

From: Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard J (MDE)
Sent: Tuesday, January 10, 2012 10:40 AM
To: MDE-SchoolNutrition
Subject: Tuesday News from MDE 011012

Happy New Year everyone!! A few items have come up over the past couple of weeks. Here they are:

- 1) Food Safety - Make Food Safety Part of Your 2012 Goals! The Michigan Restaurant Association has many resources about food safety. Check the variety of resources at michiganfoodsafety.com. There are many free items you can download and print, including a food allergy poster.
- 2) Breakfasts Kids Prefer - Here is an interesting link concerning what students like for breakfast. It is at the following School Nutrition Association (SNA) website link:
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Blog.aspx?id=16519&blogid=622>.
- 3) Fruits and Veggies Winners – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces winners of the MyPlate Fruits and Veggies Video Challenge. Please click on the link below to see the press release announcement for the USDA MyPlate Fruit and Veggies Video Challenge winners. You'll find several fun and creative short videos, which can be used to teach and promote increased fruit and vegetable consumption among program operators and participants.
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2011/12/0519.xml>
- 4) USDA Farm to School Competitive Grants – You will want to keep this on your radar. At this time we don't have any more information on these grants. As more information becomes available, we will let you know.
Funding: Up to \$100,000 per project - \$5M total
Timeline: RFP early summer. Funds begin October 2012.
Description: This competitive grant program will (hopefully) provide technical assistance and program funds to increase the use of local foods from small and medium sized farms in to schools. Grants may be used for training, planning, purchasing equipment, building school gardens and developing partnerships to create new or support existing programs. The program is designed to: improve the nutritional health and well-being of children, support experiential nutrition education activities, procure local foods from small and medium sized farms, increase farm income by facilitating farmers' access to institutional markets including schools and develop a sustained commitment to farm to school programs in the community.
Eligibility: Schools or institutions that participate in a NSLP or NSBP, state and local agencies and Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of producers AND non-profit entities.
Notes: Highest priority will be given to projects that make local foods available on the menu of the eligible school, serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced meals, incorporate experiential nutrition education or activities in curriculum and encourage

- the participation of school children in farm and garden-based agriculture education, demonstrate collaboration between eligible schools, non-governmental organizations, community-based partner organizations, agricultural producer groups and other community partners. Must include adequate and participatory evaluation plans and provide a local match to ensure commitment and long-term sustainability for the project activities.
- 5) National School Breakfast Week – It is not too early to start making plans for the National School Breakfast Week, March 5-9, 2012, as the beginning of January is when SNA's "School Breakfast – Go for Gold" campaign kicks off. SNA has the information for this special week at: http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Level2_NSBW2012.aspx?id=15458. I know most schools do promotions for school lunch. The potential for a successful breakfast campaign may be even more beneficial.
 - 6) Paid Lunch Equity – USDA has come up with guidance showing how some schools average lunch price under \$1.60 may have to be raised. For the current school year, as long as you made a good faith effort to be in compliance with this part of reauthorization, there will not be an issue. We hope to receive guidance on next year's guidelines regarding paid lunches in the near future.
 - 7) Partners and Supporters of USDA Food and Nutrition Service Programs – I received this too late to send out in December. It is from USDA's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Midwest Region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin). Attached is their Late Fall 2011 "At the Table" newsletter. Inside you'll find the latest news and resources from FNS, plus articles featuring best practices and successful partnerships in the Midwest Region. They appreciate receiving articles and ideas from our state and local partners. Please let us know if you have an idea for an article and we'll be happy to work with you. Thank you for your continued efforts to improve the nutrition and health of families and individuals through the USDA nutrition assistance programs.
 - 8) New Meal Pattern – We had hoped the new meal pattern would have been released by now but it has not. As soon as we get some information, we will be sure to pass it along. It is due shortly.

I will be leaving today to attend two USDA conferences. Hopefully, I will hear about the new meal pattern at one of them. In any event, have a great week!!

Howard Leikert, MBA, SNS

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Looking for information on local schools? Go to www.michigan.gov/mischooldata.



At The Table

USDA nutrition assistance news and information for partners and community organizations

At Holiday Time and Year-Round, FNS Appreciates Its Partners

During the holiday season, we're often reminded of the importance of our relationships with others: families, friends and relatives. FNS is grateful year-round, but particularly during this season, for the partners who administer our programs. The combined force of our programs, our approximately 1,200 staff nationwide and *you*—the food pantries, food banks, feeding partners, clinics, faith-based organizations, state and local agencies, schools, and anti-hunger organizations—melts the chilly grip of hunger for fellow Americans during the holiday season and year-round.



FNS has 15 nutrition assistance programs, but during the holiday season it might seem that we have only one—TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program). Under TEFAP, commodity foods are made available to states. States provide the food to local agencies, usually food banks, which in turn distribute the food to soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public. Without food banks, FNS could not have distributed 900 million pounds of food, valued at nearly \$635 million, to food banks, pantries, soup kitchens and other emergency providers in 2010.

Food banks have also become valued partners to help ensure that every eligible person participates in our [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP). Food banks and other partners help ease hunger by providing program information and assisting potential applicants to sign up for benefits. Food banks also connect people with other FNS programs like the [Summer Food Service Program](#) and [Afterschool Meals Program](#).

And once hungry fellow Americans leave a food bank partner and participate in another FNS program, they receive help from other partners — state and local agencies, schools and local community and faith-based organizations. As this example illustrates, FNS cannot ease hunger alone—it relies on its partners.

During the past year, your work has prevented a record number of Americans from experiencing hunger. As another year draws to a close, I find myself appreciative yet again for the strength of our partnerships and for your devoted and tireless efforts to combat hunger. Thanks for all that you do and thank you for partnering with FNS. Enjoy the season and many good wishes for a healthy, happy new year.

Bruce C. Holden

FNS Midwest Regional Administrator

Late Fall 2011

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
Midwest Region

- 2 *White House HUSSC Event*
- 3 *West Salem (WI) Wins Top HUSSC Award*
- 4 *Summer Meals Campaign in Indpls*
- 5 *Farm to School in Illinois*
- 6 *WIC Farmers Market Update*
- 7 *Sault Ste. Marie Tribe Promotes Nutrition Education*
- 8 *OH SNAP Golden Grocer Awards*
- 9 *Record Growth in SNAP Farmers Markets*
- 10 *Chicago Hospital Promotes SNAP Access*
- 11 *What's New at FNS*
- 12 *USDA People's Garden Update*

First Lady Salutes HealthierUS Schools



On October 17, a beautiful fall day, First Lady Michelle Obama held a reception on the White House lawn to honor all the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSSC) schools nationwide. As of June 2011, 1,273 schools had met USDA's HUSSC, exceeding the First Lady's initial goal of doubling the number of HUSSC schools in one year.

"You're affecting not just how these kids feed themselves, but how they're going to feed their own children. So the beauty is...that you're not just making this generation of kids healthier, but the next generation as well," she said.

She thanked the principals, teachers, school foodservice directors and staff and others who traveled to Washington, D. C., for the ceremony. She said, "...The fact is, in our movement to end the epidemic of childhood obesity in America, all of you...are the unsung heroes."

The First Lady has called for an additional 1,000 schools to meet the HUSSC this school year. The [HealthierUS School Challenge](#) is a key component of her [Let's Move!](#) initiative to end



childhood obesity within a generation. The Challenge recognizes schools that create healthier school environments by providing exceptional nutrition education, nutritious food

and beverage choices, physical education and opportunities for physical activity.

HUSSC schools voluntarily agree to provide healthy meals based on the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), including a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods, and fat-free or low fat milk. Challenge schools also agree to provide students with nutrition education and opportunities for physical activity.



The First Lady speaks at the White House HUSSC reception October 17. Chicago Public Schools 6th grader Alex Roman (on left) from Walsh Elementary School, a HUSSC Gold award winner, introduced the First Lady. Alex talked about how his school helped him adopt a healthier lifestyle by encouraging him to make better food choices and participate in sports.

Also pictured: USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Becke Bounds, Child Nutrition Director for the Lamar County schools in Mississippi.

Click to view the video of the [First Lady's Remarks](#).

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All six Midwest Region states (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, and WI) now have multiple [HUSSC Award Winners](#) at the Gold of Distinction, Gold, Silver and Bronze levels. (Click on the link). Congratulations to all the schools and to our Midwest state agencies for their efforts to promote the HUSSC!

Locate HUSSC schools in your community with the FNS Healthy Access Locator: <http://www.healthyaccesslocator.com/>

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Wisconsin's First HealthierUS School Earns Top Honors

West Salem Elementary School in southwest Wisconsin is the first school in the state to achieve USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge...and earn the highest award level -- the Gold of Distinction award.

On October 12, FNS Midwest Region nutritionist Samia Hamdan, presented Principal John Smalley and West Salem Nutrition Services Director Michelle Kloser with the HUSSC award and a Certificate of Appreciation for meeting the highest standards of excellence in school meals, opportunities for student physical activity and nutrition education.

Over 700 cheering students, teachers, food service staff, and school district leaders, West Salem's fabulous high school band and USDA's Power Panther mascot packed the gym for an all school assembly.

The event also celebrated National School Lunch Week. This year's theme "School Lunch – Let's Grow Healthy"

was especially fitting, since it underscored the connection between growing and eating healthy foods...and West Salem boasts an amazing school garden. The garden, lovingly tended by retired teacher Dave Langer and students, not only serves as a hands-on learning lab for sustainable growing practices, but also produces



USDA's Samia Hamdan (far left) joins Principal John Smalley (back row), Michelle Kloser (holding Certificate of Appreciation on left) and foodservice staff.

the freshest of vegetables for the school lunch program. (see sidebar).



Students enjoy whole grain tacos, refried beans, fresh fruit and salad bar with school garden veggies.

"We Grew This!"

When it comes to local foods, it doesn't get much fresher than vegetables direct from a school garden. At **West Salem Elementary School**, students are not only growing their own vegetables...they're eating them with enthusiasm in their school lunches. Even more, they're having fun planting, digging, harvesting, and learning sustainable growing practices. Read their success story at: <http://go.usa.gov/57a>



Since May 2011, nine more Wisconsin schools have achieved the HealthierUS School Challenge at the Gold, Silver or Bronze levels: [Wisconsin HealthierUS Schools](#)

Congratulations to all the winning schools!

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Tackling Summer Hunger in Indianapolis



by Julie Sutton, IN State Child Nutrition Programs and Glenn Moehling, IN Food Resource Network

In the summer months, when school meals aren't available, where can struggling families turn for help feeding their children? Research in Indianapolis showed that relatively few families and children were aware that free, nutritious meals were available through USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), despite the fact that more than 200 locations across the city were open to provide meals to kids in summer 2010.

Early in 2011, a coalition of community groups, corporations, local and state government called the *Childhood*

Hunger Initiative began working on an awareness campaign to connect kids with the many SFSP serving sites available throughout Indianapolis. The campaign was called *Summer Servings*.

Summer Servings is an integrated awareness campaign designed to communicate SFSP locations and serving

times to children and caregivers in multiple ways. *Publicis USA*, an ad agency, designed an overall logo and brand. Signage, including banners and lawn signs, was placed at each summer feeding site. A simple user-friendly website (www.summerservings.org), with site locations and serving times, was developed and hosted by the Indiana Department of Education. *Connect 2 Help*, a nonprofit organization that



Friends enjoy food and fun at an Indy Parks summer food site. Photo credit: Indy Parks Dept.

helps connect people to human services, helped callers find local SFSP sites via a 211 toll-free number. *RadioOne*, through its many local radio stations, created and ran PSAs about the program and where to find support. *Clear Channel* provided 25 complimentary billboards in low-income areas, advertising the 211 number and website. To kick off the

effort, Indy Parks leadership held a major press conference in late May. (Indy Parks alone sponsored more than 100 sites last summer.) The press conference included the Mayor of Indianapolis, Indiana's local US Representative, and key community leaders.

