



Board Agenda Item 24

DATE: March 1, 2016

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Chairman Buddy Mendes, District 4
Henry Perea, Supervisor, District 3

SUBJECT: CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Authorize the Director of the Department of Social Services to submit an application to the California Department of Social Services to implement the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program in Fresno County.

Approval of the recommended action will allow the Department of Social Services (DSS) to submit a written proposal to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to offer a CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program (CRMP) in Fresno County. The CRMP will allow CalFresh recipients who are unable to prepare their own meals, specifically those who are homeless, disabled and/or elderly to use their benefits to purchase prepared meals at participating restaurants.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

As the CRMP is a voluntary program, the Board could choose to deny the request to submit an application to CDSS to participate in the program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in net County cost associated with this action. CalFresh benefits are fully funded directly by the Federal and State government and have no County share of cost. Administrative costs associated with implementation of CRMP for the Department of Social Services, including support staff time for coordination and program marketing, will be funded by the CalFresh administrative allocation with the required County match funded with 1991 Social Services Realignment.

DISCUSSION:

Fresno County has a population of over 1 million, of which 228,609 are CalFresh participants. Federal statistics show that in 2014, CalFresh recipients received a monthly average of \$141 in benefits.

The purpose of the CRMP is to offer food benefits to CalFresh individuals including those who are elderly (60 and over) and/or disabled and their spouses or homeless individuals to encourage the purchase of prepared meals necessary to support good health. California's Restaurant Meals Program allows eligible Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cardholders receiving CalFresh benefits (formerly known as Food Stamps and federally known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] benefits), to purchase hot prepared foods at participating restaurants using their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.

In 2004, California chose a federal option which would allow counties to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program whereby CalFresh participants could purchase prepared food with their CalFresh benefits. There are

currently seven California counties that operate a CRMP.

The CRMP is an anti-hunger program with the goal to provide more nutritious meal choices for the disabled, elderly or homeless CalFresh recipient, prepared in a food-safe environment and who will benefit from eating at a public place that welcomes their presence, as opposed to isolation in the streets. Homeless individuals do not often have a place to store and cook food; many elderly and disabled individuals may have difficulty preparing meals for themselves.

Client Eligibility

Only homeless, elderly, and disabled CalFresh recipients are eligible to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program. Client eligibility is determined by each county and is automatically verified through the point-of-sale (POS) equipment at the time of the transaction. If a client is ineligible, an error message will appear on the POS device and the transaction will not be approved. Of the 228,609 individuals receiving CalFresh benefits in Fresno County, 19,616 (8.5%) may be eligible to participate in CRMP.

Counties

Participation in the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program is voluntary. Counties interested in participating must submit a proposal for approval by CDSS. County responsibilities include: 1) certifying eligibility for homeless, elderly and disabled recipients, 2) Identifying households eligible to participate in the program at authorized restaurants, 3) informing CRMP recipients of the names and addresses of participating restaurants, and 4) ensuring the CRMP indicator code programmed into the county consortium system will only be applied to CRMP-eligible Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cardholders. Restaurants wishing to participate in the program will be required to enter into an agreement with the County; additionally the County must provide outreach information to advertise the restaurant meals program to the restaurant community and to the eligible recipient community including information on standards and availability.

Restaurants

A restaurant interested in accepting CalFresh benefits must enter into an agreement with the County. Once enrolled in the program, a restaurant must have or obtain point-of-sale (POS) equipment that can process Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards transactions. The point-of sale (POS) equipment must include a personal identification number (PIN) pad.

Restaurants are prohibited from charging sales tax or meal tax on prepared foods purchased with CalFresh benefits through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

DSS, CAO

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BBR 2011CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program in Fresno County

Agenda Item #8 BOS Meeting February 8, 2011

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Electronic Benefits (EBT) Fact Sheet

State of Ca Department of Social Services All County Information Notice NO. I-71-11

CAO ANALYST: