



March 16, 2011

RE: SB 1145

Our food bank is at the grassroots level and offers assistance to an average of 368 families each week. As we provide for our families, many have expressed concern and frustration about the application process for SNAP assistance. These concerns and frustrations relate to the application, the lack of access to a DSS office, the inability to contact DSS employees, and the errors made in the processing of the application. All of these elevate the pressure which the applicants confront as they seek the help they need.

The SNAP application is a daunting and cumbersome document, which complicates the efficient processing of the information. Streamlining this document and establishing a centralized data base system would eliminate redundancy and expedite the time needed to complete the process and receive the assistance. Additionally, access to a DSS representative in Enfield is restricted to a one-day session conducted at the Community Healthcare Center each week. If an applicant cannot schedule an appointment, the other choices are DSS offices in Manchester or Hartford. Many of our families have expressed frustration about visiting either of these offices because they often wait for hours, cannot meet with a representative after a long wait, or experience negative reactions from some employees. Additionally, our families must utilize gas money to travel, and this reduces the resources needed in order to meet basic needs. A satellite DSS office in Enfield would afford families in this area a reasonable option for acquiring assistance, would reduce the applicant load in Manchester and Hartford, and would minimize long waiting periods and negative reactions from overburdened employees. Furthermore, many families have reported errors in the processing of the applications, the loss of the materials, and the inability to have errors or lost applications corrected. In some cases, the corrections took weeks to complete. The entire system needs modification in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Families who apply for SNAP assistance often seek this as a measure of last resort. They need financial assistance in order to meet the needs of their families. Being in this circumstance is difficult, demeaning, and frustrating. The present SNAP process often further complicates the lives of those who are in the greatest need. This needs immediate attention.

Sincerely,

*Roger C. LeBlanc*

Roger C. LeBlanc, President  
Enfield Food Shelf – Board of Directors