USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

NOV 30 2017

Courtney Hawkins, Director
Department of Human Services
Louis Pasteur Building
57 Howard Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

Dear Director Hawkins:

As Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), I want to take this opportunity to share some thoughts on administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and invite your open communication as we move forward.

Throughout my time here, our focus will be in three key areas:

- Self-Sufficiency – The American dream has never been to live on government benefits. People who can work, should work. We must facilitate the transition for individuals and families to become independent, specifically by partnering with key stakeholders in the workforce development community and holding our recipients accountable for personal responsibility.

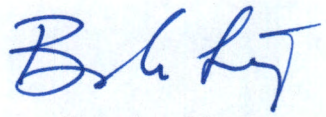
- Integrity – We must ensure our programs are run with the utmost integrity. We will not tolerate waste, fraud, or abuse from those who seek to undermine our mission or who do not take their responsibility seriously.

- Customer Service – Together, we must ensure that our programs serve SNAP participants well. In order to achieve a high degree of customer service, we at FNS must also provide States the flexibility to test new and better ways to administer our programs, recognizing that we are all accountable to the American taxpayer for the outcomes.

We believe States are laboratories of innovation and seek to learn from you what works and what does not. As necessary to address each of these focus areas, we will allow greater State flexibility in areas that do not increase costs to taxpayers or our various partners on the ground. You can expect more communication soon on policy that shifts our focus toward these three critical areas. As Secretary Perdue has charged us, collectively we will work to "do right and feed everyone."

I sincerely welcome your ideas for improving the program and ways FNS can serve you better. My door is open; please reach out to me anytime. Thank you for your partnership. I look forward to working with you as we strive to better serve our participants and increase our accountability to the American taxpayer.

Regards,



Brandon Lipps
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Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
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