

Establishing Additional Application Sites

Local agencies have increased the number of locations at which applications are taken.

Another strategy that most of the local agencies we visited have used to increase access to Food Stamp Program benefits is establishing application sites in locations other than their primary job center or W-2 intake facility. The majority of the additional sites are located in clinics or hospitals and were established primarily to enhance access to Medical Assistance benefits. Consequently, the success these sites have had in taking applications for food stamps has been mixed. For example, in the one and one-half years that Monroe County has been taking applications for public assistance services at the Cashton Health Center, only one person has applied for food stamps.

In contrast, Milwaukee County, which since July 1998 has accepted applications for food stamps at medical clinics and other community sites, has seen the number of food stamp applications accepted at these sites increase dramatically. For example, in January 1999, 37 people applied for food stamps at one of the 27 additional sites accepting applications at that time. By April 2000, that number had increased to 223 applications, even though the number of additional sites accepting applications had declined to 24.

Some agencies have made broader attempts to facilitate participation in the Food Stamp Program through the placement of staff in other types of locations. For example:

- Kenosha County has worked with local organizations and other public offices to designate 21 sites, including community centers, churches, and public health offices, at which individuals may apply for food stamps. Three full-time equivalent staff are dedicated to staffing these 21 locations at different days and times each month.
- Price County, in addition to its main office, has established two locations—one in Prentice that operates twice per month, and one in Park Falls that operates twice per week—to provide opportunities for interested parties to apply for food stamps and other social services. Paper applications are taken at the office in Prentice, because it is not connected to the CARES system.
- Vilas County sends a county worker to Forward Services, the county's W-2 agency, one day each week to take food stamp applications and recertification requests.

- Rock County arranges for county staff to conduct home visits if a person is not able to obtain transportation to a county office to apply for food stamps or other services, and takes applications at a second office in Beloit on an appointment basis.
- Milwaukee County has, since February 1999, stationed workers at a meal program site for two hours each week and, since July 1999, at a food pantry on two Saturdays each month for three hours per day in an attempt to provide greater access to the Food Stamp Program. In addition, the county will send eligibility staff to any location that will arrange to have at least 15 applicants present on any given day for events such as a job fairs or school functions, or at health clinics and other locations.

Local officials report that their attempts to enhance access through these additional sites have met with mixed success. In general, such attempts have been largely focused in urban areas, where agencies have more staff and, therefore, more flexibility. We found that it was less common for rural counties to provide opportunities to apply for benefits at sites other than their primary locations.

Working with Alternative Food Programs

Instead of placing staff to take applications at alternative food program sites, a third strategy that local agencies have used to enhance their outreach efforts is coordinating their services with alternative food programs in their areas. The extent and frequency of these efforts has varied. While some agencies have made no attempts to coordinate their services, others have taken steps to work with local pantries and food banks in order to provide more comprehensive services. For example:

- YW Works, a private W-2 agency serving low-income individuals and families in Milwaukee, indicated that it is in the process of initiating an outreach program with two food pantries within its region: St. Vincent Center and Interchange. YW Works will provide funding for additional staff to keep the pantries open longer and will educate those collecting food at the pantries about the Food Stamp Program;

Some agencies have attempted to coordinate their efforts with alternative food programs.

- Vilas County has worked with local pantries to encourage customers to sign release forms authorizing pantries to contact the county and arrange food stamp application appointments;
- Rock County is in the process of developing brochures to be distributed by food pantries and grocery stores, encouraging people to apply for food stamps; and
- in January 2000, United Migrant Opportunity Services, another private W-2 agency serving Milwaukee County, entered into a four-month \$64,000 contract with the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee to conduct door-to-door visits to encourage people to apply for benefits and to conduct other outreach efforts.

Implementation of Electronic Benefits

By the end of 2000, all food stamp benefits in Wisconsin will be distributed electronically.

Although a number of initiatives have been taken to improve the provision of food stamps to eligible recipients, efforts have not been made in every county, and the extent and duration of these efforts vary significantly. However, one change that has begun to be implemented statewide and may further facilitate access to food stamps is the replacement of paper food stamp coupons with electronic debit cards. By the end of 2000, all food stamps in Wisconsin will be distributed through electronic benefit transfer (EBT). Although Wisconsin is one of the last states to initiate EBT for its Food Stamp Program, administrative problems have been encountered during initial EBT implementation, which the Department's officials indicate are to be expected in the early stages of any project of this magnitude.

In response to a 1995 Joint Legislative Council study committee's recommendations, the Legislature mandated implementation of EBT for food stamps as part of 1995 Wisconsin Act 368. Subsequently, changes to federal law have made the conversion to electronic benefits mandatory for all states. In January 1999, Citicorp Services, Inc., was selected by the Department to establish a system for EBT and was awarded a \$12.4 million contract to implement the program statewide. That contract included \$1.3 million for start-up costs and to pilot the program in Rock County.

Electronic benefits have several advantages over paper coupons.

EBT has a number of advantages over the distribution of paper coupons. First, EBT is intended to reduce fraud by limiting program participants' ability to trade coupons for cash and by providing an electronic record of every transaction. Second, it is hoped that EBT will reduce long-term

program costs because it will eliminate the need to mail coupons. Third, EBT is intended to improve recipients' access to benefits because automatic transfers to recipients' accounts on the same day each month will eliminate mailing delays. Finally, use of an EBT debit card, rather than paper coupons, may reduce the stigma some believe is associated with participating in the Food Stamp Program, thereby increasing participation among eligible individuals.

Although EBT is generally viewed as a positive step, some fear that implementation problems will impede access to services. Department and Rock County officials indicated that during the EBT pilot in October 1999, a number of problems were identified, including:

- incorrect denial of approximately 5 percent of recipients' EBT cards over a three-month period;
- initial failure to provide EBT cards to some recipients, or providing them at a date later than intended;
- difficulty in distributing EBT cards to recipients and providing instruction on their proper use—approximately 20 percent of recipients did not initially claim their cards, in part because the Department required them to attend a pre-scheduled training session at county offices; and
- providing poor customer service to food stamp recipients through the 24-hour customer assistance hotline, including providing incorrect information on EBT.

Electronic benefits are being implemented statewide in eight geographic groupings.

As shown in Table 9, EBT is being implemented around the state, beginning with Rock County in October 1999 and concluding with a three-month phased implementation in Milwaukee County in fall 2000. In general, county implementation of EBT has been grouped based on geographic region and the regional administrative office that oversees specific counties. To date, all counties have proceeded with the EBT conversion on schedule.

Table 9

Electronic Benefits Transfer Implementation

<u>Month of Implementation</u>	<u>Counties and Tribes</u>
October 1999	Rock
February 2000	Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Marquette, Richland, Sauk, Kenosha, Racine, Walworth
March 2000	Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha
April 2000	Brown, Calumet, Door, Florence, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago, Oneida (tribe), Stockbridge-Munsee (tribe)
May 2000	Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, Wood, Lac du Flambeau (tribe), Sokaogon (tribe)
June 2000	Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Washburn, Bad River (tribe), Red Cliff (tribe)
July 2000	Barron, Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Crawford, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Polk, St. Croix, Trempeleau, Vernon
August through October 2000	Milwaukee

Some problems have been encountered with the implementation of electronic benefits.

Because Rock County was the pilot, some problems were to be expected and most of the problems encountered in Rock County were identified and addressed. However, some of these problems have been experienced by other counties. For example, when Dane County implemented its EBT program in February 2000, all food stamp recipients were required to come to a single location over a four-day period to claim their cards and receive training. Approximately 50 percent of Dane County's 3,800 food stamp recipients did not arrive as requested. As a result, the county scheduled walk-in appointments at offices outside of Madison and delivered cards to the homes of elderly and disabled participants.

Other counties have also experienced difficulties during EBT implementation. For example, Kenosha County did not receive its state-developed promotional materials until three days before it was to begin training participants. The county believes the delay increased the number of individuals who did not participate in the initial training appointments. Grant County officials noted that the customer assistance information provided through the automated 24-hour telephone hotline has been confusing to some participants.

In addition, although EBT debit cards can be processed using standard credit card terminals at grocery store counters, not all stores have installed these terminals. Efforts have been made to address some of these concerns. For example, the Department paid for installation of three EBT terminals at three sites of a Madison grocery store that does not accept credit card payments for food purchases.

As noted, the last county to implement EBT will be Milwaukee County. In response to a request from Milwaukee County that was supported by the Senate Human Services and Aging Committee, conversion to EBT will occur there over a three-month period beginning in August 2000, so any problems that may develop can be identified and addressed. In an attempt to minimize the problems resulting from implementation of EBT, the Department has:

- provided approximately \$830,000 in federal and state funding to assist Milwaukee County in paying for the EBT conversion and the distribution of coupons and debit cards through October 2000;
- provided an additional \$200,000 to the State's remaining counties to cover costs associated with contacting each food stamp recipient who does not appear for scheduled EBT training; and
- dedicated \$52,400 to conducting an outreach campaign that has included broadcasting public service announcements on the radio and that may also include televised advertising in Milwaukee County.

Some groups of recipients may have difficulty accessing their benefits using EBT.

Federal officials have reviewed the EBT implementation plan for Milwaukee and believe that it is adequate. However, there is some concern that these efforts may not be sufficient. Many of the county human and social services administrators with whom we spoke expressed concern over the potential for some groups of recipients, such as the elderly, to be harmed by the use of EBT, suggesting that some may find learning a new system of benefits confusing or may forget personal identification numbers and be unable to use their EBT cards to access their benefits. Sufficient data are not currently available to assess the validity of these concerns. However, as counties have more experience with EBT, data will be available for analysis. Therefore, we recommend the Department of Workforce Development monitor the participation of individuals in the Food Stamp Program and report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by July 1, 2001, on the changes in program participation among groups that may have difficulty with the new system, including the elderly and disabled.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the Department's efforts to improve program administration and increase participation, concerns remain about the disparity between the number of individuals receiving food stamps and the number who appear to qualify for program benefits. Continued program monitoring, a focus on outreach, and implementation of EBT may help bridge this gap. However, additional efforts to facilitate participation in the Food Stamp Program would require either changes to federal law or a waiver of existing federal regulations.

Advocates believe more could be done to facilitate or expand program participation.

Increasing program participation among those currently eligible to receive food stamps might be most effectively accomplished by reducing some of the extensive documentation and reporting requirements and by waiving some work requirements. Advocates also suggest that establishing consistent eligibility criteria for all public assistance programs would expand Food Stamp Program participation to a broader population and could enhance the ability of other programs, such as W-2, to encourage self-sufficiency. Expanding participation will increase program costs.

Changing Reporting Requirements

As noted, most local agency officials with whom we spoke cited barriers to participation associated with the Food Stamp Program's reporting requirements, including both the amount of documentation necessary to support an application and the frequency with which this information must be provided. Federal food stamp regulations for determining eligibility require applicants to verify a range of information, including:

- proof of residence, by providing a lease, mortgage receipt, utility bill, driver's license, or other similar documents;
- earned income, by providing check stubs or an employer-signed affidavit;
- unearned income, by providing award letters for such assistance as unemployment insurance, social security, retirement benefits, or disability insurance;

- assets, by providing bank statements for savings and checking accounts and other statements for retirement accounts, certificates of deposit, stocks or bonds, and life insurance; and
- expenses for housing, utilities, medical care, and child care, by providing such things as a lease or mortgage agreement, a landlord-signed affidavit, bills, child care payment receipts, or a signed affidavit from a child care provider.

Because of the amount of information required, the application process is time-consuming for both the applicant and the caseworker. In addition, recertification requires recipients to provide verification of income, expenses, and other information at each case review, even if their circumstances have not changed. State policy requires recertification every three months, which helps to reduce the rate at which an incorrect level of benefits is provided and assists agency workers in compiling current information on a recipient's case. Federal regulations require most changes in case information that affect benefit levels to be reported within 10 days, or else recipients must repay the value of benefits for which they were not eligible.

The Department could reduce some reporting requirements.

The Department could reduce some of these reporting requirements without federal action. For example, rather than being required at each three-month recertification, documentation of income, expenses, and other information could be required every six months, or annually. Alternatively, the Department could require that documentation be provided only when a recipient's circumstances change, such as when income increases by more than a specified amount.

In addition, the Department could change the frequency of recertification. As noted, the frequency was changed from six to three months in October 1997, in an attempt to reduce the frequency of incorrect benefit determinations. Because the accuracy of benefit calculations has not improved substantially over error rates before 1997, some believe that returning to six-month recertification would increase participation without negatively affecting error rates.

More substantive changes would require waivers of federal rules and regulations.

More substantive changes to current reporting requirements would require waivers of federal rules and regulations. In general, waivers are granted only for specific policies that federal rules and regulations suggest should have flexibility. However, states may seek demonstration waivers that attempt to test new approaches that are intended to better serve eligible populations, such as waivers intended to address an underserved segment of the population. If granted, these types of waivers generally require measurement of their effects using an experimental design with control and treatment groups.

Officials in the Department indicate that it is difficult to have waivers approved by USDA for two reasons. First, the federal government requires that all waiver requests be cost-neutral in each year of their implementation. Cost-neutrality is more easily achieved if it is distributed over the life of the waiver. Second, no time lines have been established for USDA's response to a waiver request. This can create planning difficulties for states.

A waiver allowing recertification by telephone has been approved.

Despite these difficulties, the Department sought waivers to address some of the potential barriers caused by complex reporting requirements. For example, the Department requested, and in 1999 received, a waiver that grants local agencies discretion to allow every other food stamp review to be conducted using a form that the participant completes and mails or the caseworker completes during a telephone conversation. However, local agency staff indicate that the benefits of this waiver have not been great. Caseworkers with whom we spoke generally believe telephone reviews have been beneficial, but they also indicated mail-in reviews were unsuccessful because the forms confused participants, which resulted in meetings with caseworkers. Consequently, some local agencies have indicated they do not intend to implement this option.

In 1999, the Department was granted a waiver to a federal requirement that any changes of \$25 or more in gross monthly income be reported within ten days. As a result of the waiver, participants with earned income no longer report changes based on a dollar amount, but rather report all changes in salary, employment status, or source of income. The Department indicates this waiver has reduced the number of changes participants must report.

Furthermore, in 2000, the Department was granted a waiver allowing participants with earned income to report changes in their circumstances on a quarterly basis, instead of within ten days of the change, without penalty. Although the waiver request was for the ability to apply quarterly reporting to FSET, W-2, and earned-income assistance groups, USDA approved it only for assistance groups with earned income. The Department has not implemented a change in procedures because officials believe doing so only for those with earned income would present administrative difficulties. Department officials indicate they are in the process of reviewing information obtained from local agencies and other program specialists to assess the benefits and drawbacks of moving to quarterly reporting.

Perhaps the most significant waiver that could be requested would allow initial food stamp applications to be completed by telephone and pertinent documentation to be mailed to the food stamp agency for verification of eligibility. The Department anticipates experimenting with the use of telephone applications in Milwaukee County as part of a federal project for which it recently applied, which is designed to more

closely coordinate Food Stamp and Medical Assistance Program eligibility procedures. If permitted, this type of option may facilitate access to food stamps while still requiring that applicants demonstrate their eligibility with adequate documentation. However, it will also raise concerns about the potential for fraud.

Waiving Certain Work Requirements

Other states have been granted waivers that some believe would facilitate access to food stamps in Wisconsin. For example, states are allowed to seek a waiver that would exempt able-bodied food stamp recipients without dependents from the more stringent work requirements of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in areas with either an unemployment rate greater than 10 percent or insufficient jobs to provide employment. Currently, 41 states and the District of Columbia have requested such a waiver for certain geographic areas within their jurisdictions.

Department officials indicate Wisconsin has not requested this waiver because they believe it would be unfair to families if single individuals were exempted from some work requirements. Moreover, even if such a waiver were granted, exempted individuals would still be required to meet the less-stringent work requirements of the FSET program. Given Wisconsin's low unemployment rate, it is also unlikely that many would currently qualify for this exemption under the federal criteria. Officials in the Department indicate that these same reasons explain why they have not implemented a state option that would allow Wisconsin to exempt up to 15 percent of able-bodied food stamp recipients without dependents from the more stringent work requirements.

Expanding Benefits and Eligibility

Advocates believe benefit levels and eligibility rules should be expanded.

Advocates have suggested that the State work with its congressional delegation to promote changes in federal law that would increase food stamp benefit levels and expand eligibility requirements in order to encourage participation by a broader population of individuals needing assistance. As noted, in January 2000, approximately one-third of assistance groups receiving food stamps received benefits of \$25 or less per month, and 28.6 percent received benefits of \$10 or less. Advocates believe that the current level of benefits, which are almost entirely federally funded, does not adequately address recipients' needs and that providing more meaningful assistance would encourage more people to participate. For example, some suggest that the minimum benefit level be set at \$20 per month, which they believe may be sufficient to encourage greater participation and provide a more meaningful subsidy. Such a change would require action by Congress and would increase program costs. For example, we estimate that if the minimum food

stamp benefit had been set at \$20 per month for those receiving benefits in 1999, benefit costs would have increased by approximately \$3.8 million in Wisconsin alone.

Alternatively, some advocates have suggested that eligibility criteria for the Food Stamp Program be expanded. They note that the federal government has not changed income limits for the program since 1977, despite the fact that income limits for other social service programs have increased. For example:

- The Wisconsin BadgerCare program, which was implemented in 1999 under federal waivers granted by the Department of Health and Human Services, is intended to provide health care coverage to individuals in low-paying jobs who cannot afford health care and would not otherwise qualify for Medical Assistance. The program allows participation for those with incomes of up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Currently, a family of three with income of up to \$26,177 per year would be eligible. Families are allowed to remain enrolled until their incomes surpass 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Currently, a family of three with an income of \$28,300 or less per year could remain enrolled.
- Wisconsin Shares, the State's child care subsidy program, increased its income limit for initial eligibility in March 2000 from 165 percent of the federal poverty level—that is, \$23,347 per year for family of three—to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. In addition, enrolled families may remain in the program until their incomes surpass 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Federal child care rules permit an even higher income limit, 85 percent of the state median income. Under federal rules, a family of three with an annual income of \$40,891 would be eligible for program services.

Table 10 shows the current comparative income limits for a number of state-administered programs that provide supportive services.

Table 10
Income Eligibility for Various Public Assistance Programs
 July 2000

<u>Program</u>	<u>Gross Income as a Percentage of Federal Poverty Level Used in Determining Eligibility</u>	<u>Annual Income Limit for a Family of Three</u>
Food Stamps*	130%	\$18,048
Wisconsin Works	115%	\$16,272
Wisconsin Shares (Child Care)	185% for applicants	\$26,177
	200% for recipients	\$28,300
BadgerCare	185% for applicants	\$26,177
	200% for recipients	\$28,300
Healthy Start (Medical Assistance)**	185%	\$26,177
Healthy Start (Children Ages 6-18)	100%	\$14,150

* Federal poverty rates for 2000 will take effect in October 2000; other programs began using 2000 rates in May 2000.

