



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/6/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services, Health Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Angela Struckmann, 707-565-5800

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution declaring May 2025 as CalFresh Awareness Month in Sonoma County

Executive Summary:

May is the official month designated to increase public awareness of the CalFresh program, federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. CalFresh is a vital food security program that helps improve the health and well-being of participating Sonoma County residents through a monthly food benefit. Throughout the month of May, the Human Services Department, Department of Health Services, and trusted community partners will collaborate to provide Sonoma County residents with information about the CalFresh program, to dispel myths about eligibility, and to increase access.

Discussion:

Sonoma County has approximately 39,652 people actively receiving CalFresh food benefits each month. CalFresh supports low-income or no-income individuals and families to buy food. CalFresh is issued monthly on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, similar to an ATM card, to purchase food at online retailers, grocery stores, convenience stores, farmers markets and any store that accepts EBT. CalFresh spending strengthens Sonoma's local economy - every \$1.00 spent in CalFresh benefits generates \$1.79 of economic activity. CalFresh purchasing power supports local markets, groceries and farmers markets, and helps community supported agriculture and local employers sustain jobs in our community.

While the CalFresh monthly food benefit directly contributes to reduced food insecurity and boosts the local economy, CalFresh also uplifts participants through additional programming including CalFresh Employment & Training that focuses on increasing the employment and earning capacity of participants; CalFresh Disaster Response which is designed to provide several important food supports during certain disasters; and CalFresh Healthy Living that works to provide education and resources to support nutrition, health and active lifestyles. Additionally, CalFresh Healthy Living programs work collaboratively with community partners on upstream factors that affect nutrition security and access to physical activity. Partners include daycares, schools, parks, low-income housing sites, farmers markets, food pantries, community gardens, and numerous coalitions. Through these partnerships, the program strives to make policy, systems, and environmental changes that impact the health of county residents.

Partnerships with the Department of Health Services and community partners help to increase access and enrollment in CalFresh.

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CalFresh Awareness activities will kick off in May and throughout the month there is a series of coordinated outreach efforts to share information about the CalFresh program, how to apply, how to maintain benefits, and additional information including:

Increasing access to healthy food options

Dispelling myths and reducing stigma associated with the CalFresh program

Technology options to apply and manage benefits using BenefitsCal.org

New technology options for protecting food benefits from theft with the ebtEdge application

Strategic outreach efforts for community-based organizations

Farmers Market Local Incentive for Food and Economy Market Match program for CalFresh recipients to receive a matching benefit (up to \$20) at participating Farmers Markets

How to receive a discounted Sonoma County Regional Parks Pass

Accessing discounted utility programs, memberships and more for CalFresh recipients

Prior Board Actions:

Adopted Gold Resolutions declaring the Month of May as CalFresh Awareness Month on:

04-30-2024

05-11-2021

04-28-2020

05-14-2019

05-08-2018

05-02-2017

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

None