

Modernizing CalFresh: Improving Program Performance, Processes & Participation

Los Angeles County, Department of Public Social Services
CalFresh Nutrition Program Section

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Sacramento, CA

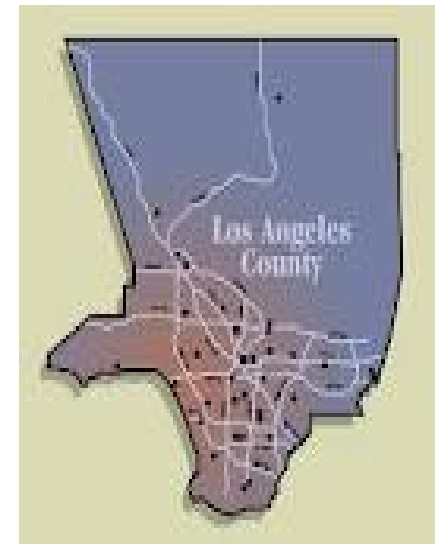
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CalFresh in Los Angeles County Overview

- There are currently 505,628 approved CalFresh cases in Los Angeles County
- 1,078,877 individuals are being aided
- Expenditure is \$166.71 million

* Based on data from June 2012



CalFresh Outreach Campaign

- The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) implemented a collaborative Countywide CalFresh Outreach Campaign in July 2005.
- The purpose of this Campaign is to reduce food insecurity and hunger by increasing CalFresh participation in Los Angeles County.
- Included in the Campaign are the Following:
 1. CalFresh Awareness Month
 2. Public Charge Forums
 3. Farmers Markets
 4. Grocery Stores

CalFresh Awareness Month

- In May 2011, DPSS launched its first Countywide CalFresh Awareness Month Campaign.
- This year, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors proclaimed May 2012 as CalFresh Awareness Month.



CalFresh Awareness Month

- The proclamation included an announcement that DPSS, in collaboration with a network of 30 partnering organizations, would deploy a variety of strategies to heighten public awareness on CalFresh, in an effort to increase access and participation to CalFresh.
- Throughout May, there were a series of community outreach and media events designed to increase awareness of the new CalFresh name, and encourage eligible individuals and families to apply.

CalFresh Awareness Month

- **The events of the Campaign included:**
- A four-month, federally funded radio campaign to re-brand the former Food Stamp Program to the CalFresh Program.
- Promotion of the “Your Benefits Now” (YBN) On-Line Application System, to provide Los Angeles residents with an alternative and convenient method for applying for CalFresh benefits any time and any place.
- Strategic deployment of the DPSS Health and Nutrition Mobile Unit to farmers’ markets, grocery stores, local schools, work source centers, homeless centers, and other non-traditional locations throughout Los Angeles County.

CalFresh Awareness Month

- Series of CalFresh outreach events staffed by DPSS staff and partnering agencies at local food banks, churches, senior centers, and health centers.
- CalFresh Outreach Workers were at twelve Farmers' Markets throughout the month providing CalFresh Program information and accepting applications.
- Media Event- Television, Radio, Telephone and Newspaper Interviews, including, Vida Nueva which is published by the Catholic Archdiocese and reaches 100,000 readers and Asian Journal, a Filipino-American community newspaper.



CalFresh Awareness Month

- A Letter was sent from the Chief Executive's office to all 88 cities in Los Angeles County, encouraging them to urge their employees and residents to share CalFresh Program information with those who need it most.
- DPSS Outreach Workers conducted outreach at more than 307 sites, the Health and Nutrition Mobile Unit was deployed to 26 community events, and our partners conducted CalFresh Outreach at 38 events.



Public Charge Forums

- “Public Charge” is one of the leading reasons why immigrants who are in need and may be eligible for CalFresh food assistance for themselves or their children are hesitant to apply.
- The goals of Public Charge Forums are to explain this issue in more detail, dispel myths, and reinforce the fact that CalFresh is not a “public cash assistance program,” but rather a supplementary, nutrition-based food assistance program.

Public Charge Forums

- A Public Charge Press Forum in a farmers' market setting, was conducted in May during CalFresh Awareness Month.
- Keynote speakers from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, United States Department of Agriculture –Food and Nutrition Service, California Department of Social Services, Korean, Community Center and DPSS participated in the forum.
- Media members from Hispanic, Korean, and Asian broadcasting networks covered the event.



Farmers Markets

- EBT cards are now accepted at Farmers' Markets so that more participants have access to fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Partnerships with agencies to educate CalFresh participants on the use of EBT cards at Farmer's Markets, include: The Ecology Center and Roots of Change.



Grocery Stores

- Grocery stores provide an exceptional location for Outreach. Outreach is often conducted at participating grocery stores including: Ralph's, Vons, Superior, Island Pacific and Northgate.

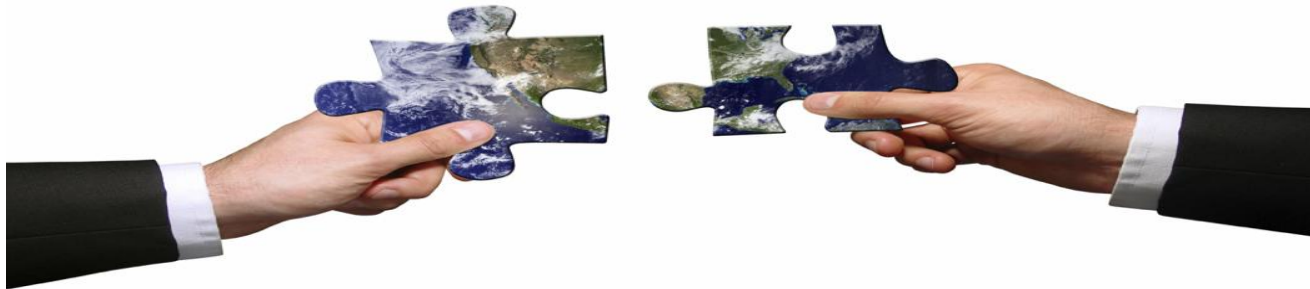


Results of CalFresh Awareness Month

- The CalFresh Awareness Month Campaign resulted in a significant increase in the number of CalFresh applications/inquiries submitted in May.
- YBN had over a 21% increase in CalFresh applications from April 2012.
- The Health and Nutrition Mobile Office took 323 CalFresh applications in the month of May 2012. This was an increase of 142%, from April 2012.
- The Customer Service Center mailed out 2,322 CalFresh applications. This was an increase of over 211%, from April 2012.
- The number of CalFresh inquiries increased by 241%, from April 2012.
- Total number of applications received for the month of May was 59,600 compared to 52,209 in April.

Conclusion

- DPSS has learned many valuable lessons from the Campaign.
- The most valuable lesson learned was that it is very crucial for DPSS to continue to work collaboratively with external partners to assemble a strong team of complementary talents: socially fluent networkers, logistical wizards and big thinkers to reach low-income Los Angeles County residents that are in need of CalFresh benefits.



Questions?

