Circuit 17 Department of Children and Families, Ft. Lauderdale, FL** is recognized for increasing community partnerships and using technology to hone efficiencies in service. In 1 year, they added \$5.35 million in food assistance benefits to the local economy and doubled the number of customers using an electronic account versus paper application.

**Dane County Economic Assistance and Work Services Department, Madison, WI** is recognized for enthusiastic support to community partners, in particular, the FoodShare Outreach Program operated by Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin. Dane County staff helped implement this outreach program in 15 counties in the State.

**Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, City of Industry, CA** is recognized for a focused outreach campaign in concert with the name change of SNAP in California to CalFresh. They provided application assistance by mobile units and used radio campaigns and outreach events to increase applications by 282 percent.

**New York Human Resources Administration, New York City, NY** is recognized for working with the Food Bank of New York to develop a city-wide "mediation model" communications process between HRA processing centers and 72 community organizations providing application assistance. Significant service improvements resulted.

**Onondaga County Department of Social Services, Syracuse, NY** is recognized for streamlining their application process using an electronic program called myWorkspace. Through this, they have been able to improve timeliness and accuracy as well as make available cross-eligibility and case management data from one location.

**Ontario Self-Sufficiency Office, Department of Human Services, Ontario, OR** is recognized for improving access to low income households in a rural, diverse county. Through online application technology, extended office hours, and outreach partnerships with local food banks, the Ontario office has been able to offer same-day service to over 90 percent of their clients in Malheur County.



## 2011 Hunger Champions Award continued

### Special Recognition for SNAP Disaster Assistance (D-SNAP)

The Hunger Champion Award is intended to honor ongoing, sustainable work; however, this year, due to the number and merit of the nominations submitted for work on disaster assistance via SNAP, the Review Committee chose to bestow Special Recognition to the following offices:

- **Springfield/Liberty/State Street and Southbridge/North Street Dept of Transition Assistance Disaster Response Team, Springfield and Southbridge, MA** are honored for “extremely well-organized” and “immediate” response to the needs of over 10,000 people in communities and neighborhoods in western Massachusetts that experienced a June 1, 2011 tornado.
- **Catoosa, Dade, Floyd, and Walker County offices of the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS)** are honored for “outstanding service” in working together to serve SNAP clients as well as enroll victims in D-SNAP after northwest Georgia experienced severe storms and tornadoes which also destroyed the Catoosa County DFCS office in May 2011.
- **Pike County Department of Human Resources, Troy, AL** is honored for disaster assistance to recipients in Pike County as well as volunteering to help sister counties during response to the destruction caused by multiple tornadoes in Alabama in April, 2011.
- **Ward County Social Services, Minot, ND** is honored for their “outpouring of effort” to enroll victims in D-SNAP when more than 12,000 people, many of them Ward County Social Services staff, lost their homes due to the record level flooding of the Souris River this year.

### 2011 SNAP Hunger Champions - Bronze

- ACCESS Customer Services Center, San Diego, CA
- Anoka County Income Maintenance, Blaine, MN
- Arlington Department of Human Services, Arlington, VA
- Bradley County Department of Human Services, Warren, AR
- Cascade County Office of Public Assistance, Great Falls, MT
- Central Region Department of Children and Families, Orlando, FL
- Chemung County Department of Social Services, Elmira, NY
- Chesapeake Department of Human Services, Chesapeake, VA
- Circuit 13 Department of Children and Families, Tampa, FL
- Circuit 15 Department of Children and Families, West Palm Beach, FL
- Circuit 5 Department of Children and Families, Wildwood, FL
- Circuit 6 Department of Children and Families, Pinellas & Pasco Counties, FL
- City of Richmond Department of Social Services, Richmond, VA
- Cob County Department of Families and Children, Marietta, GA
- Corvallis Self-Sufficiency Office, Department of Human Services, Corvallis, OR
- Davidson County OTDHS, Nashville, TN
- Denton Field Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Denton, TX
- Denver County Department of Human Services, Denver, CO
- El Paso County Department of Human Services, Colorado Springs, CO
- Fairfax County Department of Human Services, Fairfax, VA
- Forth Worth Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Fort Worth, TX
- Frederick County Department of Social Services, Frederick, MD

- Fresno County Department of Social Services, Fresno, CA
- Greensville/Emporia Department of Social Services, Emporia, VA
- Gwinnett County Department of Families and Children, Lawrenceville, GA
- Hillsboro Self-Sufficiency Office, Department of Human Services, Hillsboro, OR
- Hot Spring County Department of Human Services, Malvern, AR
- Houston Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Houston, TX
- Income Maintenance Administration, Washington, DC
- Jackson County Department of Human Services, Jackson, MI
- Jefferson County Department of Human Services, Pine Bluff, AR
- Kent County Department of Human Services, Grand Rapids, MI
- Levelland Office of Eligibility Services, Levelland, TX
- Lexington County Department of Social Services, Lexington, SC
- Linden Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Linden, TX
- Little River County Department of Human Services, Ashdown, AR
- Lubbock Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Lubbock, TX
- Medford Department of Human Services, Medford, OR
- Mission Health and Human Services Commission, Mission, TX
- Mission Valley – North Loop Office, HHSC, Socorro, TX
- North Bend SPD, North Bend, OR
- North Salem Self-Sufficiency Office, Salem, OR
- Northwest Fulton County Department of Families and Children, Atlanta, GA
- Odessa Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Odessa, TX
- Pecos Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Pecos, TX
- Plesanton Road Health and Human Services, San Antonio, TX
- Portland Department of Health and Human Services, Portland, ME
- Portsmouth Department of Social Services, Portsmouth, VA
- Prince George’s County Department of Social Services, Landover, MD
- Region 10 Department of Families and Children, Thomasville, GA
- Roseburg Department of Human Services, Roseburg, OR
- Sacramento DHA, Sacramento, CA
- San Miguel Income Support Division, Las Vegas, NM
- SC116, Department of Economic Security, Phoenix, AZ
- SC130, Department of Economic Security, Phoenix, AZ
- SC138, Department of Economic Security, Phoenix, AZ
- Scott County Department of Human Services, Davenport, IA
- South Region Department of Social Services, New Haven, CT
- Southbridge Department of Transition Assistance, Southbridge, MA
- Stark County Social Services, Dickinson, ND
- Texas City Office, Health and Human Services Commission, Texas City, TX
- Tioga County Assistance Office, Wellsboro, PA
- Verona Department of Social Services, Verona, VA
- Weld County Department of Social Services, Greeley, CO

An initiative of the FNS Outreach Coalition, the SNAP Hunger Champions Award Program honors local social services offices for providing exemplary outreach and service to clients. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) supports these efforts by conducting an ongoing national media campaign to promote the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), providing a toll-free SNAP information hotline, a website for a quick and confidential eligibility screening, and free outreach materials. There are hundreds of food banks, community and faith-based groups, and other organizations nationwide that help people learn about and apply for SNAP benefits. FNS formed the Outreach Coalition in 2003 to join forces with those efforts. By working together, we have created a strong national community to fight hunger and promote nutrition.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm>