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The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), in partnership with Neighborhood House is raising awareness about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and reaching high-need, but low-participating Minnesotans in the Hmong and Latino communities.

With a \$20,000 grant from DHS, Neighborhood House has hired a Spanish-speaking family worker, capable of enrolling an additional 100 families into SNAP and other federal food support programs this year.

"Many Hmong and Spanish-speaking people with low incomes do not take advantage of SNAP, and we want to change that," said Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. "This grant will allow our partners to help more Minnesotans put healthy food on their tables."

The Neighborhood House family worker will connect directly with Spanish-speaking, low-income families in the St. Paul area who may qualify for various federal food support program benefits, and will be responsible for:

- Assessing, navigating and translating benefit applications
- Following up with families to ensure they understand the benefit process
- Attending community events, including National Night Out, various festival and area fairs, to reach the public.

"We are grateful to the Department of Human Services for funding Neighborhood House with a grant to employ a Spanish-speaking worker, enabling us to better serve our Latino communities," said President of Neighborhood House Armando Camacho. "Our mission is to help people, families and organizations develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to thrive in diverse communities."

Recently, Neighborhood House received a grant from Hunger-Free Minnesota to hire a full-time family worker focusing on reaching the Hmong community to help people enroll in food subsidy programs they may qualify for, such as SNAP. With the help of DHS funds, both the Hmong and Latino communities of Minnesota will have more opportunities to diminish food insecurity.

"The Hunger-Free Minnesota Community Close-Up grant to Neighborhood House is an excellent example of how organizations can use meal gap data to design customized strategies," said Ellie Lucas, chief campaign officer for Hunger-Free Minnesota. "They identified

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populations and areas with high food insecurity and low utilization of SNAP benefits. They will hire a multi-lingual case worker to enroll new families in these targeted neighborhoods and over the course of one year add hundreds of thousands of new meals to the system."

The \$20,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services is funded through the state's portion of a federal bonus for increasing SNAP access for eligible residents. The state's portion – 25 percent of the \$1.2 million bonus – will go toward four initiatives to put healthy food on the table for low-income Minnesotans: the Summer Backpack Program, which provides backpacks filled with healthy food and nutritional information to children age 18 and younger; a project to expand mobile food shelf capacity; a grocery store initiative to give SNAP participants coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables; and this outreach initiative. The remaining 75 percent of the federal bonus went to counties for their work with SNAP recipients.

"These initiatives are not only good for the 500,000 Minnesotans who participate in SNAP but for our economy as well," said Jesson. "For every dollar in SNAP benefits spent, \$1.73 in economic activity is generated."

*More information about SNAP is available on the department's website*