Reaching Out to Prospective Food Support Customers

Ann Sunderman had the opportunity to attend the Big Ten FS Conference in Minneapolis in July 2010. She was very impressed with the speakers and their message that Food Support benefits used in our communities help to stimulate the economy. She also felt they did an excellent job of focusing on the importance of good “Customer Service” in our job, reminding us that the financial worker may be the only friendly person the client has contact with.

Ann took the initiative to do her own outreach:

- In late August 2010 Ann sent letters to 37 people on her caseload to tell them about Food Support (elderly population) – people that were likely to qualify but were not already enrolled in this program.
- 20 people responded to Ann’s initial letter. 6 of these people said they were “not interested” and 14 people asked for the CAF so they could apply.
- 11 CAFs were received. (11 out of 14)
- 11 NEW food support cases were opened. $439.00 in new Food Support benefits are being issued each month between these 11 new cases.
- 3 people never returned the CAF

Efforts are being made in small ways by small counties to promote the Food Support Program and carry out the Mission of Human Services.
Dear Customer:

During these hard times, who couldn’t use a few extra dollars to help with purchasing food items? I believe that there are many people living in Le Sueur County who would be eligible for Food Support if they requested these benefits.

I reviewed my cases, looking for people who may be eligible for Food Support. With the information that I found in your case record, it appears that you may be eligible.

There have been some changes in the income and asset limits for the program so if you were not eligible previously, you may be eligible now. You are also allowed to “save” your benefits for one year. This will allow those households who only receive the minimum benefit to save their benefits for special occasions.

You no longer have to use food coupons. Benefits are deposited in an account and you are issued an EBT card to withdraw your benefits. This card is like the card that banks issue so you can automatically withdraw funds from a checking account. By using these EBT cards, no one knows whether you are withdrawing funds from your Food Support account or a bank account.

If you are interested in applying for Food Support, please contact me at (507) 357-8218 and I will mail you an application. If you need help completing an application, and do not have a family member or friend who is able to help you, someone here can help you.

If you choose not to apply for these benefits, please let me know why you do not want them. You may call me or send me a note with this information.

Sincerely,

Ann S.
Financial Worker
Le Sueur County DHS