



Strengthening local communities

DID YOU KNOW?

Silicon Valley's tech boom has created immense wealth for some, but it has also brought a huge increase in the cost of living, particularly housing, making it difficult for those who don't earn high salaries. They are our co-workers, friends and neighbors, and they are struggling to make ends meet in a region known for its high cost of living. Did you know . . .

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California, is a nutrition assistance program that provides benefits to supplement household food budgets when individuals and families cannot afford enough to eat. By providing access to a nutritious, affordable diet, CalFresh helps low-income families and individuals purchase healthy and nutritious food.
- It is not a welfare program; it is a **nutrition** program that supports productivity, promotes health and helps prevent hunger.
- To be eligible to receive CalFresh benefits, a family of 4 can earn no more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- California ranks third to last among all states for SNAP participation. Less than half of the people who are eligible in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties are enrolled in CalFresh.

WHY CALFRESH MATTERS

Local families are needlessly going hungry every day, when they could be accessing almost \$179 million in additional nutrition benefits. As a region we are losing out on an estimated \$321 million in additional economic activity. CalFresh participation helps return tax dollars to our local community.

CALFRESH HELPS...

Low-Income Families:

- Feed their children – More than 74% of CalFresh participants are families with children.
- Keep elderly and disabled family members more independent – Participation can improve nutritional status and well-being. More than 6% of CalFresh participants are in families with members who are elderly or have disabilities.

States and Local Communities:

- Support local food retailers – in California, the average monthly CalFresh benefit per household member was \$139 in 2016.). Benefits are spent in local grocery stores and farmer's markets.

- Generate economic activity – Every \$1 of CalFresh money spent in our region generates \$1.79 in total community spending. Over \$8.5 million was generated in local economic activity last year as a result of Second Harvest’s outreach efforts.

Helps Businesses and Workers:

- Achieve optimal performance – Employees whose food needs are met at home may have higher productivity and take fewer sick days for themselves and their children.
- Attain self-sufficiency – CalFresh benefits supplement the food budgets of low-income workers so they can stay independent, work toward self-sufficiency and purchase additional household necessities.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Most American citizens or legal immigrants with low income can receive nutrition assistance through CalFresh. Eligibility depends on the total income and expenses of a household. The maximum gross income allowed is 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

- Most CalFresh households have incomes below 200% of the Federal poverty guidelines.

What Can Be Purchased with CalFresh?

- Breads and cereal, fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, and poultry, dairy products
- Seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat

What Can’t Be Purchased With CalFresh?

- Non-food items, such as: soap, paper products, household supplies or pet food
- Vitamins and medicine
- Beer, wine and liquor
- Cigarettes or tobacco products

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

For additional information, please contact: Anna Dyer / Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties at (650) 610-0800 ext. 424 or adyer@shfb.org

Sources

The Benefits of SNAP. USDA FNS. https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SNAP_ComChan_SNAPBenefits.pdf

Lost Dollars, Empty Plates 2016. California Food Policy Advocates, December 13, 2016. <http://cfpa.net/CalFresh/CFPAPublications/LDEP-FullReport-2016.pdf>

SNAP Factsheet California. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, March 7, 2017. https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_california.pdf

CA Department of Social Service: CalFresh. <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFresh>

CA Department of Social Service: Myths and Facts About CalFresh. http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calfreshoutreach/res/Toolkit/Appendices-GeneralMarket/GeneralMarketAppendices_F8_MythsandFactsAboutCalFresh.pdf