

**256.8799 FOOD STAMP OR FOOD SUPPORT OUTREACH PROGRAM.**

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of human services shall establish, in consultation with the representatives from community action agencies, a statewide outreach program to better inform potential recipients of the existence and availability of food stamps or food support under the food stamp or food support program. As part of the outreach program, the commissioner and community action agencies shall encourage recipients in the use of food stamps at food cooperatives. The commissioner shall explore and pursue federal funding sources, and specifically, apply for funding from the United States Department of Agriculture for the food stamp or food support outreach program.

Subd. 2. **Administration of the program.** A community association representing community action agencies under section 256E.31, in consultation with the commissioner shall administer the outreach program, issue the request for proposals, and review and approve the potential grantee's plan. Grantees shall comply with the monitoring and reporting requirements as developed by the commissioner in accordance with subdivision 4, and must also participate in the evaluation process as directed by the commissioner. Grantees must successfully complete one year of outreach and demonstrate compliance with all monitoring and reporting requirements in order to be eligible for additional funding.

Subd. 3. **Plan content.** In approving the plan, the association shall evaluate the plan and give highest priority to a plan that:

(1) targets communities in which 50 percent or fewer of the residents with incomes below 125 percent of the poverty level receive food stamps or food support;

(2) demonstrates that the grantee has the experience necessary to administer the program;

(3) demonstrates a cooperative relationship with the local county social service agencies;

(4) provides ways to improve the dissemination of information on the food stamp or food support program as well as other assistance programs through a statewide hotline or other community agencies;

(5) provides direct advocacy consisting of face-to-face assistance with the potential applicants;

(6) improves access to the food stamp or food support program by documenting barriers to participation and advocating for changes in the administrative structure of the program; and

(7) develops strategies for combatting community stereotypes about food stamp or food support recipients and the food stamp or food support program, misinformation about the program, and the stigma associated with using food stamps or food support.

Subd. 4. **Coordinated development.** The commissioner shall consult with representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Community Action Association, Food First Coalition, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Urban Coalition/University of Minnesota extension services, county social service agencies, local social service agencies, and organizations that have previously administered state-funded food stamp or food support outreach programs to:

(1) develop the reporting requirements for the program;

(2) develop and implement the monitoring of the program;

(3) develop, coordinate, and assist in the evaluation process; and

(4) provide an interim report to the legislature by January 1997, and a final report to the legislature by January 1998, which includes the results of the evaluation and recommendations.

**History:** *1995 c 178 art 2 s 21; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1Sp2003 c 14 art 1 s 106; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24*