

At The Table

USDA nutrition assistance news and information for partners and community organizations

Dear Friends and Partners in the Mountain Plains Region,

The end of summer is approaching, and so far it's been a great one.

We've seen tremendous efforts from our state, school and non-profit partners in providing the Summer Food Service Program to hungry children. Each year our goals are increasingly ambitious, and each year your efforts to reach these goals are monumental. But each year we also get to experience the satisfaction of helping feed thousands of hungry children in the Mountain Plains Region. Our goal was to serve 10 million additional meals nationwide this summer, and we sought a 10 percent increase in each state. We look forward to learning later in the year if we achieved these numbers, but we know now that everyone truly gave it their all to reach this goal. Thank you so much!



Darlene Barnes,
Regional
Administrator

Now, kids are heading back for the new school year throughout the region. And with the return of those kids, state and school district employees are already hard at work preparing to provide healthy meals to students. Implementation of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 continues, and I want to reiterate to you that everyone here at MPRO is committed to continuing to help. We stand ready to assist at all levels of the organization, whether it is through listening sessions to better understand local issues, training, or on the ground, hands-on technical assistance. If there is anything we can do to help, please don't hesitate to reach out. As you are probably aware, this school year the focus will be on the implementation of the "Smart Snacks" rule, requiring that healthier snack options be provided to students during the school day (please see more about Smart Snacks on page 3).

In the fall, we will take some time out to celebrate two more of our programs. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the start of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which of course began as the Food Stamp Program. And the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) celebrates its 40th Anniversary this year as well.

Here at the Regional Office, as we approach the end of the Fiscal Year, we anticipate some changes. We have been authorized to hire new staff, which we are very excited about. By the end of the year, we will have new staff on board in each of our programs, and with that, we'll see physical changes in our work environment as well.

I extend a big thanks to all of you, our partners, who ensure that the Food and Nutrition Service programs are being properly administered and are reaching the people who need them. We know that there is constant change in program policy, and we appreciate your ability to respond to those changes. We cannot achieve our mission without you, and we appreciate all that you do.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and fall!

Sincerely, Darlene

August 2014

USDA Food and Nutrition Service
Mountain Plains Region

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Summer Food Service Program

Mountain Plains Region States Host Summer Food Service Kickoffs

In 2014, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) has once again been a top priority for Food and Nutrition Service. In 2013, we had an historic increase of 7 million more meals served than in 2012. This year, we are aiming for an increase of an additional 10 million meals.

Accomplishing such a goal takes the cooperation of schools, recreation centers, churches, advocates, city governments and many others. Each year these groups work dedicatedly towards feeding children in the summer.

This year, Mountain Plains Region selected Missouri as a special emphasis state, as only about 9.5 percent of kids who qualified for free and reduced-price meals participated in the SFSP in summer 2013.

FNS Administrator Audrey Rowe visited St. Louis in May to meet with city and community leaders to find creative ways to increase participation. She led a successful roundtable discussion with food banks, the Boys and Girls Club, University of Missouri Extension, and others. The meeting resulted in some new partnerships -- the St. Louis Food Bank joined with Harvesters to host summer sites, and the cooperative extension found a way to provide afternoon snacks to children at the Boys and Girls Clubs by offering cooking demonstrations.

Rowe visited Missouri again to participate in two SFSP kickoffs in Ferguson and Marshall, Missouri in early June.

Several other states in the region helped host kickoff events at sites to get the word out to kids, parents and the media. In addition to Marshall and Ferguson, events were held in Denver, CO; Winfield, KS; Helena, MT; Pine Ridge, SD; Cedar Rapids, IA, and one is coming up in Wyoming.



FNS Administrator Audrey Rowe meets with Frances G. Slay, Mayor of St. Louis, to discuss the importance of the SFSP.



Administrator Rowe and Special Nutrition Programs Regional Director Darlene Sanchez join Janie Dunning and Anne McCormack at a kickoff at Johnson Wabash Elementary School in Ferguson, Missouri.



Mountain Plains Special Nutrition Programs Branch Chief Deborah Hammack visits with children at the Pine Ridge School on the Pine Ridge Reservation.



Miles, the mascot for the Denver Broncos football team, entertains children at College View Elementary School in Denver during and SFSP kickoff event.