** Covers pregnant women and children to age 6.

In addition to concerns about income limits, concerns have been expressed about the limit on assets affecting eligibility for food stamps. Some have suggested that the current federal limit of \$2,000, which has not changed since 1985, makes it difficult for working families to establish savings and work toward long-term self-sufficiency. In contrast, the asset limit for W-2 is currently set at \$2,500, an increase from the \$1,000 asset limit established under AFDC. There are currently no asset limits for participants in the BadgerCare and Healthy Start programs, and in March 2000 the Legislature abolished the asset limit for Wisconsin's child care subsidy program.

Another barrier to participation is the Food Stamp Program's federal vehicle asset limit, which generally limits families to a vehicle with a value of no more than \$4,650. Advocates note that the food stamp vehicle limit has been increased only 3 percent since it was established in 1977 and that it is substantially lower than limits in other programs for low-income individuals and families. For example, state statutes allow a W-2 recipient to own any vehicle worth up to \$10,000, while

Medical Assistance and child care subsidy programs do not place any limit on the value of a vehicle a recipient may own.

Proposed federal changes may modify the vehicle asset limit for food stamp participation.

Proposed federal rules to implement provisions of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act would provide that the value of a vehicle would not be counted against the vehicle asset limit if the assistance group had less than \$1,000 in equity in the vehicle as a result of payments made to date. USDA has estimated that by 2005, these actions will increase the number of people eligible for food stamps nationally by 150,000, and the number of eligible assistance groups in Wisconsin by 1,125. The President's proposed budget for FFY 2000-01 would allow states to set their food stamp vehicle limits at those established for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant program. It is estimated that doing so would enable an additional 245,000 people nationally to receive food stamps, including an additional 3,000 assistance groups in Wisconsin.

Income and asset limits can also be disregarded to expand program eligibility for certain groups of individuals. For example, action taken by USDA in October 1999 allows a food assistance group in which any member received a TANF-funded service to be categorically eligible for food stamps; in other words, these assistance groups do not have to meet gross income or asset limits, or restrictions on the value of their vehicle. It is important to note, however, that net income eligibility requirements must still be met. For example, a family of three that received a TANF-funded service and had a monthly income of \$2,000 would currently be categorically eligible for food stamps; however, unless allowable deductions, such as child care expenditures, lowered its net income to less than \$1,157, the family would receive no food stamp benefits.

Although a number of changes to expanding eligibility and benefits are possible, some argue that additional changes are not needed to encourage greater participation in the Food Stamp Program given recent caseload increases. They also argue that any proposed changes to food stamp policies will have to be weighed against their costs.

Appendix I

Food Stamp Recipients and Benefits by County

County	Number of Recipients in January 1995	Number of Recipients in January 2000	Percentage Change	Benefits Paid in January 1995	Benefits Paid in January 2000	Percentage Change
Adams	1,496	805	-46.2%	\$ 82,057	\$ 44,942	-45.2%
Ashland	1,397	828	-40.7	73,520	47,016	-36.1
Barron	2,774	1,446	-47.9	140,312	66,597	-52.5
Bayfield	639	393	-38.5	34,096	20,593	-39.6
Brown	9,447	4,185	-55.7	510,184	218,830	-57.1
Buffalo	748	328	-56.1	37,530	12,996	-65.4
Burnett	892	414	-53.6	47,373	19,716	-58.4
Calumet	677	404	-40.3	35,208	17,246	-51.0
Chippewa	3,173	1,458	-54.0	167,332	72,084	-56.9
Clark	1,245	555	-55.4	60,740	26,652	-56.1
Columbia	1,406	678	-51.8	70,885	31,171	-56.0
Crawford	824	349	-57.6	41,467	13,747	-66.8
Dane	13,648	8,877	-35.0	766,513	464,858	-39.4
Dodge	1,892	1,113	-41.2	94,824	46,696	-50.8
Door	1,055	417	-60.5	58,378	17,936	-69.3
Douglas	4,034	2,027	-49.8	226,612	109,493	-51.7
Dunn	2,505	1,218	-51.4	124,884	58,438	-53.2
Eau Claire	6,186	2,537	-59.0	328,064	115,870	-64.7
Florence	336	111	-67.0	16,405	5,518	-66.4
Fond du Lac	2,651	1,530	-42.3	136,639	76,799	-43.8
Forest	660	270	-59.1	33,862	9,493	-72.0
Grant	1,482	710	-52.1	72,673	29,452	-59.5
Green	949	562	-40.8	45,640	24,942	-45.4
Green Lake	715	344	-51.9	34,363	15,204	-55.8

County	Number of Recipients in January 1995	Number of Recipients in January 2000	Percentage Change	Benefits Paid in January 1995	Benefits Paid in January 2000	Percentage Change
Iowa	732	480	-34.4	\$ 34,126	\$ 20,735	-39.2
Iron	300	145	-51.7	16,071	4,829	-70.0
Jackson	1,238	470	-62.0	63,822	22,013	-65.5
Jefferson	1,597	620	-61.2	87,216	28,890	-66.9
Juneau	1,510	648	-57.1	73,735	26,866	-63.6
Kenosha	9,304	5,837	-37.3	541,249	333,089	-38.5
Kewaunee	455	210	-53.8	21,682	9,460	-56.4
La Crosse	6,519	3,506	-46.2	356,121	164,922	-53.7
Lafayette	472	201	-57.4	22,263	9,395	-57.8
Langlade	1,319	790	-40.1	63,887	40,587	-36.5
Lincoln	1,127	563	-50.0	57,511	27,396	-52.4
Manitowoc	2,469	959	-61.2	121,182	42,553	-64.9
Marathon	6,292	2,953	-53.1	333,453	135,639	-59.3
Marquette	2,183	937	-57.1	117,150	46,822	-60.0
Marquette	684	292	-57.3	33,017	14,436	-56.3
Menominee	1,011	473	-53.2	57,031	27,274	-52.2
Milwaukee	149,957	98,504	-34.3	9,079,573	5,994,086	-34.0
Monroe	2,032	1,135	-44.1	1,00,236	55,644	-44.5
Oconto	1,468	690	-53.0	70,491	35,690	-49.4
Oneida	1,734	1,037	-40.2	96,058	51,996	-45.9
Outagamie	3,534	1,718	-51.4	182,902	76,763	-58.0
Ozaukee	640	395	-38.3	36,812	19,260	-47.7
Pepin	282	101	-64.2	12,571	3,575	-71.6
Pierce	985	434	-55.9	52,928	20,233	-61.8
Polk	2,157	850	-60.6	113,877	38,454	-66.2
Portage	3,440	1,467	-57.4	187,291	70,053	-62.6
Price	994	562	-43.5	50,267	25,222	-49.8
Racine	12,145	6,541	-46.1	681,124	378,019	-44.5
Richland	987	534	-45.9	48,577	24,616	-49.3

County	Number of Recipients in January 1995	Number of Recipients in January 2000	Percentage Change	Benefits Paid in January 1995	Benefits Paid in January 2000	Percentage Change
Rock	9,617	4,925	-48.8	\$ 533,221	\$ 292,476	-45.1
Rusk	1,350	519	-61.6	70,954	28,365	-60.0
St. Croix	1,217	593	-51.3	65,899	30,230	-54.1
Sauk	1,856	1,032	-44.4	92,927	53,151	-42.8
Sawyer	1,708	665	-61.1	94,541	38,850	-58.9
Shawano	1,430	776	-45.7	70,459	38,855	-44.9
Sheboygan	3,314	1,475	-55.5	171,219	70,125	-59.0
Taylor	812	504	-37.9	42,959	25,245	-41.2
Trempealeau	1,633	680	-58.4	83,447	29,911	-64.2
Vernon	1,293	721	-44.2	60,422	29,465	-51.2
Vilas	710	338	-52.4	35,112	18,055	-48.6
Walworth	2,131	1,042	-51.1	119,925	53,560	-55.3
Washburn	1,042	450	-56.8	49,122	23,842	-51.5
Washington	1,821	1,090	-40.1	99,689	54,443	-45.4
Waukesha	3,986	2,227	-44.1	227,969	122,273	-46.4
Waupaca	1,769	715	-59.6	97,241	33,097	-66.0
Waushara	1,392	707	-49.2	69,121	35,928	-48.0
Winnebago	5,211	2,587	-50.4	277,725	118,680	-57.3
Wood	4,011	2,449	-38.9	212,274	123,985	-41.6
<u>Tribe</u>						
Red Cliff Tribe	311	347	11.6	18,666	20,531	10.0
Stockbridge Munsee	151	86	-43.0	9,252	4,337	-53.1
Lac du Flambeau Tribe	481	444	-7.7	26,431	29,402	11.2
Bad River Tribe	324	169	-47.8	17,803	9,153	-48.6
Sokaogon Tribe	--	110	--	--	7,007	--
Oneida Tribe	642	287	-55.3	36,522	18,004	-50.7
Total	326,610	189,549	-42.0	\$18,534,684	\$10,623,776	-42.7

Appendix II

Food Stamp Promotional Information Posted and Available in Agency Waiting Areas

Agency	Food Stamp Rights and Responsibilities Poster	Justice for All Poster	General Food Stamps Brochure	Rights and Responsibilities Brochure	Fair Hearings Brochure
Dane County	No	No	No	No	No
Eau Claire County	No	Yes	No	No	No
Grant County	Yes	No	No	No	No
Kenosha County	No	No	Yes	No	No
Milwaukee County office	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Employment Solutions, Inc.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximus, Inc.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Opportunities Industrialization Center of Greater Milwaukee	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
YW Works	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monroe County	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Price County	Yes	No	No	No	No
Rock County	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Sawyer County	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Vilas County office	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vilas County (Forward Services, Inc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Note: Review was conducted from February through May 2000 at the primary intake location for each agency.

