



BOULDER COUNTY  
**HOUSING  
& HUMAN  
SERVICES**

Hope for the future, help when you need it.

# SNAP OUTREACH PLAN 2016 – 2018

*Boulder County  
Department of  
Housing and Human  
Services*

**Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services (BCDHHS) Vision:**

BCDHHS has adopted this vision: *“Within 10 years, DHHS will transform the health and the well-being of our community by shifting programming and funding upstream into prevention oriented and consumer driven cross-sector solutions that improve outcomes across the lifespan and significantly reduce high-cost institutional interventions within a social determinants of health framework.”* We plan to achieve this goal through the implementation of the Generative Model of Human Service delivery and by working toward creating a Community of Hope within Boulder County.

**Mission Statement:**

For all our residents, Boulder County Housing and Human Services aims to provide *hope for the future, and help when you need it.*

**Statement of Need:**

Boulder County Housing and Human Services oversees the management and administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as Food Assistance or Food Stamps for Boulder County. Boulder County spans 750 square miles and is Colorado’s sixth most populous county, contains multiple cities and is home to approximately 300,000 people. Of those there is an estimate of 53,000 individuals according to the Census who are living at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level and many include our low participation populations including:

- *Spanish speaking/immigrant/mixed documentation families:* Total Latino/Hispanic population in Boulder County is 40,300 with roughly 12,000 living in poverty.
- *Families with school aged children:* Through school data, we know that 32% of SVVSD (SVVSD 2015) and 22% of BVSD (BVSD 2015) elementary students are income eligible for SNAP benefits with minority children (defined as American Indian, Asian, African American, Hispanic, Hawaiian and multi-racial) comprising 40% of the total SVVSD population and 36% of the total BVSD population.
- *Elder population:* Demographics within Boulder County are changing with an estimated 40,168 residents 65 and older in 2013 expected to double by 2040 according the recent Community Foundation’s *Boulder County Trends Report*.
- *Low-income families:* In 2013, Boulder County’s poverty rate is 14.1%, which is slightly higher than the state average of 13.5%.
- *Students:* Boulder County is home to approximately 30,000 students, 71% of whom live off campus (21,300). Those students not living with family and off campus are 51% more likely to live in the poverty rate and are potentially eligible for SNAP benefits.

BCDHHS offers services across individuals’ life spans from children to older adults, and for families of all sizes. BCDHHS is committed to serving the following vulnerable populations identified in Boulder County: children, homeless, youth/adults, inmates, seniors, residents with special needs, pregnant women, residents who’s English is a second language, residents of mixed documentation status, and rural populations.

**SNAP Outreach Vision:**

In alignment with the Social Determinants of Health framework, Boulder County HHS views food security as essential to a healthy community. As a result, one of our top priorities is an overall reduction in the number of food insecure residents in Boulder County through increasing access to nutritious food. We also know that our efforts to improve food security are closely linked with other efforts focused on availability of health services, safety, housing, transportation, mental wellness, financial assistance, education and work supports, environmental health, and quality early childhood programs.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is one of many programs available in Boulder County that can positively affect food security. It complements the work of our community food banks, food pantries, and programs like Harvest Bucks and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) that help link residents to nutritious food. The outreach strategy outlined in this plan is specifically focused on the SNAP program that BCDHHS administers for the Colorado Department of Human Services locally. The scope of this document is not

intended to fully address the larger food insecurity issues within Boulder County and Colorado; that is work that the Boulder County Departments of Community Services, Housing and Human Services, and Public Health are addressing as part of their Community of Hope work.

With regard to SNAP, we have identified three main objectives:

1. **Increasing our understanding of the barriers** that keep people from applying for Food Assistance (as Colorado SNAP is commonly known), and applying this understanding to our outreach efforts.
2. Decrease the number of food insecure individuals in Boulder County by **increasing the participation rate of distinct clients in the SNAP program** by 5% while maintaining our current program participation duration to 9 months.
3. Decrease the number of food insecure individuals in Boulder County **by reducing the amount of churn within the SNAP program** by 5%.

In working toward these objectives, we are coordinating with, and leveraging the expertise of, a variety of community stakeholders, including Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA), Sister Carmen Community Center, OUR Center, and Community Food Share, in addition to other partners/service providers throughout the county. This group will continue to meet on a regular basis with a focus on increasing food security in Boulder County with SNAP as the first target area.

To achieve these objectives we will be utilizing a number of tactics that are outlined in the subsequent pages. Our goal is to apply best practices learned through our successful enrollment efforts related to the expansion of Medicaid and CHP+ through the Affordable Care Act, along with other tactics that align with the State of Colorado's Food Assistance plans.

## **Areas for Growth in Community Outreach and Understanding: Boulder County HHS's 2016-2018 Outreach Plan**

### **1. *Increasing our understanding of the barriers to enrollment in the state Food Assistance program***

***(SNAP), and applying this understanding to our outreach efforts.***

There are many reasons why people choose not to apply for Food Assistance through the SNAP program, some related to program requirements and others more personal in nature. Through years of local service delivery, for instance, we know that seniors tend to link SNAP to “food stamps”, a term which some connect negatively to the idea of “welfare”. In fact, SNAP, perhaps more than any other self-sufficiency support, carries the stigma of being a “government handout” that may play into a potential clients’ political leanings to have a less intrusive government. Many potential recipients believe that they are “not that bad off” and would rather “save the resources for those who are truly in need of benefits.” We also know from direct feedback from our clients that the amount of benefit provided does not always equal the effort needed to engage in the enrollment process and to maintain benefits.

What is missing for the Boulder County community is quantifiable data on what the barriers to enrollment and recertification are here, and how we can mitigate them to improve participation in the SNAP program.

#### ***Our plan for understanding the barriers to applying for and utilizing SNAP benefits:***

BCDHHS is proposing a multi-phased approach to increase our understanding of the barriers to enrollment for the SNAP program and attempt to quantify these barriers.

- Phase I: Consolidation of local, regional and national research on the barriers to enrollment to gain an understanding of which barriers we can best impact from a local level by February, 2016.
- Phase II: Conduct a local survey of current and former BCDHHS clients that specifically solicits feedback from three target groups: (1) former program participants, to understand why they no longer participate in the program; (2) current program participants; and (3) those enrolled in Medicaid who have never been enrolled in SNAP but are potentially eligible by June, 2016.
- Phase III: Conduct focus groups and analyze survey results to create a multi-faceted campaign to address barriers identified in surveys by September, 2016.

#### **Audience:**

Our intended audiences for the survey and focus groups are residents who are potentially eligible, but unenrolled, former program participants within the last two years, and key county and community partner organization staff who engage with clients around Food Assistance eligibility and enrollment.

#### **Outcome:**

Our goal is to create a matrix of barriers that can then be prioritized to maximize resource allocation based on our ability to reduce/eliminate them at the local level and develop a marketing campaign.

**Evaluation:**

Method	Metric
SNAP Barrier Matrix	Comprehensive matrix of barriers

**Tactics:**

The proposal is to use multiple phases of direct contact to understand barriers to enrollment as outlined below:

Tactic	Dates
Consolidation of current local, regional and national research	2/2016
Conduct a local survey specifically soliciting feedback on the SNAP program, barriers to enrollment, and ways to improve local delivery	5/2016
A. Define Audience: isolate by type	
B. Create Survey	
C. Implement Survey	
D. Compile and Analyze Survey Results	
Conduct Two Focus Groups (partner and client)	5/2016
Combine and Analyze All Data (HHS, Community Food Share/CU, EFAA, Public Health)	6/2016
Develop Outreach Plan Language and Priorities	6/2016-8/2016
Finalize Marketing plan	10/2016
Execute Materials across BC in partnership with community partners	11/2016
Attend community partner meetings to identify strategies to engage individuals to apply and enroll in SNAP	11/2016-7/2017

**2. Decrease the number of food insecure individuals in Boulder County by increasing the participation rate in the SNAP program by 5% while maintaining our current program participation duration of 9 months.**

The issue of food insecurity in our community is much larger than SNAP enrollment alone, and is intertwined with the other Social Determinants of Health. In collaboration with our partners, Boulder County HHS will continue to engage with the community to address this larger issue through a comprehensive Social Determinants of Health framework. At the same time, our immediate outreach effort will focus on attempting to increase the number of SNAP participants while maintaining the average 9 month program participation goal for residents. Simply signing residents up for SNAP does not fully address the larger issue of food insecurity in our community, but it is an area where BCDHHS has control to make a positive local impact in the short-term.

