

Competitive Grant Program Seeks Local Groups To Aid Low-Income Families Receiving Food Stamps

By

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RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - The goal sounds simple but takes plenty of work: help food stamp recipients find jobs and leave the program. That's the aim of a new federal funding opportunity targeting local nonprofits and state agencies for up to \$5 million in grants. "Forty-two percent of SNAP participants live in households where at least one person is working. This is a historic high, and clearly demonstrates that SNAP recipients want to work," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in an announcement. "The additional grant support USDA is providing to state employment and training programs, along with new tools in the 2014 Farm Bill, will help SNAP recipients build comprehensive skill sets and match them with the good paying jobs they need to be able to move off the program."

SNAP E&T services help move work-ready adults into employment, offer re-training opportunities to the recently unemployed, and help participants with limited education or low literacy levels achieve milestones that move them closer to economic independence. USDA has made employment for SNAP participants a high priority and has begun working with stakeholders to determine how the SNAP E&T program can be made more effective and efficient.

State agencies or private nonprofit groups such as community-based or faith-based organizations, food banks and other emergency feeding organizations are eligible to apply for the grants. This year's Request for Applications seeks diverse proposals. The most successful grant proposals will focus on additional FY 2014 priorities, including projects that examine office processes and identify and implement efficiencies; and those that use technology to achieve procedural changes (such as electronic application filing, document imaging, telephone interviews, and web-based access to case status information) to simplify the enrollment process, improve reporting requirements and improve customer service and avoid administrative burden.

Grant applications are due May 2014. Awards will be announced in September 2014.

The Request for Applications is available on www.grants.gov and on the FNS website. The grants will fund a performance period of September 30, 2014 through August 31, 2017.