



**Contra
Costa
County**

To: Board of Supervisors
From: FAMILY & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Date: October 9, 2018
Subject: SNAP/CalFresh (Food Stamp) Program Update

RECOMMENDATION(S):

RECEIVE report prepared by the Employment and Human Services Department on the CalFresh program, formerly known as Food Stamps and federally known as the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

REFER the recommendations offered by the CalFresh Partnership to the EHS Director for consideration and report back to the FHS Committee in October or November 2018.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact. This is an informational report only.

BACKGROUND:

The SNAP Program was originally referred to the Family and Human Services Committee by the Board of Supervisors on February 15, 2011.

This program was formerly known as Food Stamps and is currently known as the Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In California, the name of the program is CalFresh.

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD

ADMINISTRATOR

COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **10/09/2018** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: October 9, 2018

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Contact: Julie DiMaggio Enea
(925) 335-1077

By: Stephanie Mello, Deputy

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

The Family and Human Services Committee, on September 24, 2018, received the attached CalFresh Program Update report. Staff reported that applications increased by 121% over a ten year period but that CalFresh applications and disbursements decreased this year from last year likely due to higher employment. She highlighted her concern about the Federal Administration's forthcoming guidelines that will restrict eligibility for cash aid and permanent housing to permanent residents.

Supervisor Gioia observed that we are at nearly a 20% poverty level and that work has been done to determine what the definition of poverty means for Contra Costa County. The Committee requested information on how this is affecting Contra Costa County specifically. Staff are working on identifying the gap of people who will no longer qualify for cash benefits under the forthcoming new guidelines. An early indicator is that in August, 20% of people surveyed said they did not want to apply for CalFresh because of immigration concerns.

Supervisor Gioia asked what staff are doing to address different reasons (other than unemployment decreasing) for the decrease in food stamp utilization. He suggested greater outreach. Staff advised that they conduct cross-sector outreach through Meals on Wheels packets, for example, but are always battling stigma.

Lisa Arnold spoke during the public comment period about the need to close the gap between jail release and cash aid receipt, saying it can take as long as two weeks. She suggested that the Medi-Cal application be initiated while a person is still incarcerated so he/she does not come out desperate and the re-offend. Staff verified that they work with parolee entities and Rubicon center on this. Supervisor Andersen suggested that staff network with the Office of Re-entry and Justice to obtain information about jail inmates who are preparing to emancipate.

The CalFresh Partnership offered three recommendations in pertinence to the long wait times experienced by clients in County offices and call centers, which they attributed to a lack of frontline staff in County offices:

1. Lift the hiring freeze on the Workforce Services Bureau so they can hire more frontline CalFresh staff.
2. Commit any augmented allocation this year to fund additional front line staff so that people can receive the customer service they need to navigate the benefits process.
3. In reference to customer service, access to benefits, and fighting hunger, create transparency about where the resources for the CalFresh allocation are being used within the County to ensure that the best use of taxpayer dollars. To do so, engage an independent contractor to conduct an impartial analysis of how CalFresh and other public benefits administrative dollars are allocated, and share the results with the public.

The Committee requested that these recommendations be forwarded to the Employment

and Human Services Director for response and report back to the FHS Committee.

ATTACHMENTS

CalFresh Program Update

CalFresh Presentation