



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 11/7/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Executive Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: M. Christina Rivera, Andrew Sturfels, McCall Miller, 707-565-2431

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Food Assistance Partnerships for CalFresh Clients

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize the County Executive, or designee, to execute community specific food assistance funding partnership agreements with entities identified by each Supervisor, in a form approved by County Counsel, which collectively will not exceed \$250,000.
- B) Approve the \$250,000 funding source from the following options:
 - 1. Available and already budgeted in FY 25-26 combined Supervisory Districts' Community Investment Funds; or
 - 2. General Fund Contingencies; or
 - 3. Combination of available Community Investment Funds and General Fund Contingencies

Executive Summary:

As part of the November 4, 2025 Board item #53 Federal CalFresh Benefits, the Board took the following actions:

- A. Increased the amount of delegated authority to the County Executive Officer up to \$1,000,000 for the Redwood Empire Food Bank and to support diversifying the foods available and to meet various food needs.
- B. Directed staff to return December 9, 2025, with scope of content options to declare a state of emergency that can assist in organizing the County's response to projected community impacts resulting from enacted federal policies.
- C. Directed staff to return Friday, November 7, 2025, with an item to allow allocation of Community Investment Funds (including Tourism Impact Funds).
- D. Directed staff to work with the Economic Development Collaborative and philanthropic partners to help support the local food assistance need.

This item addresses action C and presents funding source options for the Board's consideration.

Discussion:

On October 1, 2025, the federal government shut down because Congress did not pass the necessary appropriation bills, or a continuing resolution required to fund federal operations.

One of the many impacts of the government shutdown is that federally funded CalFresh food assistance

benefits are understood to be suspended and will result in many households not having their benefits uploaded to their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. The EBT card works the same as an ATM card and is accepted at most grocery stores, at many farmers' markets, convenience stores, and even select online retailers like Amazon and Wal-Mart. The EBT card can be used at any store or market that displays the Quest logo. Households CANNOT use CalFresh benefits to buy: beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco; and nonfood items, such as pet foods, vitamins/medicines, and household supplies.

As of September 2025, just under 43,000 county residents were receiving CalFresh benefits, which are administered by the Human Services Department. During the same month, CalFresh benefits to the community totaled a little over \$8.2 million, with the average household receiving \$300 in benefits.

During the November 4, 2025, Board meeting, your board considered the benefits of partnering with food suppliers beyond the approved action of establishing an up to \$1 million funding agreement with Redwood Empire Food Bank, such as restaurants, food gardens, etc.

Under California Code, Government Code - GOV § 26227, the Board may appropriate and expend money to fund programs deemed by the board of supervisors to be necessary to meet the social needs of the population of the county, including but not limited to, the areas of health, law enforcement, public safety, rehabilitation, welfare, education, and legal services, and the needs of physically, mentally and financially handicapped persons and aged persons. Therefore, in order to be ready to execute additional funding partnerships to mitigate food access deficits resulting from the federal administration decision to not backfill with available food emergency funds, staff recommends an up to \$250,000 delegated authority to the County Executive Officer (CEO) to execute funding agreements with entities approved by each Supervisorial district. Staff understand some communities have already established food assistance money donation mechanisms for CalFresh/SNAP which may be a criterion applied by individual Supervisors to identify and approve a funding partnership for the CEO to execute.

To finance this additional food assistance solution staff has identified the following funding source options:

1. Available and already **budgeted in FY 25-26 combined** Community Investment Funds (including Tourism Impact Fund aka CIF/TIF), which currently stand at approximately \$900,000 before inventorying pending Supervisorial District obligations still under review; or
2. General Fund Contingencies, which currently stand at \$3.7 million; or
3. Combination of available CIF/TIF and General Fund Contingencies.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

11/4/2025 - Received update on Federal CalFresh Benefits and allocation of \$1 million of General Fund

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Contingencies for a funding agreement with Redwood Empire Food Bank ([SONOMA COUNTY - File #: 2025-1243 <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7722402&GUID=9FB45BB9-35C0-4DD9-A6C0-A34C879CFAE5&Options=&Search=>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7722402&GUID=9FB45BB9-35C0-4DD9-A6C0-A34C879CFAE5&Options=&Search=>))

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Based on direction provided.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

None

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None