Reducing hunger in California for seniors and people with disabilities.

**SUMMARY**

For the first time ever in California, hundreds of thousands of seniors and people with disabilities who receive SSI benefits will also be able to apply for CalFresh food benefits beginning June 1, 2019. This historic change, once successfully implemented, will increase nutrition and health and reduce hunger and poverty among California’s seniors and people with disabilities. California will finally join the rest of the nation in providing CalFresh food benefits to low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

The CalFresh food program is the State’s number one defense against hunger and malnutrition. Nearly 4 million people a month – half of them children – receive an average of $130 on a debit card to purchase food at grocery stores and farmers’ markets. Employment and training services and healthy living programs are also available. No other social service program lifts more people out of poverty than CalFresh.

With this change, eligible seniors and people with disabilities will be able to receive a monthly CalFresh food benefit to help meet their basic needs. Some who are part of households already receiving CalFresh food benefits may receive new state funded Supplemental Nutrition Benefits or Transitional Nutrition Benefits. There is no change or reduction to SSI/SSP. CAPI recipients will receive a $10 per person grant increase. For more background information, visit http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFresh/Supplemental-Security-Income.

**GOALS**

- Enroll an estimated 369,000 newly eligible CalFresh households of all SSI recipients.
- Enroll SSI recipients who are excluded members of 125,100 current CalFresh households and, in order to mitigate any loss of CalFresh benefits, provide Supplemental Nutrition Benefits (SNB) and Transitional Nutrition Benefits (TNB) as eligible.
- Provide equal access to all Californians.
- Preserve accuracy and timeliness standards.
- Integrate healthy living (nutrition education) and employment and training services as appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CalFresh SSI Population</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total CalFresh Recipients (Apr 2018)</td>
<td>4,063,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CA SSI Recipients (Apr 2018)</td>
<td>1,284,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Newly Eligible HH</td>
<td>369,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CF Households Advantaged</td>
<td>44,800 (estimated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CF Households Disadvantaged</td>
<td>73,200 (estimated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CF Households Discontinued</td>
<td>7,100 (estimated)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSI BENEFIT TYPE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSI RECIPIENT AGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior: 60+</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult: 18-59</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child: 0-17</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOUR EMERGING STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. **Engage and Empower Clients**
   - Client stakeholders in Outreach and Customer Experience Advisory Groups
   - Client stories
   - Client journey mapping
   - Client Data Technical Group

2. **Target Outreach for Awareness and Assistance**
   - Comprehensive partner network for outreach/in-reach
   - Key materials and messaging
   - Application assisters serving seniors and people with disabilities
   - Application assistance tools: on-line, in-person, by phone

3. **Streamline Customer Experience at Initial Application and Beyond**
   - “Framework of Solutions” for application, interview, verification, communication, and report/recertification
   - County technical assistance, peer trainings, and tools
   - Statewide service enhancement

4. **Develop Policy, Automation, and Training Foundation**
   - Policy guidance, notices and forms
   - SAWS Automation Technical Group
   - USDA and SSA partnerships
   - Policy training series

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**Joe's Story**

My name is Joe, and I am a senior with mobility issues. I live alone in a senior living community, which is a heavy financial burden. I have health concerns and have trouble sleeping. I can only walk about two blocks or so before needing to use my mobility scooter to get around. The nearest grocery store is less than a mile away and the nearest county office is about two miles away. I have a cell phone and receive mail, but lack computer access. In addition to these challenges, I also have stressful family connections and a small support network. I find myself isolated from services that could possibly help me.

**Provided by Russell Rawlings**

Resources for Independent Living

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**PROGRESS SUMMER 2018**

- CalFresh Reversing SSI Cash-Out All Stakeholder Implementation **Kick-Off Meeting** held on July 16.
- **Policy guidance** issued for implementation and automation of the reversal of SSI cash-out, the Supplemental Nutrition Benefit (SNB) Program, and the Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) Program.
  - All County Letter (ACL) 18-90, ACL 18-91, ACL 18-92
  - Policy guidance issued implementing the SNB and TNB Program **notices** (ACL 18-107 & ACL 18-108). On track to issue SNB and TNB Program notices in **17 threshold languages** within the month of September.
- The first **CalFresh/SSI Outreach Advisory Group** meeting was held on August 17. The CDSS team to inform outreach plan, with initial client data and stories shared.
- The first **CalFresh/SSI Customer Experience Advisory Group** meeting was held on August 14 and second on September 6. The CDSS team and stakeholders began the process of identifying opportunities, barriers, and potential solutions to streamline customer experience by journey (e.g. in-person vs. telephone application; new or continuing CalFresh client).
- The **SAWS Automation Technical Group** is meeting regularly to develop an understanding of baseline policy and identify areas for further clarification and/or guidance.
- Notice to and consultation with our Federal partners **USDA** and **SSA**.
Mary’s Story

My name is Mary and I live with my partner. I have a permanent disability and my only income is from SSI. My partner also has a disability, but their SSI case has been pending for a long time. Their only income is CalFresh, which is mostly spent on canned foods and breads. I live in a home that goes unheated; I don’t even have a stove. To say the least, my personal health has not been the greatest and I am having difficulty managing my medical conditions, like my diabetes. I also rely heavily on my community just to survive, from getting rides from neighbors to receiving food from a nearby food pantry. Despite all of this, I do my best to give back and be generous in my community.

Provided by Carly Finkle
Policy & Advocacy Manager
Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

TIMELINE

Fall 2018
- Client data further analyzed and shared
- Potential outreach partners, assisters, and materials and messaging expertise identified
- Customer experience “Framework of Solutions” developed
- CDSS/SSA partnership developed
- CDSS Tribal Consultation conducted
- Implementation date confirmed

Winter 2018
- Initial outreach/in-reach partner convenings held
- Outreach materials and messages developed
- County technical assistance, peer training, tools developed
- Statewide service enhancements determined

Spring 2019
- Policy training series and additional policy guidance issued
- Administration, automation, and other implementation funding provided

Summer 2019
- Outreach roll-out via partner network and application assisters with targeted messages and materials and enhanced assister tools
- County readiness planning, training, and testing for implementation conducted
- State readiness plan produced

IMPORTANT DATES

All Stakeholder Reversing SSI Cash-Out Implementation Meeting
- Date: Wednesday, November 14, 2018, from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM
- Location: CDSS Headquarters | 744 P Street, Sacramento CA
- Webinar and In-Person Attendance Options Available

Questions: CalFreshSSI@dss.ca.gov