Tommy G. Thompson
Governor

Debra Stewart, Ph.D.
Secretary



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707-7946
Telephone: (608) 266-7552
Fax: (608) 266-1784
<http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/>
e-mail: DWDSEC@dwd.state.wi.us

July 7, 2000

Janice Mueller
State Auditor
Legislative Audit Bureau
22 E. Mifflin Street, Suite 500
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Ms. Mueller:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Audit Bureau's evaluation of Wisconsin's Food Stamp Program. In addition, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to your staff regarding the report draft prior to finalizing it for distribution. In our discussions prior to the report's release, it was clear that your staff faced the challenge of balancing a full and accurate presentation of complex information against minimizing the length and complexity of the report.

As we are all aware, the impetus of the evaluation was concern over the decline in Food Stamp Program participation. While the report discusses some factors that are likely responsible for this trend, the effects of these factors are not quantified. In addition, other potential factors are excluded. This is likely due to the fact that the dynamics surrounding the decline in program participation in recent years are quite complex. However, the report does not clearly articulate the difficulty faced in accurately determining the causes of the decline. As a result, theories regarding the causes of the decline remain theories, although they appear to have been accepted as fact.

Nevertheless, the decline in Food Stamp Program participation is real. We have been and will remain as concerned as others that those eligible for the Food Stamp Program have the opportunity to participate in it if they so choose. This commitment has resulted in improvements to program administration and other initiatives, many of which are noted in the report. As a result of these efforts, the number of people receiving food stamps has increased by more than 15,000 since May 1999.

In addition to addressing factors over which the Department has some control, we have also been actively working to draw attention to the need for changes to the program at the federal level. We believe, as do our peers in other states, that the federal Food Stamp Program needs to be modernized in order to ensure Wisconsin families, the elderly, and disabled can and do avail themselves of this valuable resource. We hope that others interested in ensuring the betterment of the program will work cooperatively with us to ensure adoption of our agenda.

It is in that spirit of cooperation that I offer the following information that I believe is relevant to a discussion of the Food Stamp Program. It is intended to supplement the information included in the report in an effort to ensure a full understanding of the program as it exists today, rather than at the time audit fieldwork was completed.

Increased Self-Sufficiency Has Affected Program Participation

The report emphasizes four potential reasons for the decline in Food Stamp Program participation. One cause noted in the report merits further discussion: the effects of Wisconsin Works (W-2) and other welfare reform initiatives to connecting people to appropriate work or work training, resulting in increased income and greater family self-sufficiency. Specific information regarding the effect of gains in earned income on eligibility for the program that were provided during the course of the evaluation were not included in the final report. This information provides a significant amount of insight on the effect of work on program participation.

For example, a single parent with two children receiving \$300 per month in child support (which was the average collection for public assistance cases), paying \$500 per month in rent, and working 2,080 hours per year at a wage of \$6.00 per hour with no additional income except the Earned Income Tax Credit, is potentially eligible for \$141 per month in food stamps. However, as income rises, which is the aim and purpose of W-2 and other support programs operated by the Department, the amount of benefits available declines substantially. This same wage earner at \$7.42 per hour (which was the average wage reported by first quarter W-2 "Leavers") is eligible for \$53 per month in food stamps. At \$8.25 per hour, available benefits drop to \$2 per month.

It is no small testament to the success many families are enjoying through employment that almost 40 percent of the food stamp caseload receive less than \$50 per month in food stamps. The federal formula for calculating food stamp benefits rapidly phases out benefits for those who increase their earnings. This federally prescribed "phasing out" may help to explain reports of increased reliance on alternative food resources as there is anecdotal evidence that many choose to forego participation in the program as a result of weighing the available benefits against the effort required to apply and receive food stamps.

Departmental Initiatives Have Improved Program Access and Administration

The Department has begun a number of initiatives aimed at improving access to the program. While some of these initiatives were highlighted in the report, a complete picture of all of our activities was not included.

For example, although the report describes the expansion of additional application sites, the effect of outstationing of eligibility workers in many counties was not fully reported. In late 1998, the Department, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Family Services, provided nearly \$2 million in Food Stamp Program and Medical Assistance funds to eight counties, including Milwaukee, to develop and expand outstationing of eligibility workers at community locations. From June through September 1999, over 4,000 applications were taken at more than 60 sites. Over 20 local agencies have also outstationed eligibility workers to accept applications at community sites (e.g., food pantries, schools, community centers, and clinics). In addition, as a customer service for working families and others with transportation problems, the Department requested and received a federal waiver in 1999 allowing phone-in and mail-in eligibility reviews for alternating 3-month periods. The Department is currently working with Milwaukee County to set up a change reporting call center, and will include initiating the phone-in and mail-in process.

The Department has also issued policy directives to local administrative agencies to ensure that the public is aware that food stamp applications, as well as applications for other supportive programs, may be filed at any W-2 or Economic Support Agency location at any time. This process initiates the application filing

date and allows for applicants to be screened for priority services. Local agency workers were also reminded in June 1999 of the right of potential food stamp applicants to file an application on the same day that they enter any agency office. In addition, the Department is conducting customer service reviews on over 2,000 new food stamp applications filed in FFY 2000 to ensure that they are processed in a correct and timely manner.

Other recent initiatives not specifically discussed in the report include:

- The Department created three television/radio public service announcements to encourage individuals to apply for food stamps by promoting the accessibility and ease of the new Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. The Department is also purchasing media time statewide to reach the majority of eligible food stamp participants.
- In November 1999, a Milwaukee W-2 agency began a \$350,000 media food stamp outreach and awareness initiative that includes 22 billboards, 25 bus placards, and 600 television and 374 radio spots. The initiative also included an information hotline, which received a reported 13,000 calls during a three-month period.
- The Department distributed 75,000 food stamp publications, which provide information on food stamp rights and responsibilities, for display in local offices statewide.
- The Department distributed 2,000 federal food stamp posters to local agencies to display in waiting and reception areas; Women, Infant and Children (WIC) sites; public resource areas; and community organizations.
- Currently, 33 local agencies are offering extended weekday business hours, between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., to provide customer service for employed participants. This includes all six of the W-2 agencies in the Milwaukee region.
- The Department is developing a letter to send to specific closed food stamp cases to encourage them to reapply if pertinent to their situation.

In addition to improving access to the program, the Department has been successful in improving overall program administration. For example, in September 1999, a Milwaukee W-2 Agency customer service review conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) yielded much praise and identified numerous best practices for the delivery of food stamps. The USDA report cited "excellent" public notification practices as well as five specific "best practices" including: a 24-hour hotline to answer inquiries related to food stamps, W-2, Medicaid and other services; an on-site child care center; early and late office hours; separate Food Stamp Employment and Training orientation sessions for families and single adults; and a resource center that is "fully utilized by residents of the community...a tremendous resource."

Finally, we have been working to reduce our error rate. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service notified the Department on June 26, 2000 that Wisconsin will receive an award at the Midwest Region's Big 10 Conference in August for the "most improved" state in terms of error rate reduction for FFY 1999. The reduction of 1.2 percent is considered statistically significant in the Food Stamp Program arena.

Electronic Benefits Transfer Implementation Has Been Successful

As noted in the report, a major statewide initiative related to the provision of benefits under the Food Stamp Program has been the implementation of EBT. Given the clear reduction in the stigma associated with food stamps as well as the use of an automated deposit process, we believe this initiative will improve access to and use of the Food Stamp Program. However, much of the information included in the report is historical and does not reflect the success of the program to date.

The Department conducted the pilot in Rock County to assess the operation of the system and the adequacy of the client conversion process. Such an assessment is the purpose of a pilot operation. As could be expected in a pilot, the Department identified the following problems discussed in the report and, as noted, took appropriate steps to resolve them.

- **Performance** - Through interactive diagnostic work between Rock County, the Department, and Citicorp Services, Inc. (CSI), problems with sporadic transaction denials and card issuance denials were resolved in January 2000 while the system was in the pilot stage. Neither has recurred.
- **Customer Service** - As a result of concerns regarding poor customer service via the CSI hotline, CSI terminated a customer service representative who was identified as being a party to at least one of the limited number of complaints received. The Department has continued to monitor and follow through on all instances of reported poor customer service.
- **No Show Rate** - At the strong recommendation of the advocate and retailer communities and based on "lessons learned" from other states, the Department is requiring that all clients attend in-person training. In Rock County, the final tally was that only 57 active cases (or 3 percent) of Food Stamp Program participants did not receive their cards by the end of the formal conversion period. At that point, the county began to make personal contact with the 57 participants and was able to convert another 35 of them to EBT.

Based on the results of the pilot, the Department enhanced its efforts, working in conjunction with other agencies, to assure that no Food Stamp Program participants, especially the elderly, will be harmed by the implementation of EBT. Among the steps being taken by local agencies, with the Department's support, are:

- publicizing the conversion through the media and community-based organizations and in stuffers sent with the final two months of food stamp coupons;
- providing information on the conversion to clients prior to the start of the training;
- involving other county departments and community based organizations in the planning process and to identify clients who need transportation to conversion sites or home visits;
- setting up conversion training sites at W-2 offices, housing projects and senior centers;
- making personal contacts with individual clients prior to the training to provide assistance;

- establishing special "hotlines" for clients to get information on the conversion and to change their appointments; and
- following up by mail, phone, and, if necessary, personal contacts with client who do not show up for their scheduled appointments.

Based on the latest data available, these efforts have produced the following results: 76 percent of all open cases have EBT cards available by the end of the conversion month; 94 percent by the end of the first benefit month; and 97.5 percent by the end of the second benefit month. It should be noted that during the conversion month, clients receive food stamp coupons during the normal staggered cycle. During the first benefit month, clients have access to their EBT accounts on the same staggered basis. In addition, the Department has advised the counties that no client's food stamp case may be closed due to initial non-conversion. The counties will continue to use every opportunity after the conversion month to convert the client to EBT.

We want to ensure the continued effective implementation of EBT. In addition to continuing our own proactive efforts to make EBT as "customer friendly" as possible, we will, as recommended in the report, monitor the participation of individuals in the Food Stamp Program. We will report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by July 1, 2001, on the changes in program participation among groups that may have difficulty with the new system, such as the elderly and the disabled.


Federal Requirements Hamper Service Delivery

Finally, we believe the report does not clearly delineate the need for a federal agenda to address concerns with the Food Stamp Program. Despite our best efforts to increase access to this important supportive service and improve program administration, federal law and related regulations still hamper our flexibility. We have identified 14 separate issues to be addressed at the federal level, including mandates to collect and verify voluminous amounts of data for participant eligibility, complete face-to-face eligibility reviews, base the food stamp allotment on exact net income, require low income eligibility thresholds, and require cost neutrality for waivers.

As an illustration of the difficulties these parameters represent, the USDA recently launched a series of "Food Stamp Conversations" aimed at seeking public input about the future of the program in light of federal reauthorization in 2002. Among the topics being discussed are bringing food stamp eligibility more in line with other support programs, assessing outcomes based on performance measures, and simplifying program requirements. Clearly, now is the time for all of us to work together to set the federal agenda for the future of the Food Stamp Program.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the evaluation. I look forward to working with the Legislature and the public in perfecting the administration of the Food Stamp Program in the future as a valuable employment support to Wisconsin families.

Sincerely,



Linda Stewart, Ph.D.
Secretary



**HUNGER
TASK
FORCE**
of Milwaukee
SINCE 1974

OCT 27 2003

October 22, 2003

State Senator Carol Roessler, Co-Chair
State Representative Sue Jeskewitz, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Audit
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Roessler and Representative Jeskewitz:

I am following up with additional information on issues that were raised by Joint Audit Committee members at the food stamp hearing on October 8th.

Representative Kerkman raised a question regarding the \$6.2 million that the state DHFS plans to spend on reducing the food stamp error rate. It is important to note that the state plans to spend over \$1.7 million in Milwaukee County alone over the next two years in an attempt to lower the county's error rate. In many ways, Milwaukee County drives the state's food stamp numbers, both in terms of the error rate and participation rate. However, we are concerned that this select reinvestment activity may have negligible effect if the state does not address the huge caseloads that Milwaukee County eligibility workers must handle.

Currently, each Milwaukee County caseworker handles almost 400 cases. For years, we have heard complaints from food stamp and Medical Assistance (MA) recipients who try to reach their caseworkers by phone, only to reach a voicemail box that is full and inaccessible. Milwaukee County has tried to alleviate this problem with a "change reporting center," which is a phone system designed to allow clients to make changes to their case via a central reporting center. The change reporting center was funded with state reinvestment dollars from previous years' error rates. However, this system has not worked well due to the county's poor phone service capabilities and lack of staff available to handle client calls.

Moreover, the state has reduced its income maintenance funding for counties in past years, which means that Milwaukee County in particular has had fewer caseworkers to handle huge increases in MA and food stamp caseloads in the past four years. With our current economic downturn, it seems likely that demand for food stamp and MA benefits will continue to increase in Milwaukee County and across the state. Yet, proposed cuts by the Milwaukee County Executive in his 2004 budget could further shrink the number of eligibility worker positions, increasing the caseloads even more.

All of these trends point to a service delivery system that will continue to fail for both clients and caseworkers. If the Milwaukee County service delivery system further deteriorates, the state will have a difficult time reducing its overall error rate and increasing its participation rate. The result will be continued poor customer service

201 S. Hawley Court

Milwaukee, WI 53214-1900

tel: 414 777-0483

fax: 414 777-0480

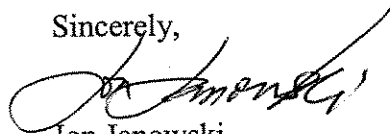
for clients, continued error rate penalties for the state, and more federal dollars lost due to under-enrollment in the Food Stamp Program.

The Committee also raised an issue concerning the 2002 federal Farm Bill process. Congress reauthorized the Food Stamp Program in 2002, and through the farm bill process made several important policy changes to the program. We have been working with state staff for over a year to ensure that these new policy options are implemented by the state DHFS. One of the major policy changes made by Congress was that all legal immigrant children, and some of their caretakers, are now eligible to receive food stamp benefits. In addition, the state is implementing a simplified reporting and 12-month recertification process for clients, transitional food stamp benefits for families who are leaving W-2, and other changes that are aimed at reducing the error rate and simplifying the program for clients. We closely monitor many other policy components of the Food Stamp Program, and we will continue to advocate that the state take advantage of all federal options that will maximize participation in the program.

The Committee also inquired about the experience of other states that have had success administering the Food Stamp Program. We think it is incumbent upon the state, whether through the audit process or otherwise, to analyze effective administrative models from other states that have successfully enrolled high percentages of eligible people into the program while keeping administrative errors to a minimum. It would seem that a thorough analysis of what these states are doing right could help Wisconsin gain new ideas about models that may work in our own state.

If you have any questions about this follow-up letter, I would be happy to discuss them with you. Thank you again for your attention to this important program.

Sincerely,



Jon Janowski
Director of Advocacy

Cc: Sen. Robert Cowles
Sen. Alberta Darling
Sen. Gary George
Sen. Jeffrey Plale
Rep. Samantha Kerkman
Rep. Dean Kaufert
Rep. David Cullen
Rep. Mark Pocan

Seaquist, Sara

From: Kurtz, Hunter
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2003 9:46 AM
To: Seaquist, Sara
Subject: FW: Food Pantry mailing

*Carol -
FYI
Jennifer*



Food Pantry
Coordinator Letter...

-----Original Message-----

From: Ziebell@oshkoshpubliclibrary.org
[mailto:Ziebell@oshkoshpubliclibrary.org]
Sent: Monday, November 10, 2003 9:26 AM
To: IANDR-L@AXP.WINNEFOX.ORG
Subject: Food Pantry mailing

Collaboration Members: for your information.

Hi Everyone. Attached is a letter that is being sent to Food Pantry Coordinators about the Food Stamp Program. DHFS sent a similar letter last year and received positive responses. This is also something on our Food Stamp outreach plan that was submitted to FNS for this year. Along with the letter, we also sent a supply of FS brochures and information about how to order them.

Cori Mc Farlane
Assistant Area Administrator
DHFS/OSF/NERO
920-448-5341
mcfarca@dhfs.state.wi.us <mailto:mcfarca@dhfs.state.wi.us>



DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE FINANCING

1 WEST WILSON STREET
P O BOX 309
MADISON WI 53701-0309

Telephone: 608-266-8922
FAX: 608-266-1096
TTY: 608-261-7798
www.dhfs.state.wi.us

Jim Doyle
Governor

Helene Nelson
Secretary

State of Wisconsin

Department of Health and Family Services

November 7, 2003

Dear Food Pantry Coordinators:

Increasing access to the Food Stamp program is a goal of Governor Jim Doyle and the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS). The Food Stamp program helps people to purchase the food needed for good health. I am asking for your assistance in encouraging eligible individuals to apply for food stamp benefits.

A recent national study concludes that nearly 50 percent of Emergency Food Assistance System households do not receive food stamps although they appear to be eligible for them. We hope that, by increasing enrollment in the Food Stamp program, we will also reduce the demand for emergency food at local food pantries and improve people's nutritional status.

The basic Food Stamp program rules are the same everywhere in Wisconsin. Almost 2,000 Wisconsin grocers participate in the program and provide easy access to food stamp benefits. People who are enrolled in the program use a plastic debit card called the Wisconsin QUEST Card to pay for food at the grocery store checkout lane with no service charge to the cardholder.

The Department has published a new brochure, "Food Stamps Make Wisconsin Healthier," which we would like you to use as a handout or stuffer in your food pantry. People can find out if they meet program requirements by contacting their county or tribal social services agency or by using a new self-screener on the Internet. A link to the brochure, new self-screener, a new shorter Wisconsin Food Stamp Only Application (HFS 16019B) form, fact sheets, and other information about the Food Stamp program can be found on our web site at <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us>.

We are also pleased to offer a new Food Stamp training course for community-based organizations that wish to learn more about food stamps to help low-income populations. If you would like information about this course, please contact Stacia Jankowski at (608) 267-3384.

We look forward to strengthening our partnership with you in promoting the Food Stamp program. We welcome any suggestions or comments that you may have about ways to improve our strategies for encouraging participation. Thank you for your help and ongoing efforts to reduce hunger and food insecurity in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Mark B. Moody
Administrator

MBM:my
BA10015

Attachments

December 2, 2003

Nancy Tolonend
194 A 5th Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935


Dear Nancy:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns with the Wisconsin's Food Stamp Program. I sympathize with your situation and regret that your food stamp benefits were not explained or distributed in a timely manner.

I too share your concerns with the Food Stamp Program being plagued with accessibility and error rates in recent years. The Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which I am Co-Chair of, held a hearing on October 8, 2003 to discuss the 2000 audit of the Food Stamp Program and the follow-up report the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) conducted per my request. The follow-up report outlines trends in program participation, accuracy of benefit calculations, national changes in the Food Stamp Program, and efforts in Wisconsin to improve the accuracy of benefit determinations. Most startling in this report is the Food Stamp benefit payment error rate. Wisconsin's benefit payment error rate has been consistently above the national average for the past two years. The error rate of 4.4 percentage points above the national averages makes Wisconsin the third-worse state in the nation for error rates (only California and Michigan have a higher error rate than Wisconsin).