Smart Snacks in School this Fall

The Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards support better health for America's children and echo the good work already taking place in schools across the country. The new standards preserve flexibility for time-honored traditions like fundraisers and bake sales, and provide ample transition time for schools. USDA is committed to working closely with students, parents, school stakeholders and the food and beverage industries to implement the new guidelines, and make the healthy choice the easy choice for America's young people.

Highlights of the "Smart Snacks in School" nutrition standards include:

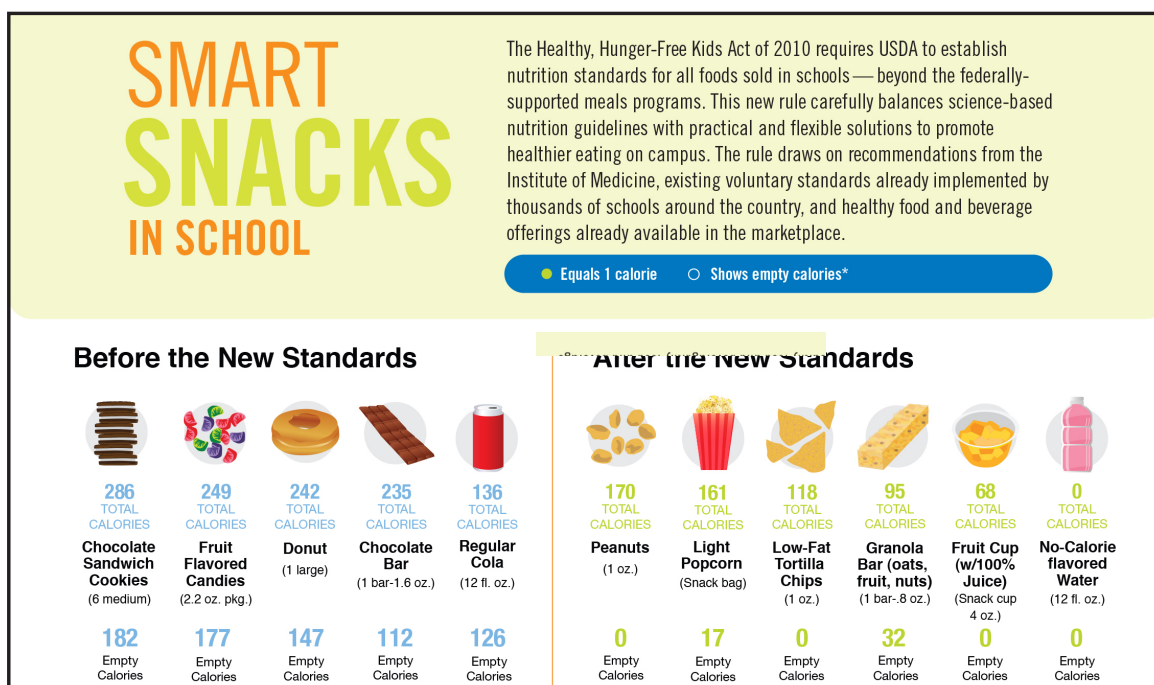
- **More of the foods we should encourage.** Like the new school meals, the standards require healthier foods, more whole grains, low fat dairy, fruits, vegetables and leaner protein.
- **Less of the foods we should avoid.** Food items are lower in fat, sugar, and sodium and provide more of the nutrients kids need.
- **Targeted standards.** Allowing variation by age group for factors such as portion size and caffeine content.
- **Flexibility for important traditions.** Preserving the ability for parents to send their kids to school with homemade lunches or treats for activities such as birthday parties, holidays, and other celebrations; and allowing schools to continue traditions like



fundraisers and bake sales. Each state will have the flexibility to set a certain number of fundraisers that can sell foods or beverages that do not meet the nutrition standards.

- **Reasonable limitations on when and where the standards apply.** Ensuring that standards only affect foods that are sold on school campus during the school day. Foods sold at afterschool sporting events or other activities will not be subject to these requirements.
- **Flexibility for state and local communities.** Allowing significant local and regional autonomy by only establishing minimum requirements for schools. States and schools that have stronger standards than what is being proposed will be able to maintain their own policies.

Visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/smart-snacks-school>





United States Department of Agriculture

CREATING A HEALTHIER NEXT GENERATION.

Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents over the past 30 years, leading to increased risks for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and breathing problems. Thanks to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, major improvements are being made across the country to transform school food, promote better nutrition, and reduce obesity. These changes, combined with stronger wellness policies, are helping to create a healthier next generation.



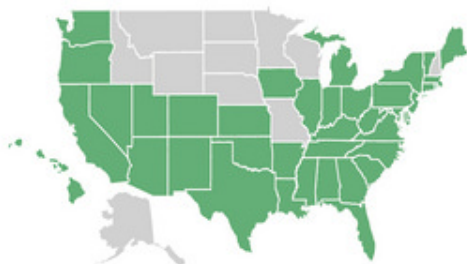
HHFKA led to an additional
\$200 million
in revenue for schools
nationwide.



Over **91%** of schools report
they are meeting the updated
meal standards.



Breakfast participation
has also increased by
600,000 students since
the updated standards
took effect.



Before the Smart Snacks
in School rule **39 states**
already had standards in
place. Schools have had a
full year to implement
these changes.



Thanks to the updated standards,
kids are now eating up to
16% more veggies and
23% more fruit at lunch.



Since 2009, USDA has
provided **\$160 million**
to improve kitchen
equipment in schools.

Learn more about supporting healthy choices at school at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday>.

For Resources refer to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/hsd-infographics.pdf>

USDA Offers \$7 Million in Grants to Help States Reduce SNAP Benefit Trafficking

By September 30, USDA will award up to \$7 million in grant funds to prevent recipient trafficking in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The grants are open to all state agencies administering SNAP, including the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. USDA is considering only one application per state agency.

Through increased oversight and improvements in program management, USDA is working to help states reduce SNAP trafficking, the exchange of benefits for cash or other goods or services. The grants will be awarded competitively to state agencies.

The SNAP Recipient Trafficking Prevention Grant Program is a new program designed to improve outcomes in the prevention, detection, and prosecution of recipient trafficking. Recipients found guilty of trafficking are subject to severe penalties, such as criminal punishment and permanent disqualification from the program. USDA works through state agency partners to investigate recipient fraud, and hold bad actors accountable.

“USDA continues to take an aggressive stance on abuse to preserve integrity in the nation’s largest nutrition safety net,” said Agriculture Undersecretary Kevin Concannon. “SNAP fraud is rare, but no level of abuse is acceptable and new strategies are continuously implemented to improve the effectiveness of our anti-fraud efforts.”

Grant applicants are required to establish a baseline of their anti-fraud activities, track the outcomes from the strategies approved for this grant solicitation, and report them back to USDA. USDA intends to review the results to determine the most effective strategies and then share those best practices with state agencies, nationwide.

These grants are part of the Obama Administration's ongoing Campaign to Cut Waste designed to fight fraud and abuse in federal programs. For more information about USDA efforts to combat fraud, visit the Stop SNAP Fraud website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/program-integrity>.



USDA Releases \$34 million to Support WIC Technology Improvements

Agriculture Undersecretary Kevin Concannon announced the release of nearly \$34 million in Fiscal Year 2014 funds to WIC agencies in states, territories, and Indian tribal organizations in support of technology improvements in USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

The grants will be used to expand use of electronic benefit transfer (EBT) systems in WIC, as well as to replace and improve management information systems to promote greater efficiencies in WIC clinics.

The grants will build on the success of previous investments made in WIC technology and bring the WIC program closer to achieving nationwide EBT use by October 2020, as required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Currently, only nine states (Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico,

Texas, Wyoming, Virginia, West Virginia) and four Indian tribal organizations (Cherokee Nation, Okla.; Chickasaw Nation, Okla.; Pueblo of Isleta, N.M. and Inter-tribal Council of Nevada) offer WIC benefits solely using EBT.

WIC agencies selected to receive technology grants in the Mountain Plains Region and the amounts are as follows:

Iowa	\$1,483,327
Missouri	\$6,206,168
Montana	\$901,517
Nebraska	\$339,065
North Dakota	\$409,100
South Dakota	\$1,949,103

FNS Awards SNAP Bonuses Based on Quality Control Reporting

by Sanela Ovonovic
MPRO SNAP Staff

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Quality Control (QC) system is part of the Performance Reporting System. It is also an integral part of combined integrity efforts of FNS and State agencies to fight fraud in SNAP and protect taxpayers' money. State agencies are responsible for conducting monthly QC reviews on a statistical sample of SNAP active and negative cases, now referred to as the Case and Procedural Error Rate (CAPER).

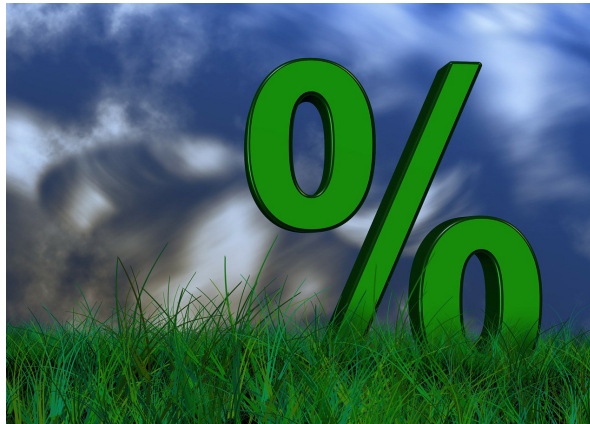
Active SNAP cases are ones in which households participated in SNAP and received benefits. Negative cases are ones in which participation in SNAP was denied, suspended, or terminated.

Data obtained from monthly QC reviews is used to assess the accuracy of eligibility determinations and benefit calculations for SNAP participants. Data collected by QC are also used for program improvement and analysis. The reported State dollar and case error rates are based on QC reviews and FNS data evaluation.

The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 authorizes the Secretary to award \$48 million to state agencies that demonstrate high or improved performance in administering SNAP.

The Mountain Plains Region (MPR) SNAP unit is excited to announce that among the awardees for FNS performance bonus money, there are four states from our region South Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, and Missouri. Our states have met specific FNS performance measures and targets which have qualified them to receive high performance bonus money.

The national payment error rate for FY 2013 was 3.20%, South Dakota's payment error rate was 0.99%, well below the national error rate. The state ranked third in the nation and qualified to receive



bonus money. Missouri and Wyoming have the largest percentage point decrease in their payment error rates in FY 2013 and also qualified for bonus money.

Missouri's payment error rate decreased by 5.56 percentage points (in FY 2012 it was 7.18% and it decreased to 1.62% in FY 2013). The state ranked first in the nation for most

improved payment error rate. Missouri implemented several practices to improve their rate such as:

- monthly conference calls with all QC staff to discuss cases
- frequent meetings with staff to discuss the importance of working within federal regulations
- visits by Quality Assurance (QA) Managers to each local office to provide information on "what QC does" and "the importance of correct case processing"
- participation of QA Managers in the field office
- Regional Manager meetings to promote QC awareness
- review of QC cases for accuracy by QA Managers
- policy changes to "act on all changes" known to the agency
- sharing of "Food Stamp Helpful Hints" to staff based on QC errors

Missouri's hard work has paid off.

Wyoming's payment error rate decreased by 2.19 percentage points in FY 2013. In FY 2012 it was 7.18% and it decreased to 4.99% in FY 2013.

Wyoming ranked second in the nation for most improved payment accuracy rate. Some of the things they did are:

- switched to the "Simplified Reporting" category effective 06/01/12
- hired a Trainer who is responsible for some core training for their new Benefit Specialists
- used "compressed video" to conduct training every six weeks, so that all offices are in

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Farm Bill 2014

Implementation Begins

The 2014 Farm Act was signed on February 7, 2014, and will remain in force through 2018—and in the case of some provisions, beyond 2018. The 2014 Farm Act makes major changes in commodity programs, adds new crop insurance options, streamlines conservation programs, modifies some provisions of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and expands programs for specialty crops, organic farmers, bioenergy, rural development, and beginning farmers and ranchers.

The Congressional Budget Office projects that 80 percent of outlays under the 2014 Farm Act will fund nutrition programs.

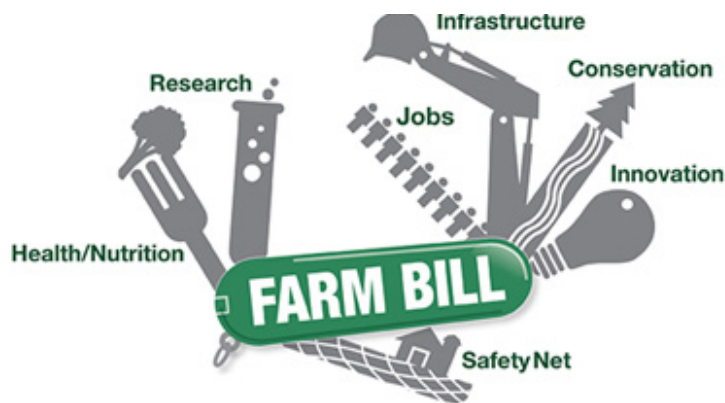
A few key areas in which the 2014 Farm Act impacts the Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services are:

- Maintains SNAP eligibility for millions of low-income families.
- Provides \$200 million for job training and \$100 million to increase fruit and vegetable purchases.
- Provides \$250 million in additional funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).
- Authorizes \$125 million for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative to make nutritious food more accessible.

