



2010

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## I. Executive Summary

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This Mobile Benefits Program is a Flagler County Outreach. It is designed to help capture a portion of the millions of unclaimed federal dollars for Food Stamps in Flagler County. As the State of Florida is challenged with cutting billions from the State budget, these untapped millions of dollars do not have to be raised or solicited. These dollars are available now. These dollars are not claimed due to several reasons: eligible citizens may not have transportation to get them to locations where they can apply, lack of awareness of the benefits, disability, language issues, lack of understanding and too few application offices, stigma, etc. The demand for emergency food continues to grow due to the state of the economy, low wages, unemployment, increased gas prices, increased food costs and unaffordable housing. Supply of donated foods and government commodities is decreasing and/or not meeting the need in many areas. As the gap between supply of food and demand is widening – Food Stamp dollars will help bridge this gap.

This initiative is designed to be a public, private, non-profit partnership; highly collaborative in nature. Dozens of partners representing various sectors of the community will be engaged.

The program is based on a relatively new service delivery model successfully done at scale in other parts of the country. Best practices have been researched and used for this program. A key component of the program is a Mobile Benefits Specialist that assists people at a variety of convenient locations and provides user-friendly advice and electronic, on-line benefit application assistance. Currently, Flagler County has a limited number of application sites and many are not visible to the population and/or are limited in capacity.

Resources secured for this program will be effectively utilized to leverage additional unclaimed federal dollars that this same population often qualifies for, such as Earned Income Tax Credits, KidCare and Medicaid.

This program includes a Year 1 budget of \$57,000. This budget is projected to deliver a Return On Investment of 1,194%. It is projected that \$692,640 worth of benefits will be accessed for Flagler County in the first year.

A budget for Year 2 will be developed based on the learning of the initial year of the program. Our request is for a two-year commitment to ensure adequate learning, maturation and momentum. Total funding for the project needs to be identified. However, Center for Business Excellence plan to help apply for available grant funding which could equate to 30 to 90 days of the position's salary or approximately \$3500 to \$10,500. The grant funding option would be based on Florida's "On The Job Training" program. This program does not have an expiration date at this time, but is a reimbursement program.

## II. Background

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### Under-utilized federal dollars

Annually, approximately 8.6 million dollars worth of Food Stamp benefits are *not* utilized in Flagler County, as identified by Florida Department of Children and Families (Based on Florida's monthly benefits average of \$240.00). Numerous barriers exist for eligible people, such as lack of transportation, lack of awareness of the program, few locations to apply, stigma, to include lack of information.

Approximately 3,000 eligible recipients are not receiving benefits in Flagler County.

### Stimulate the local economy

The Flagler County economy, along with most of the country, continues to face an economic slowdown and higher than average unemployment. One fast and effective way to give a boost to the economy is to get Food Stamps (and other earned benefits) to as many eligible people as possible. USDA studies show that every \$1 of Food Stamp benefits generates nearly **double the amount in economic activity** or \$1.73 economic impact.

In a recent national stimulus debate, a remarkable range of economists, policy makers and editorial writers spoke to the fact that Food Stamps are **the best stimulus to the economy** because they generate an immediate infusion of cash into the retail market.

Recent quotes on Food Stamps:

*"The fastest way to infuse money into the economy is through the Food Stamps program. If someone who is literally living paycheck to paycheck gets an extra dollar, it's very likely that they will spend that dollar immediately on the groceries they need."*

Moody's Economy.com, Mark Zandi, Economist

*"Food Stamp benefits are an effective tool to stimulate the economy."*

Federal Reserve Chairman, Ben Bernanke

*"Spending side measures most likely to be effective are benefits of the Food Stamp program."*

Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers

*"An increase in Food Stamp benefits would generate \$1.73 in economic activity for every dollar in cost and we know Food Stamp dollars will be spent right away."*

Representative Jim McGovern

The resources for outreach efforts for Food Stamps will be leveraged to also access available unused dollars for EITC, Kid Care and Medicare. According to the US Department of Health & Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid in a 2004 Report (most current report) on National Health Data; in Florida an average of Medicaid per enrollee generates \$5,486 in health care benefits annually, of which \$1,936 is spent on hospital. The balance on Physician & Clinical; Drugs and other Medical expenses.

Highly collaborative initiative – private, public, non-profit

This program will be very collaborative in nature and needs to include private, public and non-profit partners. Existing local feeding programs/Pantries will need to provide the venues for outreach. Collaboration with United Way of Volusia Flagler Counties and their Community Impact results, 211 service and EITC campaign (Campaign for Working Families) will also take place. Outreach plans will complement local government, DCF and other community-based organization efforts. Partnership will need to be sought with grocery retailers, hospitals and health care providers. In addition, service learning and volunteer opportunities will support efforts of the Community Benefits Specialist and will be offered to local College Students among others.

**III. Mission**

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To provide better access to the millions of unclaimed federal dollars that provides benefits to Flagler County residents in need.

This will be done by:

- Formation of a private, public, non-profit collaborative effort
- Launching a Mobile Benefits Specialist that would meet people at convenient locations throughout Flagler County and provide these services:
  - o Explanation of benefits
  - o Assisted on-site, online application for:
    - Food Stamps
    - KidCare
    - Medicaid
    - Earned Income Tax Credit
  - o Liaison for future client follow up and communication
- Mobile Benefits Specialist will be trained to assist in application for all the above earned benefit programs and equipped with laptop computer with wireless internet connectivity.
- Progress will be tracked by reports on numbers of applications and corresponding received benefits.

**IV. Strategic Focus**

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The program will be strategic in use of its resources and consider geographic and demographic needs. Currently, a couple of groups and one DCF office provides SNAP applications and information to different degrees, however, they depend on the eligible person to find them and arrange transportation to get them to their specific location. For working people, disabled, seniors and those without transportation or jobs, this presents challenges in accessing potential benefits. “*Mobile & Outreach*” are the operative words in this new Program. A Specialist equipped with a laptop computer and wireless connectivity to the internet will meet people at convenient locations. The Mobile Benefits Specialist will collaborate with their network of many partner feeding programs to provide the venues for

the Specialist. Recipients of emergency food will be able to meet with a Specialist at the food pantry, shelter or kitchen. This program is a mobile service delivery vehicle.

Specialist's activity will be prioritized to complement DCF's gaps in coverage, sources of 211 food requests along with Second Harvest poverty/population and food distribution data. The largest number of people eligible for Food Stamps needs to be identified by area of priority (i.e. Bunnell). Demographically, the program or Specialist will cover a combination of the unemployed, working poor, families and seniors, to include reaching all populations (Hispanic and immigrant).

## **V. Best Practices**

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This program is based on a study of several Outreach programs currently running in the United States. Many are based within other the Second Harvest Network Food Banks; others are through community-based organizations. Organizations with like programs include:

- Orlando, FL, Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida
- Jacksonville, FL, Second Harvest of North Florida
- San Antonio, TX, Second Harvest Food Bank
- Sparks, NV, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northern Nevada
- Atlanta, GA, Atlanta Community Food Bank
- St. Charles, IL, Northern Illinois Food Bank
- Miami, FL, Human Services Coalition
- Chicago, IL, America's Second Harvest

It is important to note that Outreach programs vary from city to city, each reflecting the unique needs of that market. However, there are some key common features of effective programs:

- Strong collaborative partners to provide sites for application services
- Close relationship with the local governing body for the Food Stamp program
- Well-trained Outreach Benefits Specialists
- Ongoing documentation and review of results
- Address policy issues related to the Food Stamp program
- Ongoing meetings/partnerships with local DCF, ACCESS; helping to provide training and support to the program.

## VI. Goals

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### 1.) Number of people and applications

- 720 applications completed/submitted per Specialist per year (60 per month)
- Total applications for 1 Specialists = 720
- 444 applications approved per Specialist per year (37 per month)

### 2.) Amount of claimed benefits

- \$692,640 per Specialist per year (\$8,880/mth per enrollee)
- Total claimed benefits for 1 Specialist = \$692,640<sup>1</sup>
- Return On Investment = 1,194 %<sup>2</sup>

### 3.) Volunteers

- Recruit and train a minimum of three to six college students for a Service Learning project
- Local Colleges
- Investigate utilization of AmeriCorps VISTA support
- Investigate working with highly motivated volunteers from a pool of existing United Way, Flagler Volunteer Center and FAMA volunteer base.

### 4.) Establish ongoing partner support centers

- Identify at least six partners with high traffic of clientele who will establish an Application Station onsite. Training and computer (if necessary) will be provided as well as ongoing oversight and documentation of results.

Goals will be broken down in many cases to daily, weekly and monthly specificity for the Specialist work plan. Detailed monthly reports will be kept to document progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Projection only includes Food Stamps. Additional dollars will be gained through EITC, KidCare and Medicaid

<sup>2</sup> Does not include USDA study stating that each \$1 of Food Stamp benefits generates a local economic impact of \$1.73. If this were included in the overall economic benefit the additional dollar value would be \$1,198,267. Also, does not include additional benefits acquired through university service learning.

## VII. Advisory Board

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An Advisory Board will be formed to provide oversight to the program:

- ACCESS (Department of Children & Families)
- Center for Business Excellence
- Community Volunteers: Doug Courtney, Sandy Mullen
- FAMA/Churches – Pastor Silano
- Flagler Chamber of Commerce
- Mobile Benefits Specialist
- Partner feeding program agencies/pantries
- Second Harvest of North Florida
- United Way of Volusia Flagler Counties

## VIII. Partners

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This program will be highly collaborative in nature. Dozens of partners will be involved from the private, public and non-profit sectors:

- Second Harvest of North Florida
- ACCESS Florida
- Local Colleges
- Schools
- State Legislators
- Community Based Organizations/Volunteers
- Hospital/s
- Flagler Cty Social Services
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Jacksonville partner feeding programs
- Dept. of Children & Families
- Volunteers
- City and County government
- H.O.L.A.
- Retailers
- Funders
- Faith community (FAMA)

Two special relationships will be very active. First, ACCESS Florida will be critical because they are the link with DCF. The second key partner will need to be the Flagler County Social Services. This group has been doing Benefit outreach for the past few years along with a variety of community services. They probably have an excellent reputation and track record of success. Their involvement with this program will be in these areas:

- a.) Planning: providing input and advice for this program
- b.) Training: assisting with training for the Community Benefits Specialist.
- c.) Public Policy: assisting with monitoring policy issues relative to a broad range of human services, including Food Stamps, EITC, KidCare, WIC and Medicaid. Help be a valuable resource for monitoring policy issues and coordination of advocacy efforts.

## **IX. Marketing**

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Awareness will be achieved in a variety of methods to various target audiences:

### Eligible people/organizations

- Posted information at partner feeding programs
- Outreach Specialist introduction at partner feeding programs
- 211
- ACCESS (DCF) listing and promotion
- FNS (USDA) television, radio and print campaigns
- Faith-based organizations and community
- Grocery retailer methods to be explored – In-Store promotion
- Health Fairs
- “Homeless Connect” events
- Pro bono media time via PSAs
- Flyers distributed through School programs/efforts:
  - flyer included within back packs, etc.

### Community

- Op-Eds
- Presentations to interested groups
- Media coverage

### Retailers, Hospitals, Schools & Faith Community

- Customers, clients, congregants will be invited to apply for Food Stamps

### Volunteers

- Volunteer Centers will communicate to their base volunteers

### Legislators

- Personal meetings with Advisory Board
- “Food Stamp Budget” event: To bring added awareness to the issue, invite legislators and mayors to buy their food for one week on an average allotment of approximately \$25 for one week.

## **X. Public Policy**

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Policy change regarding the Food Stamp program in addition to Outreach is important. Ongoing monitoring of Federal and State policy will be necessary to ensure we are communicating barriers and/or opportunities to the legislature. A few examples of policy issues:

- In 2008, all States had to address their Asset Policy. By advocating for more updated values on these assets, benefit qualifications can increase. Assets such as automobile value and savings are in this category. State by State details on this information will be valuable through America's Second Harvest Public Policy office.
- Express Stamps – this promising pilot in Illinois is being considered by some other States. This could be another area for legislative attention in Florida.
- Farm Bill – this legislation is established every five years and is currently being debated by Congress. It includes substantial legislation on Food Stamps and provisions to strengthen the program.

Public policy relative to Food Stamps will be of importance both at a national and State level. It will be important to stay abreast of these issues through its National office and Washington, DC Policy office, as well as DCF at the State level.

## **XI. Timetable**

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Presentation of Plan	July 2010
Approval of Plan and Budget	July 2010
Create Advisory Board	July-August 2010
Apply for Grant and Raise Funds	August 2010 until funds are raised
Develop marketing plan and materials	August-October 2010
Launch	TBC

## **XII. Budget**

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### A.) Compensation

#### Community Benefits Specialist:

Salary	32,000	
Benefits, FICA, etc.	<u>8,900<sup>1</sup></u>	
	X 1	40,900

### B.) Technology

Computer, air card, software	1,200	
Internet access	1,200	
Cell phone	<u>780</u>	
	X 1	3,180

### C.) Mileage

Community Benefits Specialist		5,625 <sup>2</sup>
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### D.) Conferences and Training

Training by TBD		TBD
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### E.) Marketing Materials

Design, production, printing and mailing		1,000
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### F.) Office Supplies

Community Benefits Specialist		500
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### G.) Administrative Support and Managerial Oversight

		<u>5,795<sup>3</sup></u>
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**Total** **\$57,000**

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ROI = 1,194%

- Based on projection of achieving \$692,640 worth of annual benefits in the first year.
- Does *not* include USDA study that states "each \$1 of Food Stamp benefits generates a local economic impact of \$1.73." This would equate to \$1,198,267 in local economic impact (an ROI of 2,066%).
- **Does not include the U.S. DHHS Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Report from 2004 (most recent available) that lists the average number of dollars spent per individual Medicaid Enrollee in FL as \$5,486, of which \$1,936 is spent on hospital care. For all 444 individuals signed up in this program in the first 12 months, this would result in an additional \$859,584 in additional annual Medicaid income for hospitals. If just 5% of the 444 individuals signed up through the ACCESS system by this program in the first 12 months received hospital care, that would result in \$42,979 in additional annual Medicaid income to local hospitals.**

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<sup>1</sup> Equates to appx. 28% of salary

<sup>2</sup> Based on estimate of 225 miles per week x \$0.50 per mile for 50 weeks

<sup>3</sup> Equates to 18% of position's salary which is estimating 7.2 hrs a week of mgmt (7.2hrs x 50wks = 360hrs annually / 2000 total annual hours = 18%)