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ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: KIM McCOY WADE, Chief
CalFresh and Nutrition Branch

SUBJECT: CALFRESH AND REVERSAL OF SSI CASH-OUT:
STATE OUTREACH PLANS AND COUNTY COORDINATION

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) CalFresh and Nutrition Branch is expanding CalFresh outreach and application assistance to people receiving Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP), as part of the CalFresh reversal of SSI/SSP cash-out policy, beginning June 1, 2019. These approaches have been developed by the CalFresh SSI Outreach Advisory Group in cooperation with counties, clients, the County Welfare Directors Association of California, other state agencies, and Community-Based Organizations.

We are sharing key elements of this plan with County Welfare Directors so that County Welfare Departments can plan for the new partnerships and the anticipated increased volume of CalFresh applications associated with this policy change. We also need to coordinate closely on a variety of these statewide strategies as we prepare for and implement the new policy.

Please e-mail your County Outreach Point of Contact (POC) for CalFresh SSI Outreach Coordination to Jessica Cooper at CalFreshAccess@dss.ca.gov by February 15, 2019. *CDSS will then coordinate with the County Outreach POC on all the items in italics below.* CDSS requests that counties keep their Outreach POC info updated. Any changes to the County POC information can be made using the same e-mail address.

Outreach Materials

An **outreach and messaging tool kit** with outreach materials for seniors and people with disabilities currently receiving SSI/SSP benefits, as well as for caregivers, will be

available in April to counties, application assisters, and all partners at a Campaign Kick-off event open to all (in-person or by webinar). The partner tool kit will be provided in a digital format and will be available in English, Spanish, and a range of other language translations. The partner tool kit will also include printed marketing materials and online media files.

In addition, all Outreach materials will feature the unified, refreshed **CalFresh logo**, currently being piloted by Los Angeles, Alameda, and Shasta County Welfare Departments. Counties may incorporate the refreshed logo in their local communications on a rolling, gradual basis.

Media, radio, and social media initiatives will be conducted around the implementation date, throughout the summer.

All outreach materials and calendars for coordination will be shared with the County Outreach POC.

Outreach Tools

Statewide materials will feature the existing **CalFresh Information Line, (877) 847-FOOD**, which is available statewide in English and Spanish. The CalFresh Information Line forwards callers to their counties of choice, based on the zip code entered into the system. The number will be referenced in some statewide outreach materials and media where a single phone number is required. *We will confirm or update the best county telephone number with your County Outreach POC.*

CDSS will also leverage existing online resources to make applying for CalFresh easier and more accessible. **GetCalFresh.org** is the existing online application assistance tool currently in use by 37 counties. Beginning June 1, 2019, all counties will receive online applications through the existing consortia portal from GetCalFresh.org. No technical changes are needed by counties to be able to accept the online applications. However, because of the anticipated increased volume of online applications, business changes may be required in order to process the applications in a timely manner. *The County Outreach POC will be provided with the online demo, a webinar, and technical assistance regarding GetCalFresh.org.* This support can also be requested at any time by e-mail at CalFreshAccess@dss.ca.gov.

For clients who wish to visit a county social services office in person, the CDSS website will feature an improved “**Find an Office**” **online search function**. This function will allow a client to interactively find his or her nearest office by entering his or her location into a dynamic map, which will display the nearest offices. *We will confirm or update local office locations and hours providing CalFresh services with your County Outreach POC.*

Application Assisters

Application assisters are community groups that are trusted messengers in the community and are trained to assist clients to apply for CalFresh, in partnership with CDSS and counties.

CDSS currently contracts with five CalFresh Outreach contractors to provide **application assistance**: California Association of Food Banks; 2-1-1 San Diego; Catholic Charities of California; the California State University, Chico, Research Foundation; and Redwood Community Health Coalition. These five “prime” Outreach contractors and their 139 subcontractors are prepared to conduct CalFresh outreach and provide application assistance to SSI/SSP recipients.

In addition to leveraging our existing community networks, CDSS is currently planning to add three new agencies to our network of application assisters to reach a broader range of potentially-eligible recipients. These new partners include the California Department of Aging network of local **Area Agencies on Aging**, Department of Rehabilitation network of local **Independent Living Centers**, and (still in development) Department of Developmental Services network of local **Regional Centers**.

Local contacts for all state-funded application assisters will be provided to your County Outreach POC.

Social Security Administration

In partnership with the Social Security Administration, CDSS will be mailing information material to SSI/SSP clients in May 2019 to inform them of the new eligibility for CalFresh beginning June 1, 2019. *Specifics regarding the content and timing of the mailers will be shared with the County Outreach POC.*

Beginning June 1, 2019, Social Security Administration (SSA) offices and call centers, as they currently do in all 49 other states, will begin screening all California SSI applicants and clients for CalFresh as well as assisting SSI/SSP-only households with new CalFresh applications, using the GetCalFresh.org assistance tool. SSA will also be updating their posters and other program materials. The full agreement between CDSS and SSA for how applications will be submitted and program materials supplied will be finalized and shared with the counties. *Local SSA office contacts will also be coordinated with the County Outreach POC.*

Local Events

When CDSS receives requests for local outreach events, whether from legislators, non-profit organizations, or other stakeholders, we will forward those requests to your County Outreach POC.

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For all updates related to reversing the CalFresh SSI/SSP cash-out policy, please refer to our CalFresh SSI webpage: www.cdss.ca.gov/CalFreshSSI.

We appreciate your partnership in strategic, targeted, and comprehensive outreach to California families and communities about this significant expansion of CalFresh for seniors and people with disabilities receiving SSI. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Cooper, CalFresh Outreach Unit Manager, at (916) 651-5243.