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SNAP Benefit Expungement and Off-Line Storage

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General Comment

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SNAP Benefit Expungement and Off-Line Storage program. I strongly believe that community partnerships and non-traditional approaches can enhance the effectiveness of this program, particularly in reaching vulnerable populations and maximizing benefit utilization.

1. Promote Equity Through Clear and Accessible Communication with Community Support
Recommendation:

Leverage partnerships with local organizations, faith-based groups, and community advocates to amplify notification efforts for households at risk of benefit expungement. Non-traditional outreach techniques, such as community pop-ups, mobile notifications, and culturally tailored approaches, can ensure these notices reach those most in need.

Non-Traditional Techniques:

Text and Voice Broadcasts: Collaborate with local libraries, housing authorities, or community health programs to send targeted, automated notifications about SNAP benefit inactivity and expungement deadlines.

Community Navigators: Partner with grassroots organizations and trusted community leaders to act as navigators, helping households understand notifications and retain their benefits.

Multilingual Outreach Hubs: Establish multilingual help desks at farmers markets, community centers, or public events to provide real-time assistance for SNAP recipients.

Why This Matters:

Many households, especially seniors, rural residents, or non-English speakers, face barriers to receiving

and understanding notices. Engaging local partners and adopting non-traditional outreach methods ensures no household is left behind.

2. Integrate Local Food Systems and Community Partnerships for Outreach Innovation

Recommendation:

FNS should work with community organizations to integrate SNAP recipients into local food systems, reducing account inactivity and encouraging benefit use before expungement. Non-traditional methods can create stronger ties between recipients and their local food economy.

Non-Traditional Techniques:

SNAP Engagement Markets: Collaborate with farmers markets to host events specifically for inactive SNAP recipients. Offer incentives like matching benefits or free educational sessions on preparing meals with specialty crops.

Farm-to-Table Initiatives: Partner with local restaurants or food co-ops to run campaigns showcasing how SNAP benefits can be used to purchase fresh, local ingredients.

Mobile Assistance Units: Deploy mobile vans to underserved areas, offering in-person support for benefit reinstatement and workshops on how to use SNAP at local markets.

Why This Matters:

Connecting SNAP recipients to local food systems through non-traditional approaches not only boosts benefit usage but also strengthens community food networks and promotes long-term food security.

3. Enhance Data Transparency and Community-Led Analysis

Recommendation:

Encourage state agencies to work with community organizations to track and analyze SNAP benefit inactivity trends. Community partnerships can facilitate creative, on-the-ground responses tailored to specific challenges in benefit usage.

Non-Traditional Techniques:

Community Data Co-Labs: Partner with local universities or nonprofits to host data analysis workshops, empowering communities to identify regional barriers to benefit usage.

Crowdsourced Insights: Use local volunteers or civic organizations to collect qualitative feedback from SNAP recipients about why benefits go unused and how to improve outreach.

Geo-Targeted Interventions: Work with local tech hubs or GIS specialists to map inactivity hotspots and deploy targeted, neighborhood-specific solutions.

Why This Matters:

Data-driven, community-led interventions provide a more accurate picture of challenges and enable tailored solutions, ensuring that resources are used efficiently to reduce benefit inactivity.

Conclusion

By emphasizing community partnerships and non-traditional techniques, such as mobile notifications, SNAP engagement markets, and data co-labs, the program can ensure greater equity, efficiency, and impact. These collaborative approaches create value not only for SNAP recipients but also for the local food systems that support them.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. We look forward to seeing how these strategies can enhance food access and security for vulnerable households nationwide.

Attachments