

# Chapter One: California's CalFresh Outreach Program



The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) implements the CalFresh Outreach efforts throughout the state. They do this through an interagency agreement with the *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and in partnership with several prime contractors and more than 100 community-based nonprofit organization sub-contractors.

SNAP/CalFresh Outreach is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiative. USDA provides reimbursement funds that allow states to enhance their outreach and increase program enrollment.<sup>1</sup>

CalFresh is administered by each county in California. All outreach efforts benefit from

an active partnership with county CalFresh offices, which process CalFresh applications and determine eligibility. Each of California's 58 counties accepts online applications.<sup>2</sup>

## History of CalFresh Outreach

SNAP/Food Stamps/CalFresh was established in its modern form by the Food Stamp Reform Act of 1977. Its purpose was to act as a safety net against hunger for Americans with low incomes. In the latter half of the 1980s, the program was expanded due to severe domestic hunger. Outreach, however, became an optional activity for the states with the passage of the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 and the Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act in 1990.<sup>3</sup>

In 2003, CDSS and CDPH collaborated with the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) to develop the first California Food Stamp Access Improvement Plan. The plan has been updated annually and, as of October 1, 2012, it includes partnerships with many key organizations.<sup>4</sup> The plan also includes a partnership with the Public Health Institute (PHI) for overall plan development and evaluation, and Runyon Saltzman & Einhorn (RS&E) for statewide media, advertising and public relations. In 2011, the plan was renamed the CalFresh Outreach Plan.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, *State Outreach Plan Guidance*, updated April 2012. Accessed September 8, 2012, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/guidance/stateplan.htm>

<sup>2</sup> *Your Online Resource for California Benefits Simplified*. Accessed September 8, 2012, <http://www.benefitscal.org/> and <http://beneficioscal.org>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, *SNAP Legislation*. Accessed September 9, 2012, [http://origin.www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rules/Legislation/history/PL\\_101-624.htm](http://origin.www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rules/Legislation/history/PL_101-624.htm)

<sup>4</sup> California Association of Food Banks, Catholic Charities of California (CCC), The California State University Chico Research Foundation (CRF), Redwood Community Health Coalition (RCHC), Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People (SYVPHP), Clinica Sierra Vista (CSV), and INFO Line of San Diego County, dba 211 San Diego.

## Need

In the report *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011*, the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) stated that 14.9 percent of American households had difficulty “at some time during the year providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources.” In California, this food insecurity rate reached 16.96 percent.<sup>5</sup>

A different study looked at Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), which include central cities plus the surrounding counties with strong economic and social ties to the central cities. The study reported that in the Bakersfield, Fresno and Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario MSAs, the food insecurity rate was more than 23 percent.<sup>6</sup>

According to the USDA ERS’ *The Food Assistance Landscape FFY 2011 Annual Report*, published in March 2012, SNAP accounted for 73 percent of all federal food and nutrition spending in fiscal year 2011. Benefits per person averaged \$134 per month nationally. Federal spending for the program was over \$75 billion.<sup>7</sup> In California the average benefit amount was \$147 per month.<sup>8</sup>

In fiscal year 2011, almost 45 million people in the United States, or about one in seven, participated in SNAP each month. This is the largest number ever, and marks an increase of 11 percent from the previous year.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Coleman-Jensen, Alisha, Mark Nord, Margaret Andrews, and Steven Carlson, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011*. ERR-141, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, September 2012. Accessed September 9, 2012, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR125/>

<sup>6</sup> FRAC *Food Hardships in America 2011*, updated February 2012. Accessed September 9, 2012, [http://frac.org/pdf/food\\_hardship\\_2011\\_report.pdf](http://frac.org/pdf/food_hardship_2011_report.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Oliveira, Victor, *The Food Assistance Landscape*. EIB-93, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, March 2012. Accessed September 9, 2012, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib93/>

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Average Monthly Benefit Per Person*, updated August 30, 2012. Accessed September 9, 2012, [http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/18SNAPavg\\$PP.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/18SNAPavg$PP.htm)

Economists estimate that every \$1 in CalFresh benefits generates \$1.79 in local economic activity.<sup>9</sup> When CalFresh funds are allocated, they are generally spent in the same month and act as a substantial stimulus to local economies.

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## Participation Rate

A 2012 USDA report estimated that nationally only 72 percent of eligible people participated in SNAP in 2009. California’s participation rate was estimated at 53 percent. The estimated participation rate for those working but still eligible was 60 percent nationally and 36 percent for California. California’s participation rate ranks last among all the states.<sup>10</sup> USDA’s most recent participation figures (June 2012) show California as having over 4 million participants and more than any other state.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Hanson, Kenneth, *The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP*. ERR-103 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Econ. Res. Serv. October 2010. Accessed March 9, 2012, [http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err103.aspx#\\_UfHHm5WrepU](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err103.aspx#_UfHHm5WrepU)

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, *Reaching Those in Need*, December 2011. Accessed September 8, 2012, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/snap/FILES/Participation/Reaching2009.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Number of Persons Participating,” updated August 2012. Accessed September 9, 2012, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/29SNAPcurrPP.htm>

For participation estimates in your county see the Program Access Index of California Food Policy Advocates' Measuring County CalFresh Performance in 2010.<sup>12</sup>

### Funding Process and Mechanism

CalFresh Outreach is a public/private partnership. The Prime Contractors, and their community-based organization (CBO) subcontractors, secure outreach funds from non-profit organizations to conduct outreach. This process is referred to as State Share.

For all of the outreach efforts included in the CalFresh Outreach Plan, USDA provides 100 percent reimbursement of documented and allowable costs.

CDPH retains a percentage of the reimbursement to administer the CalFresh Outreach Plan, maintain the statewide hotline, and develop materials, mass media, and other training and outreach program enhancements.

Prime Contractors receive a percentage of the reimbursement to manage their subcontractors. Subcontractors receive the remaining reimbursement to support CalFresh Outreach.

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### Roles and Responsibilities

**USDA** – Provides federal reimbursement matching funds and Plan approval.

**CDSS** – Provides oversight of the CalFresh Outreach Plan and is the state agency responsible for all federal SNAP funding.

**CDPH** – Implements aspects of the CalFresh Outreach Plan and reports to CDSS.

**County CalFresh Offices** – Responsible for determining CalFresh eligibility, CalFresh program administration and outreach, including partnering with community-based organizations.

<sup>12</sup> Shimada, T., *Measuring County CalFresh Performance in 2012*, California Food Policy Advocates, updated February 2012. Accessed September 9, 2012, <http://cfpa.net/CalFresh/CFPAPublications/PAL-FullReport-2012.pdf>



## Accomplishments

In FFY 2011, CalFresh Outreach partners secured an estimated \$141.4 million in annual CalFresh benefits to California. They did this by prescreening 475,000 individuals, assisting an estimated 39,000 households with their applications, and securing enrollment of an estimated 35,000 new CalFresh households, or approximately 80,000 individuals.

To achieve this level of success, a great deal of phone work, community partnering, and media activity took place. Refer to the CalFresh Annual report, available from CDSS, for more detailed information.

## Future Plans

The CalFresh Outreach Plan will continue with a new funding cycle beginning October 1, 2013.

**Funded CBO/Partners** – Provide State Share and carry out direct outreach services as described in the Scope of Work (SOW); report to Prime Contractors. Prime Contractors report to CDSS.

**Unfunded Partners** – Promote CalFresh by distributing outreach materials to their clients and hosting CalFresh outreach workers at their sites; work with funded CBOs.