



# NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Social Services

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## SCHWARZENEGGER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS UNVEIL NEW NAME FOR FOOD STAMPS IN CALIFORNIA – “CalFresh”

LONG BEACH– Officials from the Schwarzenegger Administration today unveiled a new name for the state’s Food Stamp Program -- CalFresh -- at an event sponsored by First Lady Maria Shriver to provide free health care, social services and financial assistance for low-income women in California.

“CalFresh encourages participants to enjoy a variety of nutritious and healthy foods, and to live healthy lifestyles,” said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. “One of my highest priorities is the health and well-being of our children and all Californians, and access to healthy food options is a great beginning to achieving this. My Administration is committed to encouraging all eligible Californians to take part in this program and take advantage of these healthy benefits.”

“We’re pleased to make this change to modernize California’s nutrition assistance program,” said Kim Belshé, Secretary of the Health and Human Services Agency, who appeared with the Governor and Maria Shriver at the First Lady’s Modern House Call for Women. “We believe the new logo and slogan better captures our Californian vision -- one that promotes good nutrition for better living and better overall health.”

The CalFresh logo is designed to capture the essence of our great state and its rich tradition as a world leader in agribusiness. In the logo, “CalFresh” is joined by a collection of fruits and vegetables which represent the high quality of healthy, delicious produce found here in California. The words “Better Food for Better Living” encourage program recipients to eat a healthy diet.

The CalFresh image is intended to increase participation in the state’s food assistance program to take maximum advantage of every available source of federal funding for our safety net programs. The influx of federal benefit dollars not only provides critical nutritional assistance to California’s neediest citizens, but also directly benefits the state’s overall economy. According to research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), every \$1 of additional federal food stamp benefits results in \$1.84 of additional local economic activity.

“I am so thrilled that The Modern House Call for Women served as the platform to kick-off the CalFresh rebranding effort for the Food Stamp Program,” Maria Shriver

said. "As we have traveled up and down the state raising awareness of this program through WE Connect, I have seen first-hand the extraordinary impact that this program has in the lives of families. This rebranding campaign will go a long way in helping to erase the unfortunate stigma associated with this program and encourage families to seek CalFresh as a resource for putting healthy meals on their table."

John Wagner, Director of the California Department of Social Services, said the rebranding marks an historic day for the state.

"We are giving the Food Stamp program a new name which better captures California's way of life and the fresh food we all enjoy in this state," said Director John Wagner. "We believe the new logo will promote the importance of healthy eating and ensure all Californians have the opportunity to provide nutritious and healthy options for their families."

The announcement comes following the enactment of Assembly Bill (AB) 433 (Beall), signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2008. The law requires the California Department of Social Services to propose a new name for the Food Stamp Program and convene a diverse group of stakeholders to review it. Under that law, the name change is needed for a variety of reasons: 1) the state's nutrition assistance program is no longer delivered by stamps; 2) the program supports healthy living; 3) it is important to agriculture in California; and 4) it is better viewed as a health and nutrition program rather than a welfare program.

While Food Stamps were once provided to Californians in coupon form, the state began delivering nutrition assistance benefits via EBT cards (similar to ATM cards) in some counties in 1996. In April 2005, EBT was fully implemented in all 58 counties in California. More than three million low-income Californians receive nutrition assistance benefits in any given month.

The CDSS worked in partnership with the California Endowment, which provided \$150,000 for development of the new name, drawing upon the real-life experiences and expectations of those currently served or potentially eligible for the program. The logo was tested with a wide variety of focus groups which included a strong representation of low income individuals. Printing and distribution of the new CalFresh brochures in English and Spanish were paid for with \$5,000 in existing federal funds provided for Food Stamp, or CalFresh outreach. Going forward, CDSS will increase public awareness of the name change to CalFresh without expending additional funds by including it in existing federal outreach efforts and funding. Federal outreach funds amount to \$250,000 a year for promotional materials in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Groups involved in the state's effort to develop a new name included county Food Stamp program representatives, the County Welfare Directors Association, California Food Policy Advocates, the California Association of Food Banks, the First Lady's Office and the California Department of Public Health, among others.

Ultimately, CalFresh was chosen because it represents a healthy lifestyle. Changing the name and image of the Food Stamp Program also aligns directly with the goals, objectives, and strategies for Governor Schwarzenegger's focus on healthy eating and obesity prevention, and the "We Connect California" campaign to help family's access government assistance programs.

CalFresh replaces the name of the Food Stamp Program in California that has been in use for more than 40 years. The modern Food Stamp Program began in the early 1960s as a result of a national pilot program established under President John F. Kennedy. The first county to pilot the program in California was Humboldt.

The move to change the name of the California Food Stamp Program follows a change at the federal level in 2008 when the name of the federal Food Stamp Program to SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. To date, 17 other states have changed the name of their nutrition assistance programs.

With the Department's announcement Saturday, the name change takes effect immediately.

For more information on CalFresh, please visit the CDSS' Web site:  
[www.calfresh.ca.gov](http://www.calfresh.ca.gov)

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