Since the Act was signed into law, a number of actions have already occurred that affect FNS programs.

Community Food Projects

February: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) released Notice of Funding Availability for the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program, with \$5 million available.



“It’s like a Swiss Army knife.”

- President Obama 2/7/14

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Payments

March: FNS released [Implementation Memorandum to States](#) on the elimination of standard utility allowances in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for LIHEAP payments less than \$20.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

March: FNS released [Implementation Memorandum to States](#) on phasing out the eligibility of women, infants and children

SNAP-related Provisions:

March: FNS released [Implementation Memorandum to States](#) communicating major SNAP related provisions of the Act.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Pilot

April: FNS announced an RFP for this pilot program, which will take place during the 2014-2015 school year.

Multiagency Taskforce on Commodity Programs

March: FNCS issued a memorandum to solicit names for a multiagency task force to provide coordination and direction for commodity programs

April: FNCS signed a memorandum appointing members to the multi-agency taskforce to provide coordination and direction for commodity programs.

Special Nutrition Programs

New Child Nutrition Reauthorization on the Horizon

It's hard to believe that it will soon be time for the next Child Nutrition (CN) Reauthorization in the coming 2015 fiscal year. Reflecting back to the last CN Reauthorization and the magnitude of the provisions required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, it's gratifying to know that because of efforts made by many -- including those efforts by State Education Agencies and local school food authorities -- kids in the Mountain Plains Region now have greater access to healthier school meals.

The school meal changes significantly increased the amount of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and established limits for fat, sodium and sugar. And as a result, the school meal standards offer healthier meals for students. To further support healthier school environments, the new Smart Snacks interim rule, effective July 1, 2014, institutes science-based nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to children at school during the school day.

Throughout the start of this school year and beyond, regional program staff will be working closely to partner and support State Agencies in their efforts to provide critical technical assistance and guidance

to schools in meeting the nutrition standards for Smart Snacks.

Program access continues to be a main priority for the Agency, and because of this, the region put forth extra effort to work with partners to promote access to summer meals. With individual targets set by each State, we were pleased to see that 90 percent of the states in this region met or exceeded state goals for growth, and regionally we continue to experience positive growth.

As the summer season winds down, we will take time to strategically assess the data and identify best practices so that we can continue to be more strategic in engaging State Agencies and partners earlier and throughout the year to further yield expansion of summer meals. A special thank you to all the partners that engaged and worked tirelessly throughout the past months to expand the summer meals programs in your respective states.

Special Nutrition Programs continues to increase integrity and oversight activities. A joint Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and



Darlene Sanchez
Regional Division Director,
Special Nutrition Programs

Children (WIC) regional meeting was hosted the week of August 4 in Denver. In addition, all program areas are evaluating review modules, processes and protocols as we retool and gear up for FY 2015 activities that enhance accountability and integrity.

Currently, we are strengthening and improving regional operations and increasing our workforce so that we can better support State, Tribal and local agencies that administer or support Child Nutrition, Food Distribution, and Supplemental Food Programs in the Mountain Plains Region.

It's been a fast summer and we look forward to a challenging new year. Together, we make a difference in the lives of those we serve. We can't say thank you enough for all you do to partner with us and to respond to the regional office requests.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SNAP and WIC Host 2014 MPRO Integrity Conference

Regardless of the program, FNS has increased monitoring and oversight activities to improve program integrity and has updated review modules and tools. The agency is also concentrating on implementation of program requirements, ongoing training, and technical assistance to further enhance integrity efforts.

As part of this initiative, the Mountain Plains Regional Office hosted the 2014 MPRO WIC and SNAP Integrity Conference in Denver on August 5th and 6th. The conference featured presentations on national WIC integrity initiatives, national SNAP integrity initiatives, OIG investigations, trends in client fraudulent behavior, geo-mapping techniques, working with FNS retailer disqualification data and the Retailer Operations Division.

