

ATTACHMENT I – KEY MESSAGES

During the focus groups (See Handout E), participants will discuss several key messages about the Food Stamp Program.

The key messages will be translated in Spanish after OMB approval for this package has been obtained. A FH/GMMB subcontractor will translate all materials.

The key message platform is provided below. Please note that FH/GMMB will only be testing the core messages among Hispanic Audiences ONLY.

Low-income Hispanic/English Version

AUDIENCE	POSITIONING	CORE MESSAGES	SUPPORTING MESSAGES
<p>Primary: Low-income, eligible non-participating Hispanics</p> <p>Secondary: Stakeholders/ Partners</p>	<p>Reposition FSP in minds of target Hispanic consumers: <i>FSP is a nutrition program</i></p>	<p>#1: Food and Nutrition</p> <p>The FSP is a food and nutrition program that helps individuals and families live healthier.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food stamps can relieve financial pressures and keep families and individuals eating well during difficult times. • The FSP helps participants purchase healthful foods including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -fruits and vegetables -whole grain foods -meats, fish and poultry -low-fat or fat-free milk products • Food Stamps can supplement grocery budgets, making them stretch further so that families can purchase more foods like fruits and vegetables.
<p>Primary: Low-income, eligible non-participating Hispanics</p> <p>Secondary: Stakeholders/ Partners</p>	<p>Emphasize the <i>individual considerations surrounding eligibility and qualification</i> in the FSP</p>	<p>#2: Eligibility</p> <p>More than 16 million people qualify for food stamp benefits, including more than three million Hispanic households, but are not enrolled in the FSP. Don't assume you or your family doesn't qualify. Call 1-800-221-5689 for an information packet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility for food stamps depends on many factors, including income, resources, and expenses such as rent and childcare. • From the employed to those looking for employment; individuals with a car and those without; from homeowners to those renting a home; from families to individuals you might be eligible for food stamp benefits.

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<p>Primary: Low-income, eligible non-participating Hispanics</p> <p>Secondary: Stakeholders/ Partners</p>	<p>Reposition FSP in minds of target Hispanic consumers by addressing <i>misconceptions about the application process.</i></p>	<p>#3: Screening and Application</p> <p>You can receive help to determine if you may be eligible for food stamp benefits. Call toll-free 1-800-221-5689, visit a local food stamp office or community-based partner, or access the free pre-screening tool online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To apply for the FSP an application must be completed. Food stamp offices and many local organizations can guide applicants through the process. • Call 1-800-221-5689 for an information packet. A Pre-Screening Tool is available at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp. The tool tells potential applicants if they may be eligible and how much they could receive. • How to get a food stamp application form: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pick it up at a local food stamp office 2. Call and ask the local food stamp office to mail an application 3. Print the form from your State's Web page or apply online (if available in your State). 4. Ask local organizations in your community such as food banks, health clinics, churches, or schools • Should you have questions about the application or need help filling out the application form, several resources are available: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call or visit the local food stamp office. A food stamp worker is available to guide you through completing and submitting your application. 2. Ask a trusted friend to assist you in accurately filling out the application 3. Ask a knowledgeable local source including those working in legal services or food banks to help you out the form. <p>Once you qualify, food stamp benefits are issued once per month and are accessed through an EBT card, which works like a bank/debit card at the grocery store.</p>

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Stakeholders and Partners	<i>Emphasize the importance of repositioning the FSP in the minds of consumers and the benefits of the FSP</i>	<p>#4: Outreach and Awareness</p> <p>FNS is committed to working with community-based organizations and partners to improve food security and nutrition among millions eligible for the FSP. You can help make a difference by increasing awareness and access to this food and nutrition program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today lack of awareness and understanding of eligibility requirements are two significant factors preventing more than 16 million individuals, of all ages, from accessing the food and nutrition benefits of the FSP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Hispanics have the lowest food stamp participation rate of any ethnic/racial group in the country. o According to most recent figures available, Hispanic participation rate in this Program equaled 51 percent when compared to 73 percent for African Americans, and 51 percent for White-Non Hispanics. • Nutrition and diet impacts health and well-being. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Among Hispanics, there is a greater prevalence of type 2 diabetes, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and a role for a healthy diet in preventive care. o One study found that predominantly Hispanic communities had 38% less fresh fruit and vegetable retailers than areas with smaller Hispanic population

