

February 22, 2017

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER (ACWDL)

FROM: TODD BLAND
Chief Deputy Director

SUBJECT: **CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH IN MAY**

May is CalFresh Awareness Month and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is encouraging counties to join in the celebration. As the largest Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the nation, California is proud to play a critical role in reducing hunger and improving health by providing nutrition assistance to low income households through the CalFresh Program. I hope all counties will join me in emphasizing the beneficial impact of CalFresh by hosting a CalFresh Awareness Month in your county.

This year CDSS is encouraging counties to focus CalFresh Awareness Month activities on alleviating childhood hunger and enrolling eligible families in CalFresh through partnerships with the Women, Infants, and Children program, school meals, First 5, and Medi-Cal. These partnerships are the critical foundation in developing coordinated plans to connect children to all available nutrition and medical services. We are also encouraging counties to continue to increase overall program participation by supporting public and private partnerships that work together to reduce food insecurity in our state.

Together we can increase the number of families that receive assistance to purchase the food they need and improve the health and wellbeing of children. I encourage all counties to work with their local community-based organizations, including food banks, faith-based organizations, schools, and health clinics, to promote and enroll families in CalFresh. For information on agencies in your community that provide CalFresh Outreach application assistance please visit the CalFresh Outreach website at:

http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calfreshoutreach/res/9_AttachmentC_by%20County.pdf

This year we are highlighting county efforts by providing a calendar that lists events counties are planning as part of CalFresh Awareness Month. Please email a list of CalFresh events in your county to the CalFresh Outreach access inbox at CalFreshAccess@DSS.ca.gov so we may add these to our statewide event calendar. Thank you in advance for your proactive efforts to address hunger and food insecurity through collaboration with other agencies for the betterment of all of California. If you would like to learn more about opportunities to replicate and build upon the CalFresh Awareness Month efforts undertaken by other counties, or about state CalFresh Outreach efforts, please contact Jeff Lasiter, Manager, CalFresh Outreach Unit at (916) 651-5616.