At the hearing, we were pleased to hear from the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) that the food stamp error rate has dropped by 3% since October 2002, participation has grown by 64% over the past five years, program rules were simplified, and administrative costs have been reduced. In addition, DHFS sent a follow-up letter to me outlining their priorities as follows:

- Increase Wisconsin's payment accuracy rate so that no sanction is imposed on Wisconsin.
- Increase enrollment to expand access to nutritious food and benefit the state economically.
- Increase automated support to relieve the work for eligible workers so they can concentrate on payment accuracy and customer service.
- Create new, easier options for customers to apply, report changes, and retain eligibility.

- 
- Streamline and align Food Stamps and Medicaid policies and processes.
 - Establish new partnerships and public and private organizations to promote the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.

I have enclosed a copy of the LAB follow-up report for your review and I anticipate the Audit Committee will request an update on Food Stamps from DHFS in January 2004.

You can rest assured I will continue to monitor the Food Stamp Program situation given how important this is to proper nutrition, hunger prevention, as well as ensuring federal funding and compliance.

Sincerely,

CAROL ROESSLER
State Senator
18th Senate District

CR:ka/food stamps
December 2, 2003

December 2, 2003

Nancy Tolonend
194 A 5th Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

Dear Nancy:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your concerns with the Wisconsin's Food Stamp Program. I sympathize with your situation and regret that your food stamp benefits were not explained or distributed in a timely manner.

I too share your concerns with the Food Stamp Program being plagued with accessibility and error rates in recent years. The Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which I am Co-Chair of, held a hearing on October 8, 2003 to discuss the 2000 audit of the Food Stamp Program and the follow-up report the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) conducted per my request. The follow-up report outlines trends in program participation, accuracy of benefit calculations, national changes in the Food Stamp Program, and efforts in Wisconsin to improve the accuracy of benefit determinations. Most startling in this report is the Food Stamp benefit payment error rate. Wisconsin's benefit payment error rate has been consistently above the national average for the past two years. The error rate of 4.4 percentage points above the national averages makes Wisconsin the third-worse state in the nation for error rates (only California and Michigan have a higher error rate than Wisconsin).

At the hearing, we were pleased to hear from the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) that the food stamp error rate has dropped by 3% since October 2002, participation has grown by 64% over the past five years, program rules were simplified, and administrative costs have been reduced. In addition, DHFS sent a follow-up letter to me outlining their priorities as follows:

- Increase Wisconsin's payment accuracy rate so that no sanction is imposed on Wisconsin.
- Increase enrollment to expand access to nutritious food and benefit the state economically.
- Increase automated support to relieve the work for eligible workers so they can concentrate on payment accuracy and customer service.
- Create new, easier options for customers to apply, report changes, and retain eligibility.

- Streamline and align Food Stamps and Medicaid policies and processes.
- Establish new partnerships and public and private organizations to promote the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.

I have enclosed a copy of the LAB follow-up report for your review and I anticipate the Audit Committee will request an update on Food Stamps from DHFS in January 2004.

You can rest assured I will continue to monitor the Food Stamp Program situation given how important this is to proper nutrition, hunger prevention, as well as ensuring federal funding and compliance.

Sincerely,

CAROL ROESSLER
State Senator
18th Senate District

CR:ka/food stamps

Senton:

NOV 12 2003

Psm. 20:5 - the Lord full-fill
all your petitions
Petition: Help For Food
Stamp
Clients

393-62-1494

1. Clients should be informed as to when they will receive their next allotment of (Food Stamps) so they can budget and survive. As you are enforcing your laws

2. Social workers could have the wisdom to help with vouchers etc.

A. Health issues were encurred as well as much pain and suffering. having to wait 6 weeks before an allotment of proper quantity.
The Hand of the Diligent
(Prov. 12:24)

Ms. Nancy C. Tolonen
194 A 5th St.
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

Carol -
Do you want me
to say you held an
audit hearing on this
issue b/c of error
last week
continue to
monitor to see
if the dept. is
improving the
food stamp
program?

or do you
think it is
case work?
Karen

our per. Food
For camp
clients

and be inform
they will be
treatment of
so they
survive - as
forcing you

s could h
to help u

issues were
well as
and suffer
6 weeks
of prope
the Dil:
(Provi.

C. Tolonen
us 5493E

Mrs. Nancy C. Tolonen

104 A SW St.

Fond du Lac, WI 54935

(Petition)

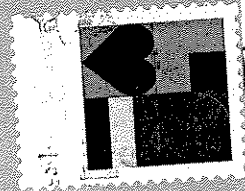
State Senator Carol

PO Box 9892

Madison, WI

53707

ATT: Senator



Appleton Post-Crescent July 1, 2003

OUR VIEWS

State must correct food stamp mess

If this isn't among the top priorities for Helene Nelson, the state Health and Family Services secretary, it ought to be: Fix the state's food stamp program. It's an embarrassment.

Wisconsin has the third-worst error rate of any state's food stamp program in 2002, according to statistics released last week by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The error rate is 12.69 percent, compared to the national average of 8.26 percent. The error rate is based on people getting overpaid or underpaid in food stamps, and people who shouldn't be in the program.

The most aggravating part of this embarrassment is that the state's poor error rate has been an ongoing problem. Wisconsin has been in the bottom 10 every year since 1996. That has cost the state \$11.6 million in federal fines — and could cost another \$3.5 million this year — although the feds allow states to use part of the money to try to fix the program. States are fined for performing worse than the national average.

The most aggravating part of this embarrassment is that the state's poor error rate has been an ongoing problem. Wisconsin has been in the bottom 10 every year since 1996.

Critics say one problem is that it's too tough to apply for food stamps in Wisconsin. That appears to be true. The food stamp application form on the DHFS Web site is 16 pages.

Add the form to other complaints — the state's administrative costs are too high compared to other states, the number of sites to apply for the program is dwindling, there's a long wait to get benefits — and it's easy to see why a frustrated head of a household would go to the nearest food pantry instead.

That's not the right idea. Food pantries are designed more for emergency purposes, and food stamp money at least goes back into the local economy.

What is the right idea is a system that makes it easy for those who need help to get it and gets the proper help to the proper people.

Nelson and her department must unravel Wisconsin's current mess and save the state from more embarrassment.

About 300,000 people in Wisconsin get food stamps, which go to those at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level, \$23,532 for a family of four. But that's only about 55 percent of the eligible families, which adds to the growing burden facing food pantries and other charitable groups.



(Google WEB SEARCH)

E-MAIL | JS ONLINE | TMJ4 | WTMJ | WKTI | CNI | LAKE COUNTRY



Journal Sentinel Services Classifieds On Wisconsin LIVE Coupons Yellow Pages

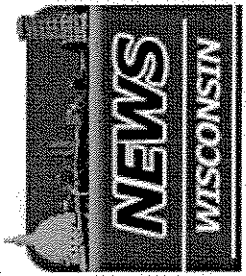
FORGET THE BOOK!

News Articles:
Advanced Searches



Subscribe to the
Journal Sentinel
online edition

JS Online Features List



ON WISCONSIN : JS ONLINE : NEWS : WISCONSIN :

E-MAIL | PRINT
THIS STORY



Shop the city's largest
lighting showroom

Effort to promote food stamps put in limbo

State paid \$10,000 to find new name, but reports differ on implementation

By MEGAN TWOHEY
mtwohey@journal sentinel.com

Last Updated: July 31, 2003

Believing the term "food stamps" carries such a stigma that it's making people reluctant to partake in the program, the state has commissioned an advertising agency to find a new term.

However, it is unclear whether these new names will be implemented, because of differing reports from state and federal agencies.

The state's Department of Health and Family Services, which spent \$10,000 to have a Madison firm craft the new name, had hoped to introduce it soon in brochures, TV

Food Stamps

FOOD STAMPS
BASELARD INCREASES

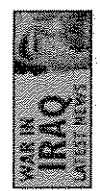
The following table shows the amount of food stamps issued by county in the first half of 2003. The amount of food stamps issued in the second half of 2003 is not yet available.

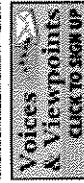
COUNTY	2003	2002	CHANGE
Adams	1,214	1,102	+112
Barab	1,302	1,202	+100
Bellevue	1,302	1,202	+100
Brookfield	1,302	1,202	+100
Calumet	1,302	1,202	+100
Franklin	1,302	1,202	+100
Grant	1,302	1,202	+100
Jefferson	1,302	1,202	+100
Madison	1,302	1,202	+100
Monroe	1,302	1,202	+100
Portland	1,302	1,202	+100
Rock	1,302	1,202	+100
Walworth	1,302	1,202	+100
Washington	1,302	1,202	+100
Winnebago	1,302	1,202	+100
Wood	1,302	1,202	+100
Total	13,020	12,020	+1,000

Source: Journal Sentinel
Data provided by the Department of Health and Family Services

- News
- Wisconsin
- Milwaukee
- Waukesha
- Oz/Wash
- Racine
- Editorials
- Crossroads
- Columnists
- Obituaries
- Letter to Editor
- Weather
- AP The Wire

Special Features:





Archived Features:



advertisements and other promotional materials. The business - Knupp and Watson - has been running several possibilities by focus groups.

Graphic/Journal Sentinel
Food stamps

But Susan Wood, the state's director of the Bureau of Income Maintenance and organizer of the food stamp program, said the department decided last week not to make a change.

The reason, she said, is that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is going to change the name of the federal food stamp program nationwide.

At least, Wood said, that's the impression that she and other state food stamp directors were given at a July meeting with USDA officials in Washington.

