

BLUEPRINT to TRANSFORM CalFresh

August 1, 2011

The State of California can help millions of families afford food and improve government efficiency by taking 5 steps to boost our participation rate in the federal nutrition program CalFresh from among the worst 5 states (approximately 50% participation) to among the best 5 (approximately 75%) in 5 years:

1. Elevate CalFresh participation to a top priority of the Brown Administration, as a 100% federal benefit for food only reaching half of eligible California families.
 - Direct high-level, targeted staff to focus on leadership, supervision and evaluation of CalFresh, in order to generate measurable State participation increases: **specifically, in 5 years, move California from among the worst five states in the nation to among the best five states.**
2. Maximize all the federal policy options for the State that will boost Californians' participation in CalFresh.
 - Elect available state options from the federal government to increase access and implement them uniformly statewide, using existing state administrative authority.
 - Review existing state waivers from the federal government to ensure boosting, not reducing, participation.
3. Integrate CalFresh policies and practices into the new state health care systems, to increase participation by all Californians, as well as efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
 - Additionally, simplify and align CalFresh policies with the other critical supports for low-income families -- especially CalWORKs and child care -- to further increase both participation and efficiency.
4. Ensure that all Californians have equal and excellent access to CalFresh, regardless of where they live.
 - Create uniform standards for State policies where counties currently have discretion, informed by the counties' "best practices" and needs for flexibility.
 - Supervise, incentivize, evaluate, and enforce the counties' administration of CalFresh, to ensure equal and excellent access for all Californians throughout the State.
5. Transform CalFresh operations, in collaboration with the 58 counties and other stakeholders, to improve and standardize access, customer service, and government efficiency.
 - In conjunction with the above priorities, redesign CalFresh business processes, technologies, and coordination with other benefits (as many other states and counties are now doing) to provide uniform, excellent service to families and reduce the administrative burdens on both government and families.

BLUEPRINT ENDORSED BY:

California Association of Food Banks
California Family Resource Association
California Food Policy Advocates

Catholic Charities of California United
Legal Services of Northern California
Western Center on Law and Poverty