CALFRESH UPDATE FOR Senate Budget No. 3 on Health and Human Services

April 30, 2015
CalFresh In A Nutshell

- CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps) is an entitlement program that provides monthly benefits to assist low-income households in purchasing the food they need to maintain adequate nutritional levels.

- In general, these benefits are for any food or food product intended for human consumption.

- Benefits may not be used for items such as alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, or paper products.

- National eligibility standards and benefit levels are set by Congress and administered by the United States Department of Agriculture.

- The program is called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at the federal level.

- CalFresh benefits are issued through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. By using the EBT card, cardholders can access food benefits at point-of-sale (POS) terminals of retailers authorized by USDA to accept CalFresh benefits.
CalFresh Participation

- In the past few years CalFresh has seen significant increases in the number of people receiving benefits.

- Today, CalFresh serves over 2 million households representing over 4.4 million persons with an annual benefit amount of over $7.4 billion dollars.

- Based on Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2012 federal data (the latest available), California’s participation rate was 63 percent.

- California’s participation rate grew 8 percentage points from 2011. The national average increased to 83 percent, an increase of 5 percentage points from the prior year.

- California’s caseload is rising faster than the nation as a whole. Since 2012, California’s SNAP caseload has increased by 9.7 percent while the national caseload has decreased by 0.2 percent.
CalFresh Participation

SNAP Caseload Growth
FFY 2007 to FFY 2014

Year to Year Growth (2007 Equals 100%)

Federal Fiscal Year

- California
- Rest of Nation
California’s CalFresh Outreach Plan is recognized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as the largest and one of the most innovative plans in the nation.

The FFY 2015 – 2016 Outreach State Plan includes eight primary contractors and 100 subcontractors.

Outreach activities in the past year were responsible for enrolling an estimated 118,330 individuals into CalFresh, representing 55,037 new households, which was a 3.6 percent increase over prior year outreach results.
CalFresh Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) & BCP

- CDSS oversees the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) Program, which educates low-income individuals and families in the state about the benefits of nutrition and physical activity.

- CDSS works with the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Aging, Catholic Charities of California, the University of California at Davis CalFresh Program, CWDs and a number of other subcontracting partners to carry out SNAP-Ed programming statewide.

- SNAP-Ed requests six positions:
  - To conduct fiscal and programmatic reviews,
  - Improve contract oversight, and
  - Provide overall technical assistance to all SNAP-Ed State and Local Implementing Agencies.

- USDA-FNS has approved the 100% federal funding for these six positions.

- Expected outcomes include:
  - CDSS to conduct annual Management Evaluations as required by USDA-FNS.
  - Identify and share best practices with all SNAP-Ed providers,
  - Deliver timely technical assistance, and
  - Better support for overall program implementation.
Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP)

- DFAP is the temporary program developed in response to Governor Brown’s Drought Emergency Declaration in January 2014.

- DFAP was designed to provide food assistance in 24 drought counties that suffered high levels of unemployment resulting from the drought.

- CDSS partnered with Foodlink to procure, pre-package and ship DFAP food boxes to the drought designated counties.

- Each DFAP box weighs about 25 pounds and serves households of four for 4-5 days. The box includes canned fruits, vegetables, soup, peanut butter, rice and beans.
To qualify for DFAP, individuals must self-certify that they live in the drought-impacted county, that their employment has been impacted by the drought and that the food is for personal use only.

DFAP food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. DFAP began distributing food boxes in May of 2014. As of April 2015, DFAP counties have distributed over 560,000 food boxes to nearly 300,000 households.

Chapter 1, Statutes of 2015 (AB 91) added five additional counties (Imperial, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Ventura and Riverside) to the initial 24 and added $17 million to fund DFAP through June of 2016.