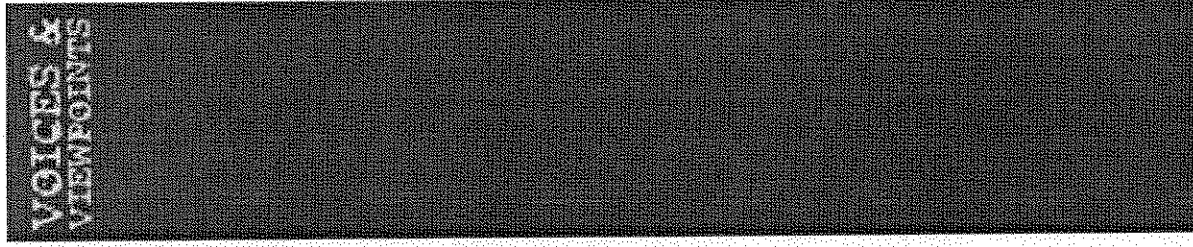
Based on that news, Wood said, Wisconsin would give the advertising agency's suggestions to the USDA. "It doesn't make any sense to get out in front of the federal government, if they're going to get active on this," she said.

But a USDA representative, speaking on behalf of the federal official who hosted the meeting, said the federal government has no plans to change the name of the food stamp program.

She said state agencies can change names on their own, but any change at the federal level must be made by Congress.

"There is no plan to change the name for food stamps nationwide," Jean Daniel said. "We have asked states to keep us posted on any plans they have to do that."

In an interview after Daniel's comment, though, Wood said the state would not implement its own change, but would continue its plan to send the proposed names to the federal government.



Jobs



- [Cars](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Rentals](#)
- [Personals](#)
- [General Classifieds](#)
- [Grocery Coupons](#)
- [Buy & Sell Tickets](#)
- [Contests](#)

Washington, Michigan and Minnesota have already changed their programs' names. The new name in Minnesota is "food support." Wood declined to reveal the names that were under consideration in Wisconsin.

Changing food stamps' image

Wood said the goal in Wisconsin is to change the program's image - to make food stamps seem less like welfare, and more like general assistance.

It's part of a broader effort to boost food stamp participation across the state by targeting elderly people, disabled individuals and the growing number of working poor families, she said.

The food stamp caseload in Wisconsin has greatly increased in the past five years, with its nearly 56% rise eclipsing the increases in 47 other states, according to records compiled by the Washington-based Food Research and Action Center.

County food stamp service providers say one reason for this is a new type of client.

"In the past, the majority of people on food stamps were those who never had much income," said Susan Fergus, a manager at the Human Services department in Racine County, where the food stamp caseload has jumped from 6,369 households in 1998 to 11,592 households as of May this year.

While those people are still on food stamps, Fergus said, "We often see people who once had considerable income. They've lost their job and exhausted unemployment."

Those are the people - perhaps too ashamed to apply for "food stamps" - whom the state wants to attract with a new name for the program.

State reforming program

Need Help?

- [Searching Archives](#)
- [Wireless Access](#)
- [Site Topics](#)
- [Table of Contents](#)
- [Contact Staff](#)
- [Subscriptions](#)

Wisconsin has been criticized in the past for its management of food stamps.

To the chagrin of anti-hunger advocates, caseworkers in the mid-1990s didn't tell people leaving welfare that they were still eligible for food stamps. As a result, the food stamp caseload decreased.

Today, the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee continues to take aim at the state for its food stamp error rate.

Wood said things are changing.

Last year, management of food stamps shifted to the Department of Health and Family Services from the state's Department of Workforce Development, which administers welfare.

Since then, the family services department has begun instructing food pantries on food stamps. The agency also placed food stamp applications that can be downloaded on its Web site.

With a \$1.7 million grant it received in July, Wood said the agency plans to implement a computer program that would allow people to submit the applications via the Internet.

From the Aug. 1, 2003 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

[BACK TO TOP](#)

News Articles:
Advanced Searches

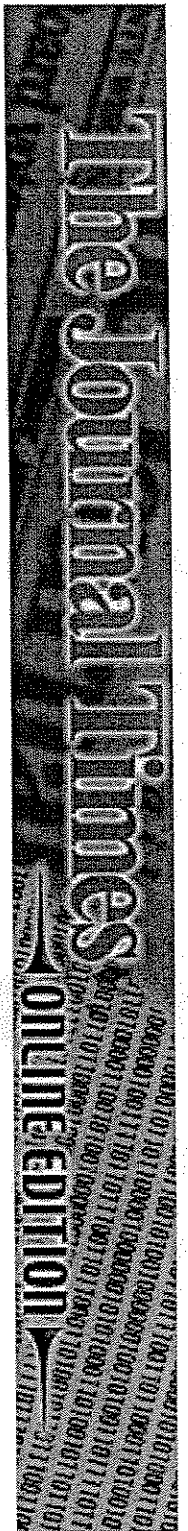


Subscribe to the
Journal Sentinel
online

JS Online Features List

© Copyright 2003, Journal Sentinel Inc. All rights reserved.
Produced by [Journal Interactive](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

Journal Sentinel Inc. is a subsidiary of [Journal Communications](#), an employee-owned company.
v050802a



Home News Sports Features Records

Classifieds Jobs Homes Cars

Archive Search

Perform Search

Subscribe Contact Us User Guide

Food stamp name game is a bit hard to swallow

More Headlines

Food stamp name game is a bit hard to swallow

State workers, who will see their own workload affected by the budget squeeze that will trim 2,300 jobs from state agencies in the next two years, must have been winning over the reports last week on the name game going on at the Department of Health and Family Services.

The department was trying to destigmatize the term "food stamps" and commissioned a Madison advertising firm to develop a new name for the program to make people less reluctant to sign on.

They paid Knupp and Watson, of Madison, \$10,000 to develop the new name and the advertising firm reportedly has several possibilities which it is now evaluating using focus groups.

The theory is that a name change would encourage more people to sign up for the program which helps poor people, the elderly and the disabled buy food.

The ranks of those eligible for food stamps has doubtlessly grown with the economic downturn and the rise in unemployment in the past couple of years as workers have lost jobs and run out of unemployment benefits. And the human services workers who argue there may be some people who are too ashamed to apply for food stamps may well be right.

State statistics from the past five years don't seem to indicate that signing people up is that much of a problem - the food stamp caseload statewide has mushroomed 56 percent in the past five years.



According to news reports, the number of households participating in the food stamp program has jumped 82 percent in that time, going from 6,369 households to 11,592. In Milwaukee County, the number of participating households has grown by more than 40,000.

We can only guess what catchy new term they have come up with at Knupp and Watson since Department of Health and Family Services officials were not saying what the options are.

We have no problem with a name change. Other states reportedly have made changes recently, with Minnesota going with "food support."

Fine. Call it that. Or call it "nutritional development" or "nutrition supplement" or any other name you like.

But when the state of Wisconsin is cutting jobs, boosting tuition, raising license fees and going through all sorts of hoops to stem a tide of red ink, we shouldn't be squandering \$10,000 with a private ad agency to make a name change that state workers could probably have come up with on their own.

That money would be better spent on, say, food.

And when other state agencies complain there isn't any fat left in their budgets, you can bet that legislators will find that hard to swallow and cite this little episode as an example.



[Click here to view The Journal Times On-line privacy policy.](#) [Comments or Questions? Click Here.](#)

This entire web site content copyright 2003, The Journal Times, 212 4th St., Racine, WI, 53403. All Rights Reserved.

Racine Journal Times August 5, 2003

OUR PERSPECTIVE

Food stamp name game is a bit hard to swallow

State workers, who will see their own workload affected by the budget squeeze that will trim 2,300 jobs from state agencies in the next two years, must have been wincing over the reports last week on the name game going on at the Department of Health and Family Services.

The department was trying to destigmatize the term "food stamps" and commissioned a Madison advertising firm to develop a new name for the program to make people less reluctant to sign on.

They paid Knupp and Watson, of Madison, \$10,000 to develop the new name and the advertising firm reportedly has several possibilities which it is now evaluating using focus groups.

The theory is that a name change would encourage more people to sign up for the program which helps poor people, the elderly and the disabled buy food.

The ranks of those eligible for food stamps has doubtlessly grown with the economic downturn and the rise in unemployment in the past couple of years as workers have lost jobs and run out of unemployment benefits. And the human services workers who argue there may be some people who are too ashamed to apply for food stamps may well be right.

State statistics from the past five years don't seem to indicate that signing people up is that much of a problem — the food stamp caseload statewide has mushroomed 56

percent in the past five years.

According to news reports, the number of households participating in the food stamp program has jumped 82 percent in that time, going from 6,369 households to 11,592. In Milwaukee County, the number of participating households has grown by more than 40,000.

We can only guess what catchy new term they have come up with at Knupp and Watson since Department of Health and Family Services officials were not saying what the options are.

We have no problem with a name change. Other states reportedly have made changes recently, with Minnesota going with "food support."

Fine. Call it that. Or call it "nutritional development" or "nutrition supplement" or any other name you like.

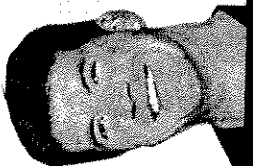
But when the state of Wisconsin is cutting jobs, boosting tuition, raising license fees and going through all sorts of hoops to stem a tide of red ink, we shouldn't be squandering \$10,000 with a private ad agency to make a name change that state workers could probably have come up with on their own.

That money would be better spent on, say, food.

And when other state agencies complain there isn't any fat left in their budgets, you can bet that legislators will find that hard to swallow and cite this little episode as an example.

Local

Saturday, June 28, 2003 www.thenorthwestern.com



Entertainment: Simon Cowell looking to settle contract **D4**

Simon Cowell
D4

D

Oshkosh Northwestern

NEWS IN BRIEF

Researchers monitor mosquito population

MARSHFIELD (AP) — To us they may be annoying and irritating, but experts at the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation say mosquitoes play an important role in veterinary and human health.

Jennifer Meece, a post-doctoral fellow at the foundation,

Food stamp errors may cost millions

Associated Press

MADISON — Wisconsin had the third-worst error rate in the nation for its food stamp program in 2002, mistakes that could cost the state up to \$3.5 million, according to data released Friday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

USDA spokeswoman Helene Nelson, secretary of the state Department of Health and Family Services, said she is committed to correcting the state's 2002 error rate of 12.69 percent and wants the fine to be Wisconsin's last.

Wisconsin had third worst error rate in the nation

Kathy Fiorito said the state can reinvest the fine to improve the food stamp program rather than pay the money to the federal government.

The average error rate nationwide was 8.26 percent last year. The USDA bases the error rate on a formula that takes into account the number of people who got too much or too little in food stamp payments and the number of people who should not have been in the program.

Nelson said the federal government will allow the state to submit a plan for investing half of the \$3.5 million and will forgive the rest if we get our performance in line. The program enrolled about 400,000 people as of March, and its numbers are increasing, she said.

Federal officials also said Wisconsin spent \$18.1 million more on food stamps last six years because of administrative mistakes.

while failing to give \$6.9 million in food stamps to poor people who should have received them.

State officials said in April they were making changes to Wisconsin's troubled food stamp system, which has cost the state millions in federal fines in the last six years because of administrative mistakes.

Wisconsin's program ranks 48th in nation

By Jenny Price
Associated Press

Wisconsin had the third-worst error rate in the nation for its food-stamp program in 2002, mistakes that could cost the state up to \$3.5 million, according to data released Friday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

USDA spokeswoman Kathy Fiorito said the state can reinvest the fine to improve the food-stamp program rather than pay the money to the federal government.

Helene Nelson, secretary of the state Department of Health and Family Services, said she is committed to correcting the state's 2002 error rate of 12.69 percent and wants the fine to be Wisconsin's last.

The average error rate nationwide was 8.26 percent last year. The USDA bases the error rate on a formula that takes into account the number of people who got too much or too little in food-stamp payments and the number of people who should not have been in the program.

States that meet the national average are not penalized and those with lower-than-average error rates get extra food-stamp funding.

Nelson said the federal government will allow the state to submit a plan for investing half of the \$3.5 million and will forgive the rest "if we get our performance in line." The program enrolled about 300,000 people as of March, and its numbers are increasing, she said.

Federal officials also said Wisconsin spent \$18.1 million more on food stamps than it should have in 2002 while failing to give \$6.9 million in food stamps to poor people who should have received them.

WISC
Wisconsin

Food-stamp error rate high again

Wisconsin's program ranks 48th in nation

By Jenny Price
Associated Press

Wisconsin had the third-worst error rate in the nation for its food-stamp program in 2002, mistakes that could cost the state up to \$3.5 million, according to data released Friday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

USDA spokeswoman Kathy Fiorito said the state can reinvest the fine to improve the food-stamp program rather than pay the money to the federal government.

Helene Nelson, secretary of the state Department of Health and Family Services, said she is committed to correcting the state's 2002 error rate of 12.69 percent and wants the fine to be Wisconsin's last.

The average error rate nationwide was 8.26 percent last year. The USDA bases the error rate on a formula that takes into account the number of people who got too much or too little in food-stamp payments and the number of people who should not have been in the program.

States that meet the national average are not penalized and those with lower-than-average error rates get extra food-stamp funding.

Nelson said the federal government will allow the state to submit a plan for investing half of the \$3.5 million and will forgive the rest "if we get our performance in line." The program enrolled about 300,000 people as of March, and its numbers are increasing, she said.

Federal officials also said Wisconsin spent \$18.1 million more on food stamps than it should have in 2002 while failing to give \$6.9 million in food stamps to poor people who should have received them.

State officials said in April they were making changes to Wisconsin's troubled food-stamp system, which has cost the state millions in federal fines in the last six years because of administrative mistakes.

Most of that money has been reinvested in efforts to improve the error rate, but the state consistently exceeds the national error-rate average and has ranked among the top 10 poorest performing states every year since 1996.

Only California and Michigan had worse rates in 2002.

The state budget for the two-year period that begins July 1 includes a \$2.87 million fine USDA assessed in 2001, when the program's error rate was 13.14 percent. Nelson said the state intends to use the money to improve a computer system used to administer the program.

But money for the 2002 fine is not budgeted and Nelson's agency would have to find money within its budget to cover the cost of the reinvestment, according to the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau. The state is facing a \$3.2 billion budget deficit for the upcoming two-year budget.

Sherrie Tussler, executive director for Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee, said the computer system has erroneously cut people's benefits in the past. She also said the program needs to increase the staffing levels and improve the technology in Milwaukee County.

"We're just totally under-resourced," she said. "The call volume is so high the system shuts down."

While Tussler said the group appreciates the state's commitment to improving food administration, she said she would reserve judgment on whether it would succeed.

"This time next year when the error rates are released, we'll have a better idea if the commitment is tangible," she said.

Nelson said the state is also aiming to increase enrollment rates.

Save your...
let's...
Wed
Self
June 28, 2003

Food Stamps

Jan + 5087

- not all eligible participating
- 3/95 - 7/99 ↓ 147,000 - 45%
- 94 97% → 98 70% 120,000 people

economy booming

- 29% of recipients rec less than \$10
- agency not fully rec eligible "light touch"
- appendix - required posters + brochures not displayed
- 2000 August hearing held
- program be simplified for workers + participation

• follow up series this summer 9-11 Jan, 2 main findings

① particip. 304,000 99
" 412,000 02
37% P

Economy worsen - initiatives have had no improvement in ^{some success} people benefited

3rd highest in 2 yrs.

\$18.1 mil. (9.2%) too high

\$6.9 " (3.5%) " low

\$10.6 mil in sanctions since 1993-94

food policy changed if we announce

→ \$201,500 must pay for each of next days.

6.2 mil on projects at or below
will one by 2004
subject to USDA review but not
legislation

She?

— W-2 prop not run by CO. not able to
administer food stamps
new contract later highest
not resolved that there are still
access & availability
\$45-50 million to administer!

appropriate
retain sanction and
current & future effort
system enhancements

Kirkman?

— can we ask fcd govt. to streamline
different cards / cards for
retailers

DHFS - Sec. Nelson

Sheryl

Bur HC Eligib.

- 100% federally benefit
- streamline + speed case
- reduce errors

↓ 3% since Oct 2000

3
years

- particip. ↑ 64% post type.
- streamline - prog rules simplified + adm. costs ↓

Error 12.69% combined over → under
pymt (FFY)

if work of or rent goes up 1mo.
that is an error

- income
- household comp.
- shelter
- utility costs

1/2 of errors

Graph Pg 3

Blue - Midw.

Red - State late caseload growth 00-02
economy

Sanctions:

- can't put into orange projects that ↓ the system net personnel
- 6.54 current net. ave
- 9.6 1st
- 9.2 end of yr - 1/2 way

Access

25% on SST receiving Food stamps
young people in the
#351-158 bc

target elderly who under earning
fed gov. investment in our state
Every \$5.00 transacted generates
\$.20 economic activity

Graph 7/5

Red-carroll

Blue - 1/2 pd out

Particip

60% of elig. will participate
Red - 1/2 pd out
attachment not go through "who
is on food stamps"

Asking for waiver from USDA to
count in-person interview
for SSTs to count for Red.

131,000 - 207,000

200-300,000 people can be reached
w/o federal funds

funding to counties where that
administer IM programs reduced by

50% w/ get food stamps

benefits autom.

admin: sum certain

1/2 state 1/2 fed

Ques?

fed law - eligibility determined by public emp.

- w/d agencies can take on client register but not do determination - state opt out

milw.co now restructuring to be more efficient

annual FFY02 1.2 mil sanction

major of funds go

food nutr. system in milw.co

to provide resources to

unemployed food stamp

access, delivery

customer service

light touch philosophy - no red tape

philosophy

mobile - go to food pantries w/emo

work now more accessible

full process - interview

determination happens in car

Kirkman?

What are the issues?

- process determining and efficient
workflows.

if determining

big person on program

several income

of

human system size - didn't

put

going to

See

- form - Jan new form - Food Stamp

only 5 pages, access through

website

if multiple programs - work

via outsource form

if widely used in CA, why need this
detail that more eligibility

a lot of staff in CA staff -
enrolment plan

best practices - talked w/ Reg. office

a app in other states

found co. adm. more than states

1 of 12 states that use co. adm

rather than state

take something back
What is efficient?

Two wage recording quarterly -
catch up w/ if some

Computer

DHFS speak to DWP or DOR computer?

Personnel

provide a team of 100 - to be trained
to hold in 1997 program
- immediate access to work site
- pilot in 1997

Backlog

- VA item is appendix - improved record management
agency workload - bc image there
- audit - print accuracy
20 to 30% of total, used files,

determine oblig. there is a medical exp
11,000
5,000 med exp.
unit 100,000 other, what deduct.

Reg Ward

- concern of online
- 3rd highest food stamp use
- system designed to be on phone
 - ↳ fed off 131 number
 - ↳ should have had should have
- missing these people out there
- need need to do an audit to get report

1. measure to have them get them
2. IR 1 spend more
3. get donations

Sherrill Taster Exec Dir Hunger Task force

- ~ 100,000 in food bank
- show their expt needs
- Since 1997 went w/applicants
- best food stamps
- ensure hunger on new health
- federal entitlement prog.
- food stamps
- 5% → 10% act.
- midview of fed & hunger in
- with
- food stamp - not in denial
- also need
- related since 1997

also called us place on finding
the needs

after we staff looked at what
this is - it's a

community based decision making
and process

started

shifted away to county

and we're doing it

various case studies

concern

over 19,000 cases

- phone systems out people

- call center

- 1st of 2nd of 3rd

- we're doing it over the

new house

- don't have more - try to be

in the

and we're

- we're doing it State (and a

little bit of

some

- we're doing it

- we're doing it

- we're doing it

- we're doing it