In 2015, Boulder County served 27,987 unduplicated individuals through its Food Assistance program. As of December 2015 there were 18,055 individuals enrolled in SNAP and 7,976 total open cases. We believe this puts Boulder County’s annual participation rate at between 50% and 70% of eligible residents. During the height of the recession in the month of December 2011, the highest number of enrolled individuals recorded was 21,601 (clients that received a SNAP benefit payment during the month). We would like to increase the number of unduplicated SNAP enrollees by 5% (from 27,987 to 30,178) within the next 12 months in a combination of both efforts related to this outreach plan and with to streamline the division’s work process and CBMS data entry. As part of this effort Boulder County expects to generate 2,900 SNAP applications during the period to increase the number of unduplicated clients served by 2,192. PAI will be a lagging indicator used.

Year	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Unduplicated SNAP clients	27,987	29,057	29,402	30,712	29,524	26,306	22,061	16,555

**Plan for increasing participation in SNAP throughout Boulder County:**

Boulder County HHS has outlined four focus areas designed to increase SNAP participation:

- A. Education and Training
- B. Direct Assistance
- C. Data Driven Outreach to potential EBNE
- D. Targeted outreach
- E. Client education

**Outcome:**

To increase the number of unduplicated/distinct SNAP participants by 5% over the next 12 months.

**Evaluation:**

Method	Metric
CBMS Data	Number of unduplicated individuals enrolled in SNAP
File Maker Pro	Number of trainings provided; number of attendees
HHSC, File Maker Pro, Sales Force	Number of individuals served
CBMS Data	Number of individuals enrolled in SNAP who received a post card, text or e-mail
Tableau	Applications received, case and client

HHSC, CBMS	Number of people contacted who enrolled
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**Tactics:**

**A. Education and training**

1. Develop CS 101 training to community partners that provides basic SNAP program rules and eligibility requirements
  - a. Leverage the Boulder County Healthy Kids and Adults and PEAK teams to create and provide ongoing SNAP program, application assistance, and Boulder County process training. Include sections on income, household composition, verifications and timelines.
2. Increase Community Partner capacity to assist residents in applying for benefits through CO PEAK or paper applications
  - a. Create work process to track applications being submitted through community partners.
  - b. Provide a county employee to liaison with partners to help expedite applications, provide on-the-spot troubleshooting and answer questions.
  - c. Quarterly meetings with partners to: identify and coordinate service gaps, solidify targeted outreach, and analyze data and program delivery

Tactic	Dates
<b>Create training package for community partners presentation for CBO's including PowerPoint and materials</b>	
a. Deliver presentation to all community partners with rotating schedule	See below for schedule
b. Conduct a past attendee survey specifically soliciting feedback on the presentation, post knowledge check, ways to improve content and delivery and assess need for advanced knowledge presentation	12/15/2016 – 1/20/2017
c. Enhance presentation to incorporate survey feedback.	1/23/2017 – 2/10/2017
<b>Increase Community Partner Capacity to assist with applications</b>	
a. Review current MOU's; Communicate with community partners and reach decision point re: ways to incorporate PEAK Application Assistance	10/01/2016 – 12/31/2016
b. Update and finalize MOU's	12/01/2016 – 2/28/2017
Finalize work process to track applications	10/01/2016 – 11/30/2016
Provide county liaison	10/01/2016 – ongoing
Quarterly meetings with community partners	10/2016, 1/2017, 4/2017, 07/2017

**Presentation Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>October 28, 2016</b>	9:00AM – 10:00AM	<b>Boulder County Annex Building</b> 3460 Broadway Boulder, CO
<b>December 2, 2016</b>	9:00AM – 10:00AM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO
<b>January 13, 2017</b>	3:00PM – 4:00PM	<b>Boulder County Annex Building</b> 3460 Broadway Boulder, CO
<b>February 10, 2017</b>	9:00AM – 10:00AM	<b>Boulder County Annex Building</b> 3460 Broadway Boulder, CO
<b>March 8, 2017</b>	3:00PM – 4:00PM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO
<b>April 12, 2017</b>	9:00AM – 10:00AM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO
<b>May 12, 2017</b>	3:00PM – 4:00PM	<b>Boulder County Annex Building</b> 3460 Broadway Boulder, CO
<b>June 14, 2017</b>	9:00AM – 10:00AM	<b>Boulder County Annex Building</b> 3460 Broadway