To measure the success of the campaign, the Coalition has undertaken a research project to better understand the ongoing needs of families and children during the summer. One key indicator of the campaign's success is simply the increase in meals served from 2010 to 2011. There was an overall increase of 16.5% in lunches served to children for *all* sponsors in Indianapolis, and an 18% increase for Indy Parks sites. The Indiana Department of Education also had a substantial increase in interest in the program and many calls from community members willing to volunteer.

So, what's next? The coalition has already begun meeting to create the next plan and building upon its 2011 campaign. The research work will clearly provide guidance as to next steps and program upgrades.

For more information, contact:
jsutton@doe.in.gov

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Growing Farm to School in Illinois

by Lindsay Blough, Principal Consultant
IL State Board of Education Nutrition Programs

Farm to School (F2S) is growing throughout Illinois...from local foods in school meals, to school gardens, to classroom agriculture education. A recent Farm to School Summit in Springfield (IL) gave attendees and speakers a chance to share successes and struggles with F2S, help new programs get started and find solutions to challenges already encountered.

Panelists Julia Govis (IL Lead for the Farm to School Network) and representatives from the Woodstock and Oak Park school districts shared practical advice for schools interested in starting school gardens or integrating gardening into the curriculum. They stressed the importance of not just having a school garden and eating fresh produce, but also incorporating physical activity and nutrition education into students' daily activities. Breakout sessions addressed the link between nutrition and local food, school gardens, local procurement issues, and how parents can help. The Summit ended with a lunch made with local foods and a discussion on F2S next steps.

Recently, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) implemented several innovative F2S activities.



CPS students enjoy locally grown peaches.

In partnership with CPS foodservice provider Chartwells-Thompson Hospitality, they introduced fresh, hormone-free Amish chicken to the menu and began serving scratch-cooked chicken in 473 schools. CPS CEO Jean-Claude Brizard noted, "Offering fresh chicken on school menus is another step we've taken to improve the quality of food served to our children, and we will continue to bring more fresh, high-quality food options moving forward." Of the 2.5

million pounds of unprocessed chicken that CPS purchases annually, 1.2 million pounds will now be fresh hormone-free chicken. In October, the school district also worked with Rachael Ray's Yum-o! organization to develop a special *Windy City Chicken* recipe using USDA unprocessed chicken and locally sourced carrots.

Read about CPS and other F2S programs in USDA's new blog: [Midwest Schools Find Benefits in Serving Local Foods](#)

For National Farm To School Month in October, Illinois F2S encouraged schools and farmers to register at www.farmtoschool.org/IL. Our goal is to build a directory of school food service

staff, administrators, educators and farmers who will work together to serve fresh, local foods in school cafeterias, improve student nutrition, provide agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities and support local and regional farms. The directory offers a searchable database for interested schools to find farmers selling a specific product. It can also facilitate field trips to farms and classroom agriculture education.

Illinois' new F2S webpage: http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/farm_school.htm has resources and information on the rules and regulations of implementing a F2S program. It serves as a central location for schools starting new programs. We also hope to hear success stories from schools that we can all learn and grow from.

F2S success takes teamwork! We are seeing school districts make small changes that evolve into bigger and more innovative steps. We tell our schools that it is not only important for students to eat healthy and be physically active. Learning about where our food comes from is instrumental to overall wellness.

For more information, email lblough@isbe.net

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WIC Farmers Markets Help Moms, Kids Eat Healthier

The [Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#) (FMNP) was established by Congress in 1992 to



provide fresh, nutritious locally grown fruits and vegetables to [WIC Program](#) participants through farmers markets... and boost sales of fresh, unprepared, locally grown

foods at farmers markets. The FMNP provides coupons to eligible WIC participants, in addition to their regular WIC benefits, to buy fresh locally grown foods at authorized farmers, farmers' markets or roadside stands. Operating as a federal/state partnership, the FMNP is available in 46 State agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations nationwide.

In FY 2011, Congress appropriated \$19.96 million for the FMNP. USDA provides cash grants to FMNP state agencies (typically health departments or state departments of agriculture) to administer the program. Eligible WIC recipients are issued FMNP checks or coupons, along with their regular WIC benefits. The federal benefit per recipient must be at least \$10 and cannot exceed \$30 per year; some states provide additional state funding. In FY 2010, the FMNP served 2.15 million WIC participants.

Midwest Region WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program - FY 2010

	Participation	Food Dollars	# Markets
IL	33,964	\$334, 822	116
IN	29,678	\$219,917	91
MI	20,362	\$345,196	126
MN	54,927	\$277,625	60
OH	25,912	\$450,193	340*
WI	98,433	\$522,354	252

(* Ohio authorizes farmers, not markets)

Program Helps WIC Clients, Local Farmers



FNS WIC Program specialist Randy Garrett (on left) with son and daughter of 91 year old farmer Edward Woods, Sr.

During a recent review of the Michigan Dept. of Community Health, FNS Midwest Region staff visited the Berrien County Health Dept. Farmers Market in Benton Harbor. They interviewed several WIC participants who utilize the FMNP to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, primarily grown by Michigan farmers. They also had the privilege of meeting the son and daughter of 91 year old farmer Edward Woods Sr., one of only 31 African-American farmers in Michigan who own their own farmland. Edward Woods, Sr. (not pictured) has owned the Woods Farm near Benton Harbor since 1967 and has participated in the FMNP for the last three years. He is believed to be the oldest active African-American farmer in Michigan.

FNS staff heard from many participants that they love the variety of fruits and vegetables offered by the FMNP. One woman said that before enrolling in WIC, she and her family rarely ate fruits and vegetables because she could never afford them. After enrolling two years ago, she learned about the benefits of including fresh fruits and vegetables in her family's daily diet. "This program has been a blessing for me and my children," she said. "It gives me the tools to feed my family in a healthy manner."



FDPIR: Making a Healthy Difference for Tribal Members

Luci DeVoy is a nutrition aide for the Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of Chippewa's [Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations](#) (FDPIR) in Michigan. She's the newest addition to the staff, supporting the tribe's commitment to improving members' nutrition and health. Luci grew up on the reservation in Sault Sainte Marie, attended university to receive her degree in public relations and musical theater, and has now returned to the reservation.

In a little more than a year, her enthusiasm and creativity are making a positive impact on the tribe's 3,500 FDPIR-eligible members. She travels frequently throughout the tribe's service area, which includes nine FDPIR distribution sites. She is quick to point out that she's not a dietician and tends not to lecture to participants. Rather, she likes to approach clients by engaging them in conversations about their favorite dishes and inviting them to try new ideas or recipes.

Says Luci, "Many of our clients are challenged by time and resources. If you give participants simple homey recipes using the commodity foods, you are giving people something to feel good about and empowering them in the kitchen. It is then much easier to make changes towards a healthier lifestyle." She adds, "It's not a big leap to incorporate another few meals into your rotation. Soon every meal in the rotation is a balanced, healthy one your family will love."

Luci is full of creative ideas to promote healthy eating, like take-home "lunch sacks" with nutrition-themed magnets and cutting boards. She feels hands-on materials are especially helpful to

families with children and participants who are not likely to spend a lot of time reading nutrition education material. Each month, she posts 20 new, healthy recipes for FDPIR clients to peruse when they pick up their foods, along with seasonal cookbooks.



Luci shows young tribal members how to plant vegetables in square foot gardens.

Recently, she purchased a dehydrator and laminator to use with FDPIR clients. Class participants have used the dehydrator

to make fruit rollups, veggie chips, and dried herbs. She's used the laminator for visual aids, nutrition education games, puzzles, and *MyPlate* placemats, a client favorite.

To help make gardening less intimidating, last summer Luci showed clients how to make kitchen "salad bowl" gardens by filling large plastic bowls with soil mix and lettuce seeds provided by

the FDPIR. She also started a "square foot garden" program at the distribution center, with 4 x 4 foot boxes of veggies in raised beds.

Luci's cooking classes are popular with adults and children. For Halloween, her "Taste Buds" kids' class used FDPIR bakery mix and commodity meats to create

"snakes," (giant calzones with ground chicken and beef, green peppers, other veggies and cheese). Her adult classes offer practical, time-saving ideas, like "Cooking in One Night for 5 Nights" and window-sill earth gardens. Luci looks forward to sharing ideas and getting some new ones from other FDPIR tribes. Email her at: ldevoy@saulttribe.net

The 2012 Midwest Region ITO Calendar and Nutrition Guide is now available! View the colorful photos and healthy recipes using FDPIR commodities and traditional foods at the [FDPIR Sharing Gallery](#)

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Ohio's "Golden Grocers" Step Up to the Plate

Partnership with Area Agency on Aging Helps Seniors Eat Better



USDA's [Golden Grocer Awards](#) highlight the instrumental role retailers play in the success of the Supplemental Nutrition

Assistance Program (SNAP). On September 29, the FNS Midwest Region presented its [first Golden Grocer Awards](#) to five grocers in rural Richland County, Ohio:

- Cornell's IGA (Shelby)
- Geyer's Market (Mansfield)
- Geyer's Market (Lexington)
- Stoodt's Market (Bellville)
- Hitchman's Market (Butler)

USDA representative Sheila Jacobs noted, "These grocers are model community partners, helping to ensure that low-income seniors have access to healthy food." The grocers were nominated by the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

District 5 AAA formed a partnership with the grocers to help more low-income seniors access SNAP benefits by pre-screening them for eligibility at the store. "We want to allow our seniors to put more nutritious food in their grocery carts and on their tables," says Teresa Cook, District 5's Community Services Manager.

District 5 AAA stationed trained outreach volunteers at the stores to talk to customers about the benefits of SNAP, do confidential pre-screenings for eligibility, and help them complete SNAP applications. "We have many seniors who are eligible for benefits who aren't receiving them," explains Cook.

The partnership has been very successful in getting seniors to apply for SNAP and try new healthy foods. The seniors regularly visit their local grocery stores and feel comfortable there. The grocers generously provided space for nutritious cooking demonstrations by volunteer chefs from nearby assisted living facilities.



USDA's Sheila Jacobs presents the Golden Grocer award to Jerry Hitchman, owner of Hitchman's Market in Butler.

According to Cook, the myth that "you won't get much if you apply for the program" is still too prevalent among seniors. Many are familiar only with SNAP's minimum monthly benefit. To debunk the myth, Cook says, "I went shopping to see what \$16 would buy, and I purchased bread, bananas, fresh carrots, cheese, tuna, eggs, potatoes, fresh green beans, and ice cream!"

One outreach worker relayed the story of a slight, 80-year-old woman who started to cry when the pre-screening tool showed she would probably be eligible for SNAP. She had been struggling to pay medical bills and cutting back on groceries. "She held my hand and thanked me. I hugged her and said, 'This is why we are here'."

For more information, contact Teresa Cook: tcook@aaa5ohio.org

In FY 2009, just 34 percent of eligible elderly individuals (age 60 and over) participated in SNAP. Research shows many reasons why eligible seniors don't participate, including stigma, unawareness of eligibility, and confusion about program rules and requirements.

SNAP Farmers Markets Enjoy Record Growth in Midwest

SNAP clients gain access to fresh local produce

Last summer brought welcome news to Midwest SNAP participants looking to buy fresh produce and foods produced by local farmers. In FY 2011, the Midwest Region (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH and WI) experienced an overall **73% increase** in the number of farmers markets accepting [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) benefits and a **92% increase in redemptions by SNAP participants** over the previous fiscal year.

