

NEWS RELEASE

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MAY IS CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH

Alameda County Launches Effort to Reduce Hunger, Boost Nutrition for Individuals and Families

Oakland, CA (May 1, 2013) - There's nothing easy about needing help to provide nutritious food for yourself or your family. But gaining access to CalFresh benefits is easier than many people realize.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has joined the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) and a broad-based community collaborative in proclaiming May to be "CalFresh Awareness Month." The proclamation introduces a month of programs and activities aimed at educating residents about CalFresh and removing the barriers that discourage eligible individuals and families from applying. As part of its effort to reduce hunger and increase nutrition awareness, Alameda County will be spreading the message that "CalFresh is *Easy*."

In Alameda County, where more than 1.5 million people reside, it's estimated that only half of those eligible are receiving CalFresh food assistance, even though a record high of 126,147 individuals received CalFresh benefits in January 2013. Many individuals and families who need immediate food assistance are unaware that they may qualify. Many others need access to higher quality food and education about nutrition and exercise. Although Alameda County has considerable wealth, some neighborhoods have been declared "food deserts" because of their limited access to fresh, healthy food.

According to Lori A. Cox, the County's Director of Social Services, SSA will work closely with longtime community partners, especially the Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB), an organization that continues to keep the issue of food equity at the forefront in Alameda County.

"SSA and the Food Bank are partners in the fight against hunger," explained Lori A. Cox, Director of SSA. "CalFresh Awareness Month includes a full schedule of events where we will work together to broaden awareness and outreach to populations we may not have reached in the past."

Due to reports that lower-income communities are at greater risks for obesity, diabetes and certain other diseases, the County is also working with local supermarkets, farmer's markets, food banks and school districts to promote healthier food choices and more exercise. The campaign will also emphasize convenient methods of applying for services, such as [on-line applications](#). CalFresh Awareness Month activities will also be held in Marin and Los Angeles Counties.

For more information contact SSA's CalFresh Program Specialists Antionette Burns at (510) 259-3849 or Danielle White at (510) 259-3825 or visit www.mybenefitscalwin.org. ☎