

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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August 22, 2007

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Philip L. Browning, Director

SUBJECT: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: MOTION ON DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO IDENTIFY, PROSECUTE AND PREVENT FOOD STAMP TRAFFICKING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY (BOARD ORDER #61-A-DECEMBER 12, 2006)

This is to provide an update to our letter to your Board on May 16, in response to the above motion directing DPSS, in consultation with the District Attorney (DA) and the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (CCJCC), to report on the development of a comprehensive program to identify, prosecute and prevent Food Stamp trafficking in Los Angeles County.

- After receiving training from the Office of the Inspector General/Food and Nutrition Service (OIG/FNS) staff on critical areas in the investigation of Food Stamp trafficking, the District Attorney Recipient Welfare Fraud Unit entered into negotiations with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for a Memorandum of Understanding for obtaining Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to be used in the investigation of Food Stamp trafficking.
- Following completion of these investigations, DPSS and the DA will meet to assess funding needs and sources for continued investigation of referrals from the OIG/FNS.

Additionally DPSS is implementing the following activities identified by DPSS and the DA which focus on the prevention of Food Stamp trafficking. The following is an update on these activities:

- DPSS is developing posters and flyers advising applicants and participants of the consequences and penalties for fraud, including selling their Food Stamp benefits and how to report suspected Food Stamp trafficking by both vendors and recipients. The posters and flyers will be available for distribution by November 1, 2007.

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- DPSS procedures have been developed for implementing an Administrative Disqualification Hearing process in Los Angeles County, to allow a penalty to be imposed on participants when the Food Stamp loss falls below the DA's minimum loss for prosecution in criminal court. The target implementation date is December 31, 2007.

We are hopeful that the collaborative efforts outlined above will result in a reduction of Food Stamp trafficking in Los Angeles County. We will provide your Board with an update in 90 days following completion and assessment of the DA Investigation Unit's Food Stamp Trafficking pilot.

PLB:mh

c: Chief Executive Officer
Deputy CEO
District Attorney
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors