



HUNGER TASK FORCE

NEWS RELEASE

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ANTI-HUNGER EXPERTS ENCOURAGE IMMIGRANTS TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS FOR FAMILY, CHILDREN

Milwaukee (Feb. 27, 2008)—Anti-hunger experts are encouraging immigrant men and women to register for federal nutrition programs, including food stamps, school meals and the Women, Infants and Children program. Certain non-citizens—including many children, elderly immigrants and individuals who have been working in the United States for certain periods of time—are eligible for federal nutrition programs.

Household members may be eligible for federal nutrition benefits even if there are other members of the household who are not eligible. Specifically, a child born in the United States or a legal immigrant child is eligible for food stamps, even if his parents are not eligible because of their immigration status.

Common reasons eligible people do not participate in federal nutrition programs are because they do not realize they may be eligible, or because of myths or misunderstandings about benefits. For Latino populations, there may be additional compounding factors, such as language barriers, or time and transportation barriers for the working poor. Further, immigrants may misunderstand eligibility requirements related to citizenship.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), an immigrant to the United States will not be deported, denied entry to the country, or denied permanent status because he or she receives food stamps, WIC benefits, free and reduced-price school lunches or other nutrition assistance.

Latinos as a group disproportionately suffer from hunger and do not access federal nutrition programs designed to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. According to the USDA, 13 percent of food stamp recipients are Latino.

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Federal Nutrition Programs/ Add One

Nutrition programs available to low-income men, women and children include:

- **FoodShare**, commonly known as food stamps, which helps low-income families and individuals to buy nutritious food. U.S. citizen children living with non-citizen parents are eligible to receive FoodShare. In Wisconsin, 13,000 citizen children living with non-citizen parents participate in the program.

Qualified FoodShare recipients will receive a Quest Card, an electronic debit-type card that can be used in many grocery stores throughout the state. Each month, the recipients' food benefits will automatically be added to his Quest Card, to be used to purchase nutritious foods, including breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish and poultry; and dairy products.

To apply for FoodShare or to find out if you're eligible, visit www.wisconsin.access.wi.gov.

- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**, which provides nutritious foods to low-income women, infants and children up to age five. Immigration status does not affect eligibility for WIC benefits. In Wisconsin, 113,000 women, infants and children participate in the program. To apply for WIC, visit www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/wic.

- **School meals**, which provide free or reduced-price meals for low-income children. **Children are eligible to participate in the school meal program regardless of immigration status.** In Milwaukee, parents can register their children for school meals by calling Milwaukee Public Schools at (414) 475-8897. Outside Milwaukee, parents should call their local school district.

- **Summer meals** are available to all children age 18 and under throughout Milwaukee beginning in June. **Children are eligible to participate in the summer meal program regardless of immigration status.** To find the summer meals site nearest you, dial 211; cell phone users should dial (414) 773-0211.

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, institutions are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. In addition, discrimination based on religion or political beliefs is prohibited in the FoodShare program. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication and compliance, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Hunger Task Force is an anti-hunger organization which believes that every person has a right to adequate food obtained with dignity. Hunger Task Force works to prevent hunger and malnutrition by providing food to people in need today and by promoting social policies to achieve food security tomorrow.