Attendees also participated in policy workshops for both SNAP and WIC. Workshop topics



**Cheryl Kennedy,
Regional Division
Director, SNAP**

included WIC integrity investigation and compliance buys, best practices for clear and convincing evidence during an administrative hearing, WIC vendor management, and state agency insights into the fraud navigator.

The speakers represented a wide variety of organizations. We were fortunate to have State Agency program staff and management, FNS National and Regional program staff and

management, state investigators, an OIG investigator, independent investigative contractors and an administrative law judge.

More than 70 attendees came from around the region and included representatives from Indian Tribal Organizations, SNAP state agency staff and management, and WIC state agency staff and management.

The goals of the conference were to share best practices, network to strengthen partnerships, identify challenges and develop solutions, and develop plans for action.

Participants came away with many creative ideas for collaboration. Building on the momentum of this conference, we look forward to more in the future. Thanks to all of those who participated!

SNAP Quality Control continued from page 6

- attendance
- provided a state wide conference that focused on training issues i.e. best estimate training, deductions, self-employment
- changed policy to exempt all motor vehicles, which resolved issues related to resources

Wyoming's hard work has paid off.

South Dakota and Iowa also qualified to receive Lowest Case and Procedural Error rate bonus moneys. The national CAPER rate for FY 2013 was 25.25%. South Dakota CAPER rate was 2.54%. Iowa's CAPER rate was 8.36%.

Congratulations to all these states on a job well done.

Our SNAP team will continue to work on improving payment accuracy as well as Case and Procedural Error Rates through partnerships with our states and through regulatory and statutory requirements.

Nutrition Services

Collaboration- A Healthy State of Mind

If you ask 30 individuals the definition of collaboration, you will probably get 30 different answers. Since the 2006 Mountain Plains Region's Cross Program Collaboration Meeting "Collaboration in Action: Making Nutrition Connections Come Alive," I've wondered how much collaboration we really do.

Collaboration is a process in which two or more people or organizations work together to realize shared goals; it can also be an endeavor that is creative in nature by sharing knowledge, learning, and building consensus.

Collaboration involves teamwork, cooperation, communication, partnership, coalition building, and commitment. Most of our participants who utilize FNS programs are usually the recipients

of more than one of our programs. A good collaborative effort would be one geared around jointly communicating about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and its icon, MyPlate, where consistent messages are provided to the participants.

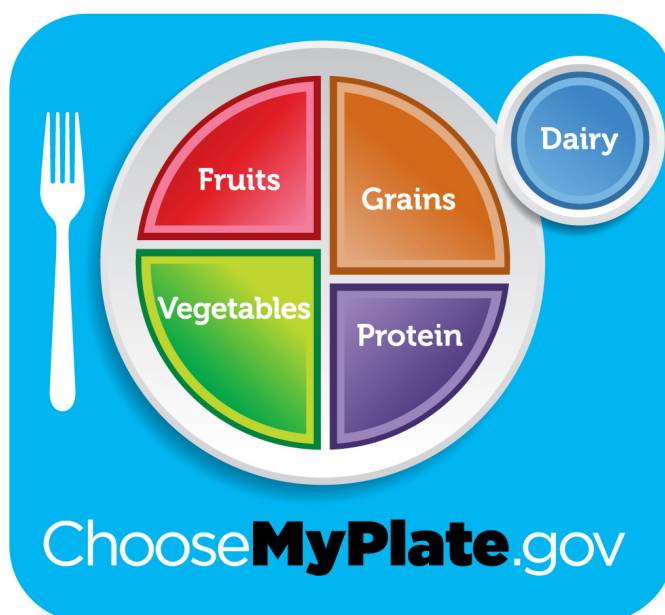
Through a concerted effort and with strategic planning, partners can address issues of the Dietary Guidelines, MyPlate, healthy weight, behavioral changes in eating patterns, access and communication from a common base. Partners can also share resources and ideas, as well as data, in an effort to build local capacity.

Mountain Plains Region States continues to make progress when it comes to collaborating and using integrated nutrition



Stella Nash,
Regional Director,
Nutrition Services

education approaches across FNS Programs. This is attributed in part to their willingness to be in partnership with one another. This is especially evident with the State Nutrition Action Coalition(SNAC) where there are still productive and active teams in each of our ten states. Our gratitude, thanks and appreciation goes out to the State SNAC Team leaders for their dedication and commitment to doing the right thing.



Civil Rights

Civil Rights Reviews Follow Principles of Civil Rights Act of 1964

We recently celebrated 50 years of the passing of the landmark legislation Public Law 88-352, 88th Congress, H.R. 7152, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964. This Act is cited as the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The enactment of the Act by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives was for the sole purpose of liberating persons from discriminatory acts and unfair treatment by providing injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations.

The Act authorized the U.S. Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education; to extend the Commission on Civil Rights to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs; to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity; and to protect the rights of citizens in the United States of America.

In the past year, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) restructured its Civil Rights Compliance program to magnify the agency's Civil Rights operations and enhance relationships with our state partners through integrity, by providing excellent customer



**Evelyn McGregor,
Civil Rights Director**

service; training; technical assistance; on-site visits; and complaint investigations. We have recently completed the first round of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on-site Civil Rights Compliance Reviews of several state agencies throughout the Mountain Plains Region as well as on a national level.

The purpose of these reviews is to ensure equal and timely access to FNS programs and services for all customers by examining state and local policies, procedures and processes in accordance with the principles of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Office of Civil Rights' mission is to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies for FNS customers and employees regardless of race,

color, national origin, age, disability, and sex. In SNAP and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, protections are extended to political and religious beliefs through the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Now is the perfect time to reexamine the wellness of your state's Civil Rights Compliance program to ensure that it complies with all FNS Civil Rights laws, policies and instructions.

Ensure that your state website conveys the message of equal opportunity and fairness and that your public notification system includes information regarding program eligibility. It must also display program rights and responsibilities, the program's policy on non-discrimination and the procedure for filing a complaint. A perfect place to start is by reviewing the requirements in the FNS 113-1 Civil Rights Instruction.

A copy of the Instruction can be found at <http://origin.www.fns.usda.gov/cr/Documents/113-1.pdf>.

If you have a Civil Rights question or need technical assistance, contact me at 303-844-0307 or by electronic mail at Evelyn.McGregor@fns.usda.gov.

School Districts Successfully Implement Meal Standards

Although some school districts are currently expressing concern about the time frame and cost of implementing provisions of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, more than 90 percent of schools nationally report that they are successfully meeting the updated standards. We spoke to a number of districts in the Mountain Plains Region who have had success in the implementation. Here are a few examples of their positive experiences.



"The Youth Crisis Center in Casper, Wyoming, provides emergency shelter for young people who are runaways, abused, abandoned or need intervention with parents. This small agency has embraced the Health Hunger Free Kids Act 2010 to provide healthy meals, nutrition education and physical activity. The Center provides breakfast, lunch and afterschool snacks to all of the students and is dedicated to meeting the USDA meal pattern requirements.

Students and staff are excited about planting herbs, radishes, lettuce, etc. using a vertical growing planter provided by a mini grant from the Wyoming Child Nutrition Programs, and they will implement an educational series to illustrate the process of Seed to Plate."

- Ken Bates, Casper Youth Crisis Center

"Every year the schools in Missouri's Raymore Peculiar R II district celebrate their salad bars during 'Rainbow Days.' Thanks to the staff's efforts to use local farmers markets, students throughout the district see fresh peppers, squash, onion, zucchini, tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, green beans, corn on the cob, peaches, apples, cantaloupe, watermelon and more. 'The students love the veggie bar,' said Peculiar Elementary Food Service Manager Carol Johnson, 'It looks colorful and appetizing.' Through the Rainbow Days activity, Missouri estimates that 4500 elementary school children have been exposed to a variety of fruits and vegetables."

- Raymore-Peculiar RII District, Peculiar, Missouri

"The changes in the younger kids have been the most noticeable. Exposing them to more fruits and vegetables has been really exciting. When we first began introducing new fruits and vegetables, I was surprised that some kids had never had cantaloupe or honeydew melons. Now, I go to the local market and I see students there pointing out fruits and vegetables and telling their parents, 'Mom, Dad, you've got to try this!' The younger kids now ask me about proteins, grains, and what other types of nutrients they need. I'm very grateful for the process we've gone through."

- Victoria Wittrock, West Central School District, Hartford, SD

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US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service

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