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## **City Garner's Federal Food Stamp Grant Of Nearly \$1 Million**

**QUEENS** - City officials today accepted nearly a million dollars in a US Department of Agriculture grant aimed at making Food Stamp assistance available to even more than the record number of New Yorkers helped by the program under the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

The grant of \$945,000 was accepted by First Deputy Commissioner Patricia M. Smith, of the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA/DSS) along with Joel Berg, Executive Director of the NY City Coalition Against Hunger and Richard Murphy, Executive Director of FoodChange, the community-based organizations who partnered with HRA/DSS in winning the competitive grant. Robert Doar, Commissioner of the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, also attended.

In commenting on the City's grant award HRA/DSS Administrator/Commissioner Verna Eggleston said, "This is truly a partnership. The City, State and Federal governments are working with dedicated private groups like FoodChange and the NYC Coalition Against Hunger. That is how government is supposed to work."

In presenting the grant at HRA's Queens Food Stamp Center in Long Island City, USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Eric Bost said The City of New York has formed partnerships with FoodChange and the New York City Coalition Against Hunger to improve the City's Food Stamp centers, and enlist soup kitchens and food pantries as places where people can get help applying for food stamps.

This is one of six grants totaling \$5 million recently awarded to help increase access to USDA's Food Stamp Program for low-income households. The six grantees were selected from more than 31 proposals submitted by states, nonprofit groups and other organizations. The grants, authorized by the 2002 federal Farm Bill, are designed to help simplify food stamp application and eligibility systems.

The grant to New York City is designed to modernize the food stamp application process and allow community groups to easily submit applications for people they serve. Just under 1.1 million people receive Food Stamps in New York City today, an increase of some 36 percent since Mayor Bloomberg took office.

Nationally, the Food Stamp Program provides support to needy households and to those making the transition to self-sufficiency. The program serves as the first line of defense against hunger, with almost 25 million individuals in over 11 million households currently participating in the program. The program enables low-income families to buy nutritious food with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards.