

NCSFPA Communication Response to Presidents FY09 Budget to Zero Out CSFP

- 1) **Purpose of Talking Points:** We are urging Congress and the Administration to reconsider the elimination of CSFP and instead support an adequate funding level in the FY 2009 that will continue to provide food to CSFP recipients and restore the thousands removed from the program last year due to budget cuts.
- 2) **Program Description:** The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides monthly nutritious food boxes to low-income seniors, women, infants and children (with an income below \$1100 a month) in 32 states, 2 Indian Tribal organizations and the District of Columbia.
- 3) **When stated that CSFP duplicates two of the Nation's largest Federal nutrition assistance programs—Food Stamps and WIC:**
 - CSFP is a complement – not a substitute for – the Food Stamp Program.
 - CSFP serves low income women (pregnant, breastfeeding and new mothers up to 1 year postpartum), infant and children (up to their 6th birthday) not being served by the WIC Program.
- 4) **When stated that the Budget provides funding to serve all eligible individuals who seek services from WIC and funds temporary benefits and outreach to help elderly households transition from CSFP to the Food Stamp program:**
 - 91% of CSFP recipients are seniors and thus not eligible for WIC.
 - Seniors receive a \$50 retail benefit from CSFP; food stamp benefits for this population frequently top out at \$10 a month.
 - Many seniors are more comfortable receiving help in a faith-based, senior-focused or residential setting where CSFP boxes are generally distributed as compared to local welfare offices.
 - Seniors with more than \$3,000 in assets can not receive food stamps, but can receive CSFP.
- 5) **Unique program benefits:**
 - In FY 05 there were over \$27.7 million in donated goods, services and labor by the state and local agencies who administer CSFP.
 - What other program administered by USDA does that?
 - CSFP is cost effective – it provides a food package that costs USDA about \$15.85 per month, yet has a retail value of approximately \$50.

Talking Points from the State Perspective

- Specific issues critical to your state.
- Have information available on food stamp participation in your area.
- What are some comments from the participants about food stamp benefits?
- What is the “average” monthly income of your CSFP participants?