



Rebranding and Target Populations

Opportunities to reintroduce the SNAP/ Food Stamp Program to potentially eligible people include a new national name for the program; the 2008 Farm Bill food stamp improvements for older Americans and families with high child care costs or modest assets; and state policy choices to eliminate asset tests entirely and offer online applications.

What's in a Name?

For several years stakeholders have been interested in a new name for the Food Stamp Program. That largely is due to two factors:

- 1) benefits no longer come in the form of "stamps," but are delivered via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT); and
- 2) a new program name might lessen perceived stigma and better position the program.

Now with the 2008 Farm Bill, the new national name of the Food Stamp Program is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). States, however, have flexibility about what name to use. Several states that already have state-specific names (e.g., Washington's Basic Food Program and North Carolina's Food & Nutrition Services) likely will continue with those. Others are in the process of deciding. State implementation schedules vary, with some already in effect and others expected in the coming months.

A variety of factors reportedly are influencing state choices. These include how a name resonates with focus groups; how a name relates to other programs (e.g., what the state SCHIP program name is; whether the acronym SNAP already applies to something else); whether the acronym FSP is used in existing materials and rules; how a name would affect the state's ability to maximize USDA resources (e.g., free leaflets; USDA-prepared radio ads for which USDA buys airtime and PSAs available for placement); and concern about possible client confusion, especially in areas on state borders where media markets from one overlap the other. A USDA chart detailing state name choices is posted at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/roll-out/state-chart.pdf>

Rebranding the Program for Target Populations

Separate from any name change rebranding opportunities, the 2008 Farm Bill changes provide especially good handles for reintroducing the SNAP/Food Stamp Program to two low-income populations: older Americans and working families with high child care costs. Improvements that will help many older Americans include: the first-ever increase in the minimum monthly benefit (from \$10 to \$14 and indexed thereafter); the increase in the standard deduction for households of three or fewer; expansion of simplified reporting; and exclusion from resource tests of retirement and education savings accounts.

With the Farm Bill's uncapping of the dependent care deduction, the full amount of child care costs will be taken into account when determining a family's food stamp allotments, often resulting in significant increases for working families. States can take into account the cost not only of the provider but of transportation to and from a dependent care setting, which also can boost the value of the dependent care deduction and a family's food stamp allotment considerably.