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Local Food Stamp Office	<i>Emphasize the importance of customer service in the effort to reposition the FSP in the minds of Hispanic consumers and to increase participation.</i>	<p>#5: Customer Service</p> <p>More than three million Hispanic households qualify for food stamp benefits, but are not enrolled in the FSP. Your commitment to customer service and knowledge of Program policies reinforces the FNS'S commitment to improve food security and nutrition among millions eligible for the FSP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today lack of awareness and understanding of eligibility requirements, barriers to obtaining applications and the lack of awareness of available resources that provide pre-screening and application support are significant factors preventing millions of individuals from accessing the food and nutrition benefits of the FSP. • You can make a difference by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Informing potential applicants about the enrollment support the local food stamp office offers in regards to understanding eligibility requirement, pre-screening tools and assistance in filling out applications. • Offering the names and locations of other community-based organizations lending similar support.

Elderly Hispanic

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<p>Hispanic elderly and caregivers</p>	<p>Reposition FSP in minds of low-income, elderly Hispanic consumers and their caregivers: <i>FSP is a nutrition assistance program.</i></p>	<p>#6: Elderly Hispanics and Nutrition</p> <p>The FSP is a food and nutrition program that helps elderly Hispanics eat healthier.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FSP can help low-income elderly age 60 and over who may be faced with a choice between nutrition and other basic necessities, by stretching their grocery budgets, so that they can purchase nutritious foods. • Daily food choices affect the health and quality of life of older Hispanics. The FSP helps participants age 60 and over purchase healthy foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meats, fish, and low-fat and fat-free milk products.

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Hispanic elderly and caregivers	Emphasize the <i>individual considerations surrounding eligibility and qualification</i> in the FSP.	<p>7: Elderly Hispanics and Eligibility</p> <p>Nearly 1 in 5 Hispanic elders could qualify for food stamp benefits. According to figures released by the Food and Nutrition Service in 2005, only nine percent of all food stamp benefits go to households with elderly persons. Don't assume you don't qualify. Call 1-800-221-5689 for an information packet.</p>	<p>Food stamp benefits are for eligible individuals and families, including people age 60 and over.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility for food stamp benefits depends on many factors, including income, resources, and expenses. Individuals can own or buy a home and still receive food stamp benefits. • If you are employed and receive a small retirement pension, you may qualify for the nutrition benefits of the FSP. • If you apply for food stamp benefits and have medical expenses totaling more than \$35 a month that are not covered under Medicare or other insurance, you may qualify for a medical expense deduction. Check it out as the additional dollars can supplement your grocery budget and help you buy more healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. • Have you heard you will only receive \$10 a month in food stamp benefits? Is this why you haven't learned more about the FSP? If so, the truth is that elderly households receive an average of \$91 a month and elderly who live alone receive an average of \$74 a month in food stamp benefits. Call 1-800-221-5689 for a free information packet. • Having difficulties getting to the grocery store or carrying heavy grocery bags? The FSP allows eligible families to designate an authorized representative to do their grocery shopping for them.

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Hispanic elderly and caregivers	Address <i>misconceptions about the application process.</i>	<p>#8: Hispanic Elderly Screening and Application</p> <p>You can receive help to determine if you may be eligible for food stamp benefits. Call toll-free 1-800-221-5689 for an information packet, visit a local food stamp office or access the free pre-screening tool online at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To apply for the FSP an application form must be completed. Food stamp offices and many local organizations can guide you or others through the application process. • If an elderly person is not able to go to the food stamp office, he or she may request a telephone interview. The person may also ask a relative, pastor, or friend to attend the interview as an authorized representative. • After the certification interview, the Eligibility Worker will process the application form to determine if the applicant is eligible for FSP benefits.

Caregivers	Reach out to <i>caregivers so that they can assist elderly loved ones in eating healthier.</i>	<p>#9: Caregivers of low-income, elderly Hispanics</p> <p>The FSP is a food and nutrition program that can help your loved ones eat better and lead healthier lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you provide care for a low-income, elderly member of your family, learn more about the nutrition benefits of the FSP. Call 1-800-221-5689 for an information packet. • Food stamp benefits can supplement limited grocery budgets. Your loved one can eat healthier and buy more fruits and vegetables. For a free information packet call toll-free 1-800-221-5689. • Caring for grandchildren and other family members is making it hard to buy healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. But, if you qualify for the FSP, your grocery budget can be supplemented. To learn more about the FSP call 1-800-221-5689 for a free information packet.
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