

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



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Each year that I have been a member of CWFC, I have had the blessing of making new friends and learning something new about myself. While there have been many happy memories, there have also been personal tragedies that our friends and families have had to experience. Over the past few years, some members of CWFC have suffered through incredible illness either themselves or in their families, had near death experiences, lost a close member of their family, and we have recently lost one of our cherished members. As I hear these stories and share communications with individuals in our CWFC family, I cannot help but reflect on what a unique organization CWFC truly is. The sense of community is like nothing I have seen before. Regardless of your professional role, there is an unspoken level of respect that CWFC members have with each other. Anyone that has had to reach out to another member for support knows what I am referring to. Whether it is for professional guidance, emotional support or just an ear to listen to our struggles, there is someone within the CWFC community that you can rely on and confide in.

Over this next year, I encourage you to reflect on the friendships, professional relationships, people that you consider like extended family, through the unspoken bonds you have made through the CWFC organi-

zation. Think about how one (or more) of the members has touched your life. Consider the fact that never once were they burdened by your request, instead they answered the call with honor because you are an important piece of the big picture. Think about actions you have personally taken to share your compassion, professionalism, and knowledge. Whether it is providing training to someone in need, sharing an e-mail with someone who is feeling hopeless, or sending well wishes when they experience moments of sorrow, every action you take as a CWFC member towards other members is noticed and appreciated.

I have personally made friends and personal bonds that I plan on keeping for a lifetime through this organization and I am excited for the opportunity to extend a warm welcome to new members and an excited welcome back to our members that are returning at conference this year. My hope is that this year will be a year of recognition. As I think of recognition, I remember something that Maya Angelou once wrote; "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." There is a lot of power in that statement. As you reflect, consider how members can be recognized for all of the greatness that you see in their actions. When the award nominations come out for this

year's conference, nominate someone who has done something that was a big deal to you. Make that person that always answers your call and religiously goes above and beyond the call of duty, just because that's who they are, feel exceptionally special. Let them know how much they mean to you and how much they have touched your life in such a special way. In addition, if that special person is not a yet CWFC member encourage them to join the organization and become part of our extended professional family. Sharing our passion for CWFC is an important element in the success of the organization and in continuing to expand our networking resources.

Thank you for being you, I am honored to know you and am grateful for the opportunity to be involved in CWFC with you all.

Bridget Convey
CWFC President



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

As the holidays approach, I hope that you and yours are doing well. As we all know, there are many changes coming our way, so information and training are becoming a valued commodity. I am working hard to bring you the most updated information at our 2014 Training Conference. With the help of the Conference Committee members, we are already touching base with, what we hope, will

be the best trainers we can find. As we cannot see all of the resources that are out there, we are asking our members to help us find presenters who can help us achieve our goal of the best trainings. If you know of a trainer, or a subject you would like to have explored, please contact me at tammy.frey@state.co.us. We would appreciate any ideas you have.

At this time we have contacted over 20 presenters of varied expertise to see if they will attend our Training Conference and bring us up to date on rules and procedures. We will continue to contact trainers in all subject areas.

Thank you, ahead of time, for your ideas and comments.

Tammy Frey

CWFC President-Elect

As a current CWFC member, you should have recently received a membership renewal form in order to continue your involvement with the Colorado Welfare Fraud Council.

We are always seeking new members and encourage you to spread the word about the benefits of being a member of CWFC! If you have any interested parties that want more information, please contact Shelley Poole at poolexsx1@gmail.com.

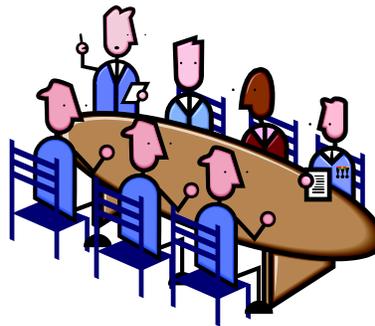
TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Colorado Welfare Fraud Council is comprised of many talented individuals who have a wealth of experience in the detection and prevention of welfare fraud and program eligibility. One of the purposes of CWFC is to provide training to our members.

Is your eligibility team in need of some training in detecting fraud through front-end detection techniques? Have

you hired a new investigator or have gained an investigative team? The board of CWFC is committed to your success!

Please contact the Training Committee Chair, Bridget Convey, at bridget.convey@state.co.us. The CWFC training committee will work to tailor a training suited for your needs.



DEAR INFORMER



Need help with a case? Seeking advice or answers from field experts in CWFC? We are here to help!

If you have a question related to a case or policy surrounding a case, please send an

email to Jenn Parrilli-Cole at jparrilli-cole@bouldercounty.org. We'll get answers from the board and membership of CWFC and post the answers in future editions of The Informer.

It's not too soon to be thinking about who to nominate for next year's CWFC awards!

Recognize those who truly represent the spirit and beliefs of the Colorado Welfare Fraud Council!

- *Ted Cole Memorial Award*
- *Outstanding Group/Individual of the Year*
- *IMT of the Year*
- *Investigator of the Year*

And many more!

USDA RELEASES NEW REPORT ON TRAFFICKING AND ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE INTEGRITY IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Release No.
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Contact:
FNS Office of Communications and Governmental Affairs (703) 305-2281

WASHINGTON, August 15, 2013 – Agriculture Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Kevin Concannon today released a report that examines the trafficking rate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and better pinpoints where the vast majority of SNAP trafficking occurs—smaller stores that typically offer minimal access to the healthier foods encouraged by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. In response, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin gathering public input on establishing stricter “depth of stock” requirements for SNAP retailers in order to discourage bad actors from entering and abusing the program. This move also supports USDA’s continuing efforts to improve SNAP recipients’ access to healthy foods.

The report indicates that the vast majority of trafficking – the illegal sale of SNAP benefits for cash or other ineligible items – occurs in smaller-sized retailers that typically

stock fewer healthy foods. Over the last five fiscal years, the number of retailers authorized to participate in SNAP has grown by over 40 percent; small- and medium-sized retailers account for the vast majority of that growth. The rate of trafficking in larger grocery stores and supermarkets—where 82 percent of all benefits were redeemed—remained low at less than 0.5 percent.

While the overall trafficking rate has remained relatively steady at approximately one cent on the dollar, the report attributes the change in the rate to 1.3 percent primarily to the growth in small- and medium-sized retailers authorized to accept SNAP that may not provide sufficient healthful offerings to recipients. These retailers accounted for 85 percent of all trafficking redemptions. This finding echoes a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that suggested minimal stocking requirements in SNAP may contribute to corrupt retailers entering the program.

“USDA has a zero tolerance policy on fraud, and we continue to strengthen our anti-fraud tactics to identify and exclude bad actors. More than any other factor, we know that the change in the trafficking rate is being driven

by the growth in the number of smaller retailers where trafficking occurs at ten times the rate of larger grocery stores and supermarkets,” said Concannon. “And while the vast majority of retailers and participants are honest, exploring enhanced retailer requirements reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that everyone plays by the rules.”

In order to begin the process of establishing stricter retailer stocking requirements, USDA will be publishing a Request for Information (RFI) in the Federal Register to solicit feedback from stakeholders and the public.

USDA today also finalized a rule that will provide states the option to require SNAP recipients to make contact with the state when there have been an excessive number of requests for EBT card replacements in a year. Requesting excessive replacement cards can indicate that a client is exchanging SNAP cards for cash or other ineligible items. The rule will provide states the opportunity to determine whether the request is legitimate, or requires further investigation.

“Eliminating waste, fraud and abuse is a shared responsibility between the federal government and the states that administer SNAP,” said

better safeguards the taxpayer investment in this critical nutrition program by providing states with additional tools to investigate potentially fraudulent behavior.”

SNAP continues to have one of the lowest fraud rates for Federal programs. Over the past several years, USDA has taken steps to improve SNAP oversight through its SNAP Stewardship Solutions Project. USDA has seen declines in the rate of trafficking from four percent down to about one percent of benefits over the last 15 years. While fraud is rare in SNAP, no amount is acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. USDA continues to crack down on individuals who violate the program and misuse taxpayer dollars by:

- **Supporting a Robust Investigation Process** that, so far this fiscal year, has led to sanctioning of 549 stores and permanent disqualification of 826 stores for trafficking in SNAP benefits or falsifying an application. In 2012, USDA reviewed more than 15,000 stores and permanently disqualified almost 1,400 for program violations, a 14 percent increase over the 1,215 disqualified permanently in FY 2011.

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USDA

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- Cracking Down on New Forms of Fraud** by requiring more frequent reviews of higher risk retailers, and expanding the definition of fraud to include so-called “water dumping” and online schemes to illegally sell benefits through social media sites like Facebook, Craigslist and Twitter.
 - Establishing Stiffer Penalties** including a proposed rule that allows USDA to not only permanently disqualify a retailer who traffics, but to assess a monetary penalty in addition to the disqualification, and a separate proposal that would authorize USDA to immediately suspend payments to retailers suspected of flagrant trafficking violations while the retailer is under investigation.
 - Strengthening State Partnerships** through data-sharing agreements to help states more aggressively target suspicious recipient activity and State Law Enforcement Bureau agreements, including a recently announced partnership with Massachusetts, that expands the power of states to investigate retailer fraud.
 - Improving Program Administration** including ensuring that only eligible individuals participate and that recipients receive the correct amount of benefits with a record-high payment accuracy rate of 96.58 percent.
- The SNAP Stewardship Solutions Project is part of the Obama Administration's ongoing Campaign to Cut Waste designed to fight fraud, abuse and misuse in federal programs. For more information about USDA efforts to combat fraud, visit the Stop SNAP fraud website at www.fns.usda.gov/snap/fraud.htm.
- SNAP is the nation's first line of defense against hunger and is a vital supplement to the monthly food budget of millions low-income individuals. Nearly half of SNAP participants are children and more than 40 percent of recipients live in households with earnings.
- USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) oversees the



administration of 15 nutrition assistance programs, including the Summer Food Service Program and other child nutrition programs, that touch the lives of one in four Americans over the course of a year. These programs work in concert to form a national safety net against hunger. Visit www.fns.usda.gov for information about FNS and nutrition assistance programs.

COLORADO WELFARE FRAUD COUNCIL

PO Box 890
Canon City, CO 81215
www.cwfc.us

The mission of CWFC is to uphold the integrity and spirit of public assistance programs' rules and regulations as they relate to fraud.

CWFC Memberships for 2014 are now being accepted

The Colorado Welfare Fraud Council has been in existence since 1984 and is still going strong! Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the officers, board and general membership over the years, the Council has been able to maintain a strong presence in human services agencies throughout the state. There are currently over 140 members of CWFC and we want to add to that number for 2014! I encourage you to share information about our organization with others and help the Membership Committee increase our numbers. The annual dues remain an affordable \$20.00 per year.

CWFC memberships cover the year from January 1st through December 31st. The membership affords you access to the CWFC newsletter, *The Informer*, and the website www.cwfc.us. In addition, you'll have access to the Council's resources to support you in maintaining program integrity and the fight against welfare fraud.

Please be sure to spread the word about CWFC and all of the good work our members do every day to detect, investigate and prosecute those guilty of welfare fraud!

Sincerely,

Shawn Southard-Nielsen

Vice-President and Membership Committee Chair, CWFC, 2013-2014

Please print legibly and complete membership form in its entirety

2014 CWFC Membership Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Agency: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

New Member Returning Member Renewal Change of Contact Information Only

Please make checks payable to CWFC and mail with this completed **membership form to:**

CWFC, P.O. Box 890, Canon City, CO 81215

****Please report any changes to your contact information as soon as possible****