



**Contra  
Costa  
County**

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: FAMILY & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Date: May 7, 2019

Subject: SNAP/CalFresh (Food Stamp) Program Follow-up Report

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**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

ACCEPT status report on the Employment and Human Services Department's implementation of the CalFresh expansion to include SSI (Supplemental Security Income) recipients.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None. This is an informational report.

**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. This status report follows the last update to the Board of Supervisors, made on October 9, 2018.

EHS Director Kathy Gallagher presented the attached status report to the Family and Human Services (FHS) Committee on April 22, 2019, and summarized that of the approximately 7,500 people who are eligible for the CalFresh expanded benefits and who

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY  
ADMINISTRATOR

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD  
COMMITTEE

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Action of Board On: **05/07/2019** ☒ 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: May 7, 2019

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

By: Stephanie Mello, Deputy

Contact: Kathy Gallagher

are expected to participate based on State assumptions, 6,527 are already receiving IHSS MediCal benefits or have existing MediCal cases, and 2,512 are members

## BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

of households in which a resident is already receiving CalFresh benefits. Therefore, a significant number of applicants will already have records in the CalWIN system that will not have to be recreated. Adding new beneficiaries and their income to households already receiving benefits would normally impact the level of benefits for a household; however, the State will provide supplements to preserve existing benefit levels so that no household will be negatively impacted.

Supervisor Gioia verified that the eligibility requirements for the expanded SSI benefits are blindness, disability, and age of 65 years or older, providing that all other eligibility criteria are met.

In anticipation of the increased workload, Ms. Gallagher reported that her department is training existing staff on the new requirements; these staff can process applications received beginning in May. Additionally, EHS is interviewing, from a list of 41 applicants, individuals for appointment to 14 temporary positions (10 eligibility workers and 4 clerical workers), who will become trained and ready to begin processing applications in June. She explained the difficulty in attaining any certainty at this point about additional workload and permanent staffing requirements. She mentioned that CalWIN automation of the applications will become available on May 13 and an intake template is being developed by EHS to capture intake data until the new CalWIN automation becomes available.

EHS is relying primarily on community partners to conduct outreach to eligible people. The department is also contacting CalFresh households, and placing information in General Assistance packets and on the department's web page.

As to funding, Ms. Gallagher reported that the State allocation of \$973,280 will expire on June 30, 2019 and the FY 2019/20 will not be received before September 2019. The County Administrator authorized, in the interim period, \$300,000 to be leveraged with federal funds.

A representative from the East Bay Leadership Council suggested that the prior expansion of benefits to students might provide some indication of the increased workload to be anticipated with the new expansion of benefits.

Representatives from SEIU Local 1021 opined that a reason for the predicted 75% application rate was likely due to the long wait times to apply for and receive benefits, citing an example of a person waiting on the phone for four hours for assistance. Representatives from the Contra Costa Food Bank speculated that as many as 25,000 people might apply, even though less than half that number are actually eligible to receive the expanded benefits. They expressed concern that EHS is not prepared for the potential onslaught of applicants and observed that Contra Costa residents cannot register for these benefits over the phone as residents of some other counties can do.

A representative from Ensuring Opportunity expressed concern about the overall EHS structure and lack of sufficient frontline staff in CalFresh. In her opinion, more could and should be done to address whole-system deficiencies. She expressed frustration about these concerns not being addressed and suggested that the community-based partnerships with EHS might not continue.

Ms. Gallagher explained that EHS staffing levels are driven by State and federal funding reductions. She advised that EHS has a staff of 130 eligibility workers in total who could process applications. In recognition of the reduced funding, EHS is reassessing its service delivery model in terms of reduced plant and increased automation. She concurred that phone registration should be a future goal.

The FHS Committee accepted the staff report and requested the EHS Director to report back to the Committee on June 10.

#### ATTACHMENTS

EHSD CalFresh Expansion Implementation Update