When more low-income individuals use their benefits at farmers markets, they enjoy greater access to fresh, healthy foods, especially the fruits and vegetables lacking in many Americans' diets. SNAP usage at farmers markets also puts local dollars right back into the local economy, benefiting farmers and small businesses.

Several factors contributed to this impressive increase. Recently, USDA has focused intensive

efforts on finding and enrolling markets to accept SNAP benefits. Some of the growth is also the result of USDA Farmers Market Promotion

grants that fund outreach or help equip markets with the capabilities to accept benefits.

Many farmers markets also participated in incentive projects, with funding from foundations, corporations and local governments. The projects are structured

to improve the purchasing power of low-income families by doubling the value of benefits used at farmers markets, so that they can afford to buy more fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods. Such incentive projects include Wholesome Wave's [Double Value Coupon Program](#) and Fair Food Network's [Double Up Food Bucks](#) program.



FY 2011 Midwest Region SNAP Farmers Market Activity

Authorized Markets, Direct Marketing Farmers (DMF*) and Redemptions

	2010 Number of Markets/ DMF	2011 Number of Markets/ DMF	2010 SNAP Redemptions	2011 SNAP Redemptions	2010/2011 Redemptions Increase %
Illinois	33	48	\$32,600	\$69,320	112.64%
Indiana	10	24	\$8,338	\$20,527	146.19%
Michigan	80	153	\$578,518	\$1,076,611	86.10%
Minnesota	27	44	\$20,007	\$66,652	234.14%
Ohio	56	84	\$81,086	\$167,040	83.23%
Wisconsin	25	46	\$48,962	\$77,042	57.35%
Totals	231	399	\$769,511	\$1,477,192	92%

**Direct Marketing Farmers are individually authorized farmers, including roadside stands and stalls within farmers markets.*

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Chicago Hospital on a Mission to Fight Hunger



We usually think of a hospital as a place where people go for help with physical ailments or medical emergencies. But

one Chicago hospital is dispensing much more than health care to the people of its community. Saint Anthony Hospital is on a mission to reduce hunger and poverty by connecting eligible people to vital public benefits and services, including USDA's [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP).

Saint Anthony Hospital is deeply rooted in its southwest side community. It has supported community-based services for almost 20 years, and its Community Wellness Program (CWP), opened in 2009, expanded that commitment. The CWP offers an array of free services, including a public benefits and referral services program to help link eligible people to SNAP and other benefit programs. The hospital serves two impoverished communities – one primarily Latino and one mainly African-American. Both populations often encounter barriers to accessing SNAP. In addition to language barriers, potentially eligible Latino families with mixed immigration status or undocumented members may be afraid to apply for SNAP because of a fear of deportation. Nationally, only about 50% of eligible Latinos participate in SNAP, compared to an overall rate of 72%.

Saint Anthony Hospital's CWP offers a trusted, welcoming place for people to come for help. "By

building trust, we can capitalize on word of mouth referrals," says Leslie Fiedler, CWP Coordinator. CWP bilingual staff members serve as "cultural brokers," helping clients navigate complex public benefits systems. They work one-on-one with SNAP applicants to screen them for eligibility, help complete applications, and follow up on the outcomes. They also provide translation services, advocate for clients, conduct numerous public informational meetings and events and create targeted messaging about eligibility for mixed immigration status families. Last year, the CWP helped 310 clients successfully apply for SNAP. In fiscal year 2012, their goal is to help 600 clients with application assistance and case management.



Altagracia Guzman, Public Benefits Specialist, in front of a mural at the CWP. The mural represents the culture of the surrounding Mexican community and hospital leaders whose vision shaped Saint Anthony's CWP.

The CWP works hard to build good relationships with many community partners. Their staff attend regular meetings sponsored by the Illinois Hunger Coalition at local Illinois Department of Human Services offices to stay abreast of SNAP changes and advocate for culturally sensitive policies. The CWP also receives SNAP outreach funding from the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), an approved State SNAP

outreach partner. *To learn more, email: lfiedler@saintanthonyhospital.org*

State SNAP agencies can receive reimbursement for up to 50 percent of their administrative costs for outreach to low-income people. Community and faith-based organizations may serve as contractors under the State's outreach plan. Learn more at: [State SNAP Outreach Plans](#)

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What's New in the FNS Nutrition Assistance Programs

USDA Announces New Strategies to Fight SNAP Fraud

On December 6, USDA Under Secretary Kevin Concannon announced new aggressive tactics to improve the integrity of USDA's [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) – formerly known as food stamps. The tactics will combat trafficking – the use of SNAP benefits for anything other than the purchase of food from authorized retailers, including the sale or exchange of benefits in SNAP.



Although the trafficking rate in SNAP has been driven down significantly over the past two decades – from about 4 cents on the dollar in 1993 to about 1 cent in 2006-08 – USDA has increased its efforts to reduce trafficking by working with state agencies and state-of-the-art technologies. USDA awarded a [ten-year contract](#) to SRA International, Inc. to develop the next generation of its fraud detection system. USDA's [New Tactics to Fight SNAP Fraud](#) also include rule changes and policy guidance to combat retailer and recipient fraud, in partnership with state agencies.

New “Get Involved” Webpage

FNS has a new, easy-to-use webpage for partner organizations to get involved in the USDA nutrition assistance programs: www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/getinvolved. The new webpage makes it much easier for partners to find information and explore outreach opportunities for SNAP, Summer Food, CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals and other programs...all in one convenient location.



Summer EBT Demonstration Grants

In December, USDA announced \$5.5 million in grants to help improve children's access to good nutrition in the summer months, when free and reduced price school meals are not available. The grants fund the [Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children](#) demonstrations (SEBTC). USDA is testing innovative ways of providing nutritious food to low-income children in the summer months. USDA's Summer Food Service Program serves nutritious meals and snacks to more than 2 million children. Under the SEBTC, families in project areas will receive a card similar to a debit card which they can use in stores to buy food during the summer. The SEBTC grants fund five projects begun last year (including one in Michigan that will be expanded next summer) and five new projects.



SNAP Local Office “Hunger Champions” Honored

The FNS Outreach Coalition has announced its 2011 [Hunger Champion Awards](#). This award recognizes local social services offices for exceptional customer service to SNAP clients.

These offices employ a variety of strategies to ease the process of applying for SNAP and help improve public awareness. View the list of awardees at the link above and learn about their efforts to improve outreach, reach underserved groups, expedite application processing, educate clients about healthy eating and more. Find more great ideas and resources on the FNS [SNAP Outreach](#) website.

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USDA People's Garden Initiative Takes Root



When Secretary Tom Vilsack launched the USDA [People's Garden](#) initiative in 2009, he challenged his employees to create gardens on federal

properties for the benefit of the community. Since then, his initiative has grown into a nationwide collaborative effort with over 600 local organizations and more than 1,400 school and community gardens. And, it's inspiring communities to combat hunger, increase access to fresh, affordable foods, and support local sustainable food systems.

All People's Gardens must benefit the community, be collaborative, and incorporate sustainable growing practices. All produce grown on USDA-owned or leased property is donated to help those in need. This year, the People's Garden [Share Your Harvest](#) campaign donated over 1 million pounds of produce from gardens and gleaning projects to local food banks, food kitchens and other charitable organizations

In September, USDA awarded ten [People's Garden Grants](#) in nine states, including the Calhoun Conservation District in Marshall, MI and the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation in Youngstown, OH.

Find out where People's Gardens are located at the [People's Gardens Interactive Map](#). To learn more, visit www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden.



An FNS Midwest Region employee plants bok choy in May 2011 at the People's Garden on Chicago's west side. The Chicago People's Garden is a partnership between the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Midwest Region and the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG). FNS employees volunteer to plant, weed and harvest in the garden, working alongside students employed by the CBG's Windy City Harvest urban gardening program. This year the garden produced over 3,000 pounds of vegetables. The harvest was donated to local food pantries.

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