

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1989

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SENATE BILL 1549

Short Title: Food Stamp Program/Funds.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Walker; Richardson, Lee, Marvin, and Hunt.

Referred to: Human Resources.

June 6, 1990

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

**AN ACT TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO USE OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS.**

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Two State level coordinator positions for the Food Stamp Program are established in the Division of Social Services, Department of Human Resources.

These coordinators shall:

- (1) Assist county human services staff in the development of local activities designed to remove barriers to participation in the Food Stamp Program;
- (2) Establish a recognition process for counties with the most improved rate of participation in the Food Stamp Program;
- (3) Develop a Referral Network consisting of local and State-level community action and advocacy groups in order to ensure that potentially eligible persons apply for the Food Stamp Program;
- (4) Establish and maintain ongoing contact with various agencies serving low-income persons, including crises centers, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), community health centers, senior citizen centers, shelters, food kitchens, agricultural extension agencies, the Employment Security Commission, churches, schools, Head Start centers, Indian Affairs agencies, legal services, migrant services, public housing, and adult day care; and
- (5) Provide training to community action and advocacy groups wishing to know more about the Food Stamp Program.

1 Sec. 2. The Division of Social Services, Department of Human Resources,
2 shall develop informational pamphlets on the Food Stamp Program for community
3 distribution, aimed at reaching the following groups:

- 4 (1) The rural poor;
- 5 (2) Senior and disabled citizens;
- 6 (3) Migrants;
- 7 (4) AFDC and Medicaid recipients;
- 8 (5) The homeless;
- 9 (6) The working poor; and
- 10 (7) Farmers and fishermen.

11 Sec. 3. The Division of Social Services, Department of Human Resources,
12 shall develop an instructional videotape on the Food Stamp Program to include:

- 13 (1) Food Stamp Program eligibility requirements;
- 14 (2) Food Stamp Program clients' rights and responsibilities;
- 15 (3) Food Stamp Program methods of issuance, including mail, "on-
16 line," and "authorization to participate" cards; and
- 17 (4) Food Stamp use in grocery stores.

18 The instructional videotape shall be designed for use by county human services staff
19 and others, such as community action agencies, when providing information to
20 recipients and potential applicants.

21 Sec. 4. The Division of Social Services, Department of Human Resources,
22 shall develop a media campaign on the Food Stamp Program, to include:

- 23 (1) A pamphlet for community distribution to describe the Food Stamp
24 Program, its eligibility requirements, and how to apply;
- 25 (2) Public service spots on the Food Stamp Program for radio and
26 television; and
- 27 (3) Informational material on the Food Stamp Program regarding:
 - 28 a. Facts about poverty and myths and stereotypes of the Food
29 Stamp Program and its participants; and
 - 30 b. Histories of people now considered successful who received
31 food stamps in the past.

32 Sec. 5. (a) The Division of Social Services, Department of Human Resources,
33 shall facilitate and administer at the State level, demonstration projects, to be conducted
34 by those counties that choose and are selected to participate, designed to remove
35 barriers to needed participation in the Food Stamp Program. These projects shall
36 consist of those comprehensive activities participating counties consider necessary to
37 remove barriers to necessary use of the Food Stamp Program. Participating counties
38 may contract with local agencies to conduct these activities.

39 (b) Counties desiring to participate in the demonstration projects authorized in
40 subsection (a) of this act to enable them to conduct comprehensive activities designed to
41 remove barriers to necessary use of the Food Stamp Program shall submit a detailed
42 plan to a review committee appointed by the Secretary of Human Resources, upon
43 consultation with the Director of the Division of Social Services. A project may include
44 one county only or may be a multicounty effort. In its selection process, the review

1 committee shall consider those criteria the Department of Human Resources adopts by
2 rule making, including:

3 (1) Requiring that projects be geographically diverse, with both rural and
4 urban representation; and

5 (2) Giving priority to those areas with the most need, based on poverty
6 level information and participation rates.

7 (c) In order to be considered for selection to participate in the demonstration
8 projects, a county's plan shall include:

9 (1) The establishing of a referral network consisting of community action
10 agencies, client advocates, and other appropriate agencies that work
11 with low-income families. The Division of Social Services shall
12 furnish to the county a list of such groups that may be active in that
13 county. The county shall expand this list to include any other local
14 groups of which it is aware;

15 (2) The informing of the community about the Food Stamp Program
16 through informational materials, and visits to community agencies;

17 (3) The training of local groups on a semiannual basis to update awareness
18 of Food Stamp Policies;

19 (4) The training of volunteers to assist with completing the Food Stamp
20 application;

21 (5) The securing of local media support for distribution of information
22 regarding program highlights, feature stories, and program
23 announcements;

24 (6) The effective use of outposts, extended office hours and home visits;

25 (7) The establishing of a local advisory board consisting of
26 representatives, from both public and private sections, who work with
27 low-income families. This board shall meet regularly to discuss and
28 coordinate issues affecting these families.

29 Sec. 6. The Division of Social Services, Department of Human Resources,
30 shall develop a method of evaluating its activities, and the activities of the county
31 human services staff, designed to remove barriers to Food Stamp Program use. The
32 evaluation shall include the examination of why target groups fail to use the program,
33 the nature of referral networks established, and the enhanced training of the human
34 services staff. The Division of Social Services may contract for the evaluation.

35 Sec. 7. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Division of Social
36 Services, Department of Human Resources, the sum of \$347,818 for the 1990-91 fiscal
37 year to fund the State share of the cost of funding this act.

38 Sec. 8. This act shall become effective July 1, 1990.