



## **CalFresh Expansion to Include SSI Recipients**

Report to the  
Family and Human Services Committee  
June 10, 2019

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## CalFresh Expansion Implementation Update

As Of June 10, 2019

### A. What is CalFresh Expansion?

Effective June 1, 2019, individuals receiving or authorized to receive Supplemental Security Income/ Supplementary Payments (SSI/SSP) through the Social Security Administration are now eligible for CalFresh or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). CalFresh and SNAP are commonly referred to as "Food Stamps".

Individuals who are blind, disabled or over the age of 65 with limited income and resources are eligible for SSI/SSP. Many of these SSI/SSP individuals will now be authorized to receive CalFresh providing all other eligibility criteria are met.

Similar to Health Care Reform, CalFresh Expansion adds a large newly eligible group of people to an existing program under the administration of EHSD. Most of this SSI group are already known to EHSD as Medi-Cal, IHSS and General Assistance recipients.

### B. Anticipated SSI Applicants and Current Applications Received

The following are projections received from the State of California Department of Social Services (CDSS) of those Contra Costa residents who are eligible and will likely seek CalFresh benefits under the SSI Cash-Out program.

- Total number of Contra Costa County residents on SSI in June 2018: **24,841**
- Of the total number of County SSI recipients, the estimated number to be CalFresh Eligible: **10,045**
- Total SSI recipients CalFresh Eligible and expected to participate (75% participation rate): **7,533**
  - *Current IHSS recipients* **(6,527)**
- SSI recipients expected to apply, and those who will be added to an existing CalFresh household **2,512**

*The above numbers provided by CDSS only address eligible applicants. We anticipate a significant number of ineligible individuals will submit applications as well due to the wide outreach being conducted.*

Applications for CalFresh can be submitted in a variety of ways: phone; mail; on-line portals via the Internet; in person at EHSD offices and at staffed sites such as the Food Bank, Family Justice Centers, et.al. Home visits can be scheduled for application processing.

EHSD began receiving applications on May 1, 2019 for the June 1, 2019 launch date. From May 1 through

June 3, 2019, there were 1,110 applicants through the following sources:

• Walk-In	502
• GetCalFresh Portal*	560
• CalWIN On-Line Portal (MyBCW)	514
• Mail-In	58
• Fax	21
• Inter-County Transfer	2
• Health Care Partners	1
• Telephone	1
• Unknown Source	1
Total	1,100

\*The GetCalFresh Portal opened on May 29, 2019.

**C. What are the internal business processes to provide services to this new population in the initial 4-6 months?**

The Workforce Services Bureau is processing applications and determining eligibility for the SSI applications received thus far and will continue to do so with the assistance of the Aging and Adult Services (AAS) Bureau in June, July and August when the heaviest influx of applications are anticipated.

We plan to continue the utilization of overtime as well as the reallocation of staff where possible to assist with the increased workload including workers from Fraud, Quality Control and Navigators from the “4 Our Families” program. In addition to the current resources, we have funded 24 positions (15 temporary EW’s, 4 temporary clerical and 5 permanent EW’s) to assist in this effort.

Training to the newly hired temporary staff is being conducted as well as refresher training for those staff willing to assist on overtime.

As new applications level out we will review the data in order to revise and reset our estimates and staffing plans. The State expects that many of the CalFresh applications from IHSS recipients would be processed at their annual IHSS reassessment, however if an application is submitted prior to that date, it must be processed regardless.

**D. What will be the service delivery model for the SSI population?**

EHSD has a long history of working with the SSI population and we are familiar with the vulnerabilities and special physical and mental challenges many of them struggle with. To that end and with the aim of providing a supportive case management environment, EHSD will be combining the caseloads of SSI recipients into a separate eligibility division, under one manager. These program caseloads include General Assistance, the SSI Advocacy program, IHSS Medi-Cal and CalFresh eligibility cases (not IHSS program cases handled by social workers), and non-IHSS CalFresh cases. Workers in this division will have assigned cases and will be the primary case management point of contact for their recipients. We plan to have this division fully established no later than October 2019.

The staffing plan for the SSI Division includes the following benchmarks:

- General Assistance (GA) Temporary Division Manager hired by June 10, 2019
- Eligibility Supervisor hired by June 24, 2019
- Solidify the transition of the GA Division into the SSI Division by July 1, 2019
- Inclusion of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Medi-Cal and CalFresh staff in the SSI Division by August 1, 2019
- Permanent GA Division Manager hired by October 2019

#### **E. Data and Tracking**

Although CalFresh Expansion applications were accepted starting May 1, 2019, the system of record for the CalFresh (CalWIN) was not able to process these application until after May 13, 2019. Preliminary data has been skeletal due to the lack of functionality. As implementation continues, the following data points will be gathered and analyzed on a regular basis:

- Number of SSI Applicants
- Number of SSI Applications
- Average number of days applications are pending
- Number of applications pending over 30 days
- Number of applications submitted in each of the following modes:
  - In person
  - Mail in
  - Telephone
  - My BCW
  - GetCF Portal
  - ICT
- Denials
- Withdrawals
- Number of lost/replacement cards issued to SSI CalFresh recipients (*Partial data component - this will not be an all-inclusive number as recipients call the 1-800 number for this service*)
- SSI recipients who have lost connection to the CF program (partial data component – this will not be an all-inclusive or timely data component as this would not be determined until SAR)

#### **F. Funding:**

FY 18/19 State/Federal funding was provided in December 2018 in the amount of \$973,280 to cover planning and implementation costs. Because the implementation of the CalFresh Expansion begins in May, this may not be sufficient funding to address the anticipated high numbers of applications in the early months of the program. The CAO is making available up to \$300,000 (\$600,000 with Federal match) to fill the gap until September when the FY 19/20 CalFresh/SSI allocations are known.

May Revise shows a very small statewide allocation of \$30 million (all funds) for SSI Expansion workload.

#### **G. What are current risks and concerns?**

Workload will exceed staffing capacity. HR processes including slow background checks, coupled with our need to provide at least minimal training to new hires means a delay of 8 weeks for Temp staff.

Under Federal law, the eligibility determination for CalFresh must be completed within 30 day of the application date. If there is an influx of applications beyond our capacity to meet this requirement, the county will be at risk of sanctions due to non-compliance.

Because of the vulnerable nature of this population, we expect to see an increased incidence of lost EBT cards which will have an impact on the recipient, and, an impact on EHSD workload which to date has not been anticipated by the State in their funding premises.

Likewise, an increased incidence of fraud perpetrated on some of our vulnerable elderly and mentally challenged recipients will have similar impacts.