## **B. Direct Assistance**

1. Utilize the Boulder County Healthy Kids and Adults, Healthy Communities and Boulder County Assistance Site teams to continue to co-locate staff in critical community partner locations to provide outreach, direct assistance using PEAK and the paper application.
  - a. When utilizing the PEAK application the application will automatically be directed to the Community Support Division for processing through the Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS). The outreach worker will work with the Community Support Division to track the application to understand the final eligibility decision for reporting purposes.
  - b. PEAK will be the primary mode of application, but in some instances a paper application may be utilized, the outreach worker will ensure that the application is submitted to the Healthy Kids and Adults team (a subset team of the Community Support Division) for processing by an eligibility technician. The outreach worker will work with the technician to obtain the final eligibility decision for reporting purposes.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Day/Time</b>
<b>Community Cupboard Food Bank - Lyons</b> 14863 Colorado Hwy 7 Allenspark, CO	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month 2:00 – 4:00PM
<b>Columbine Family Health - Nederland</b> 20 Lakeview Dr. #204 Nederland, CO	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month (in open enrollment) and then 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday outside of open enrollment 8:00AM – 4:00PM

<b>El Comite de Longmont</b> 455 Kimbark St. Longmont, CO	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month in open enrollment 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month outside of open enrollment 8:30AM – 12:00PM
<b>LEAF – Lyons</b> 350 Main St. Lyons, CO	Wednesday 1x per month 12:00PM – 4:00PM
<b>Mental Health Partners</b> 515 Coffman Street Longmont, CO  1333 Iris Ave. Boulder, CO	Longmont: every Wednesday 10:00AM – 2:00PM  Boulder: every Monday 10:00AM – 2:00PM
<b>Sister Carmen Community Center</b> 655 Aspen Ridge Drive Lafayette, CO	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month 9:30am – 12:00PM  4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month 1:00PM – 3:00PM

2. Leverage HHS teams and Boulder County community partners to broaden the scope of open enrollment events to include all public benefit programs, financial and housing counseling and community safety net services.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016</b>	9:00AM – 2:30PM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO
<b>December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016</b>	9:00AM – 2:30PM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO
<b>December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016</b>	9:00AM – 2:30PM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO
<b>January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017</b>	9:00AM – 2:30PM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO
<b>January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017</b>	9:00AM – 2:30PM	<b>St. Vrain Community Hub</b> 515 Coffman St. Longmont, CO

### C. Data Driven Outreach to potential EBNE

#### Phase I: Community Partner Data Driven Drive

- a. Leverage data from Community Partners to identify potential food bank participants that are not enrolled in SNAP. Community Partner data will be compared to CBMS (Colorado Benefits Management System) to identify eligible but not enrolled clients and co-branded materials will be sent to those clients encouraging them to apply through PEAK.
- b. Will explore the possibility of linking this outreach to the already existing open enrollment outreach. A tiered approach will be leveraged to send postcards: eligible for health only, eligible for health and SNAP enrollment and SNAP only enrollment.

#### Phase II: Medicaid/Food Assistance “Reverse Popping”

- a. Leverage CBMS data and the existing and successful *Why Me* campaign graphics to create a compelling direct mail piece to clients who are currently enrolled in Medical Assistance but who are not receiving Food Assistance.

#### Phase III: Former Food Assistance Families

- a. Leverage data from CBMS to identify and conduct direct outreach (via postcard, e-mail, and/or text messaging) using the *Why Me* campaign graphics to encourage them to reapply if appropriate through PEAK.

Tactic	Dates
Data Scrub “Community Partner Data”	9/01/2016 – 10/31/2016
Create marketing materials and graphics	9/01/2016 – 10/31/2016
Execute mailing with deadline for applying	10/01/2016 – 12/31/2016
Analyze program success (data metrics)	1/01/2017 – 1/31/2017
Data Scrub: “Reverse Popping”	1/01/2017 – 1/31/2017
Create marketing material and graphics	1/01/2017 – 2/15/2017
Execute mailing with deadline for applying	2/15/2017 – 2/28/2017
Analyze program success (data metrics)	4/18/2017 – 5/31/2017
Data Scrub: “Former Food Assistance Families”	4/01/2017 – 4/30/2017
Revamp messaging from previous mailing	4/01/2017 – 5/15/2017
Execute mailing with deadline for applying	5/15/2017 – 5/31/2017
Conduct Data Analysis	7/01/2017 – 8/15/2017

### D. Targeted SNAP Outreach

1. Senior/low-income family outreach at local housing sites.
  - a. Partner with the City of Boulder to conduct outreach at their local housing sites consisting of low-income families and seniors
  - b. There are 286 units at the senior sites and 304 units at the family sites for an estimated 894 residents
2. Student Outreach
  - a. Partner with local colleges, universities or higher learning businesses to conduct outreach at their sites
  - b. Provide market specific to these populations

Tactic	Dates
Senior Outreach	10/01/2016 – 02/01/2017
Finalize Coordination of Application Assistance	10/01/2016 – 10/31/2016
Analyze enrollment	12/01/2016 – 1/31/2017
a. Gather enrollment data	12/01/2016 – 1/31/2017

b. Analyze success of the program	12/01/2016 – 1/31/2017
c. Based on lessons learned start preparation for next population group: Students	2/01/2017
Meet with CU Boulder, Naropa	2/01/2017 – 4/30/2017
Data Scrub: compare student data vs. CBMS to identify EBNEs	5/01/2017 – 6/30/2017
Create targeted messaging including letter and postcards/mailer	5/01/2017 – 6/30/2017
Coordinate Application Assistance	7/01/2017 – 9/30/2017

### E. Client Education

1. Educate and train clients about our SNAP processes, timelines, and program eligibility requirements as well as resources and tools at their disposal to manage their benefits, check determinations and upload verifications.
  - a. Re-educate staff on how to simply explain SNAP processes and other important details to clients
  - b. Provide tri-fold brochure at intake and review with client
2. Optimize the use of PEAK and Boulder County Connect, the new client engagement portal, to empower clients to track their case information and renewals, and to make changes.
  - a. Empower clients to use PEAK and the new Boulder County Connect client engagement portal to track benefits, renewals and to make changes
    - i. Create a training for all county eligibility staff showing them how to teach clients to set up an account and use the Boulder County Connect portal
    - ii. Train staff on how to present Boulder County Connect to clients and support their use of the system
    - iii. Monitor client use of the systems.

Tactic	Dates
<b>Client Education/Training</b>	
A. Create internal staff training on key client educational needs during interviews or engagement	12/2016
B. Train all existing eligibility staff on expectations	12/2016
C. Incorporate into new worker curriculum	2/2017
<b>Boulder County Connect</b>	
C. Incorporate training into new worker curriculum	2/2016
<b>HHS Connect In-Reach</b>	10/2016 – 2/2017

**3. Help to decrease the number of food insecure individuals in Boulder County by reducing the amount of churn within the SNAP program by 5% within 12 months.**

The size and scope of “churn” is a largely unknown entity within the world of human services and is extremely difficult to measure. Understanding why people decide to un-enroll in SNAP is critical, and hopefully through our survey and focus groups data, we will begin to learn more. We are also working to analyze our case closure data to separate closures due to income improvements from procedural closures (i.e., when eligible families have their cases closed).

An analysis of Boulder County CBMS data shows that from April 2015 to April 2016, on average 29% of SNAP applications received were from individuals who had been enrolled in the program within the previous **six months**. This six month timeframe is an indicator of churn and is likely caused by reasons such as program rules, client correspondence confusion, inability to understand the renewal process, and more. By reducing this churn, we can directly impact the number of people receiving SNAP and thereby help to reduce the amount of food insecurity among residents. This effort will also help maintain stability for recipients, in addition to reducing the amount of client and staff time spent reapplying.

**Outcome:**

To decrease the amount of churn (or un-enrollment) in the SNAP program by 5% from previous calendar year.

**Plan for decreasing churn (un-enrollment) in SNAP in Boulder County**

Boulder County HHS has identified six tactics that can help to reduce churn:

1. Maintain 95% timeliness or higher
2. Maintain PER and CAPER accuracy or higher
3. Provide education to our clients on program rules and our process and timelines, particularly as they relate to renewals – and incorporate such information in our community partner education and training materials and efforts
4. Proactively send text messages to clients who have receive a renewal packet, but have not yet turned it in four times prior to due date.
5. Encourage the use of [Boulder County Connect](#), our new online client engagement portal
6. Utilize *HHS Connect* data to do proactive in-reach to clients who are coming up for renewal or a life change event that may impact their SNAP benefits.

**Audience:**

Our intended audience is clients who are currently receiving SNAP benefits within Boulder County.

**Evaluation:**

Method	Metric
CBMS Data	Processing SNAP within 7 days expedite and 30 days for regular
Court Reports	Monthly CSTAT and court reports
BOCO Program Integrity Data	Internal case review tracking of 100 case reviews per month
Training Log	Monthly staff training log
BOCO Connect	New Account Log
Tableau	Monthly churn reports

