



CDSS

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

April 7, 2015

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: WILL LIGHTBOURNE
Director

SUBJECT: CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH

Since 1964, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has dramatically reduced the extent of severe hunger in our country. California is proud to play an important role in our nation's goal to reduce hunger and improve health and well-being by providing nutrition assistance to low-income households through the CalFresh Program.

In 2014, a number of counties conducted targeted activities for the CalFresh Awareness Month. Some highlights include:

- Alameda County participated with the theme "CalFresh is *Easy*". The county hosted enrollment clinics and fairs, and collaborated with the Alameda County Nutrition Action Partners to promote the consumption of healthy foods and beverages and educate customers on how to buy and prepare healthy meals on a budget.
- Marin County partnered with local schools, churches, and food banks to host CalFresh outreach events. It also held an event at a local office every Wednesday in May with information, games, food and balloons.
- Santa Cruz County's campaign was comprised of several outreach events, including a diabetes health fair, Cinco de Mayo celebrations and outreach at farmers' markets.

During the month of May 2015, I encourage all counties to join me in highlighting the CalFresh Program by hosting a CalFresh Awareness Month in your county. Together we can reduce food insecurity by increasing the number of eligible Californians that receive needed and essential food benefits. I also encourage counties to focus on two other food security components: the further implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 402 and the Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP).

AB 402 allows for county welfare departments to work with their local education agencies and enter into a memorandum of understanding to use National School Lunch Program information to serve as the initial request for a CalFresh application for the student and their family. Many times, children who rely on school-based meals are at an elevated risk for food insecurity, especially during school breaks and the summer months. By creating a link between these two vital programs, counties can ensure that children are benefiting from an improved nutritional status that also results in improved attendance, behavior and academic performance. For additional information and direction on AB 402, please refer to All County Information Notice I-38-13 dated July 3, 2013:

http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/lettersnotices/EntRes/getinfo/acin/2013/I-38_13.pdf

The DFAP was initiated in response to the Governor's Drought Emergency Declaration in January 2014 and is targeted to those communities that are most affected by the drought. As the State enters into yet another year of extended drought, the resources of this program are facing even higher demand. As part of the CalFresh Awareness Month activities I encourage all counties, especially those most affected by the drought, to work with their local community-based organizations, food banks and faith-based organizations to promote and enroll families in CalFresh. For additional information on agencies in your community that are able to provide CalFresh outreach application assistance, please visit the CalFresh Outreach website at:

http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calfreshoutreach/res/Prime_Contractor_Contact_List.pdf

- If you have questions regarding AB 402, please contact Bill Belon, CalFresh Policy, at william.belon@dss.ca.gov.
- If you have questions regarding DFAP, please contact Michael Coleman, Emergency Food Assistance Program, at michael.coleman@dss.ca.gov.

Thank you in advance for your proactive efforts to address hunger and food insecurity through partnerships at the local level for the betterment of all Californians. 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 Caryn Rizell, Chief, CalFresh Nutrition Education and Outreach Bureau at (916) 654-1896.