SNAP In California: The CalFresh Program

Erin Horgan
County Welfare Directors Association of California
SNAP-shot of California’s CalFresh Program

- Currently In CalFresh:
  - Over 4 million Californians benefit from the program
  - Or, 1 in 9
  - 11% of the state population
  - $149.05 average monthly benefit per person

- CalFresh growth:
  - Last five fiscal years = 84% growth in the program
  - Average annual growth rate = 16.8%
SNAP-shot of California’s CalFresh Program

- California’s SNAP enrollment has kept pace with unemployment
SNAP-shot of California’s CalFresh Program

- Participation Rate estimated to be 55%
  - National average = 75%
- But, this doesn’t tell the whole story:
  - SSI “cash out”
  - Large immigrant population
  - Fingerprinting requirement (repealed by AB 6 in 2011)
  - Frequency of reporting (changed by AB 6 in 2011)
Innovative Projects in California
CalFresh Projects – Golden Advantage Nutrition Program

- Pilot program launched in Spring 2012
- Concept: allow low-income seniors to use CalFresh (SNAP) benefits for voluntary donations at congregate meal sites or Meals on Wheels (funded through the Older Americans Act).

- Goals:
  - Provide additional resources for nutrition for low-income seniors,
  - Decrease stigma associated with “food stamps” among the elderly,
  - Increase participation in CalFresh among seniors.
CalFresh Projects – Golden Advantage Nutrition Program

- Partners include:
  - California Department of Social Services
  - California Department of Aging
  - California Department of Public Health
  - County Welfare Directors Association of California
  - Pilot Counties:
    - San Diego County
    - Los Angeles County
    - San Francisco County
    - Sonoma County
    - Riverside County
    - Humboldt County
    - Lake County
    - Fresno County
  - Catholic Charities of California
  - California Association of Food Banks
  - Area Agencies on Aging
CalFresh Projects - Heat & Eat

- Implemented across California on January 1, 2013
- Nominal annual LIHEAP benefit for all households
- Full Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)
  - No verification of utility expenses required
- CalFresh households still eligible to apply for traditional Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
CalFresh Projects - SnapFresh

- Developed by San Francisco county, in partnership with Code for America and Applications for Good
- A simple way for individuals to find the closest certified SNAP retailers anywhere in the nation.
CalFresh Projects - SnapFresh

- A national database of certified SNAP retailers, with:
  - Links to Google Maps for directions (walking, public transportation, driving)*
  - Information on the type of establishment so that users can determine the best option for their needs*

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<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Mobile App**</th>
<th>SMS Text</th>
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<td><a href="http://www.snapfresh.org">www.snapfresh.org</a></td>
<td>SnapFresh</td>
<td>415-889-8650</td>
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*website and mobile app only **iPad and iPhone only
CalFresh Projects - SnapFresh

- Existing options include:
  - USDA SNAP retailer locator: http://www.snapretailerlocator.com/
  - CA EBT Project Client website: https://www.ebt.ca.gov/caebtclient/cashlocationSearch.recip
  - Signage at retailers

- SnapFresh combines the best of each option:
  - Multiple platforms available
  - Location-targeted searches
  - Results displayed in map and list format (website and mobile app only)
  - Filtering for Restaurant Meals Program and Farmer’s Markets
  - Directions for walking, driving, and public transportation
CalFresh Projects – SnapFresh
CalFresh Projects - Outreach

- Network for a Healthy California
  - Statewide movement of local, state, and national partners
  - Mission is to create innovative partnerships that promote the health of low-income Californians through increased fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, and food security
  - Contractors work with over 3000 CBOs to promote participation in CalFresh
    - Education
    - Application assistance
    - Prescreening
    - Follow-up to help ensure retention of benefits
CalFresh Projects - Outreach

- Los Angeles County’s “Health & Nutrition Mobile Office”
  - Provides ADA-compliant mobile office space for screening and interviews
  - Monthly:
    - Average of 12 events
    - ~150 CalFresh applications and ~25 Medi-Cal (Medicaid) applications
- Venues include
  - Farmer’s Markets/Grocery Stores
  - Community Events
  - Other public and private non-profit events
CalFresh Projects - Outreach

- San Francisco County’s monthly “CalFresh In A Day”
  - Partnership between San Francisco’s Human Services Agency and San Francisco Food Bank
  - Monthly outreach events held at local food banks
  - Application assistors, CalFresh staff and supervisors
  - Applications taken and processed on the spot

- San Bernardino County’s “CBO CalFresh Consortium”
  - Partnership with community and faith based organizations
  - Training, marketing materials, development of a CBO-portal for CalFresh applications
CalFresh Projects - Outreach

Many counties have ongoing outreach projects:

- Staff who are co-located at various sites – mental health clinics, senior centers, rural health centers, etc.
- Partnerships with community-based organizations, faith-based organizations,
- Provision of training for community-based and faith-based organizations
- Regular outreach at:
  - School events, health fairs, farmer’s markets, employment events, migrant labor camps, local media interviews, churches, senior centers, grocery stores, homeless centers, work source centers.
Modernization Efforts

- California Department of Social Services’ effort to modernize CalFresh – “CalFresh Refresh”
  - Elimination of fingerprinting requirement
  - Waiving face-to-face interviews
  - Screening all applications for Expedited Service
  - Telephonic signatures
  - Simplified reporting: semi-annual reporting
  - Email notifications
  - Other efforts
Horizontal Integration

- The Affordable Care Act has implications for CalFresh and other programs: horizontal integration is required
  - Streamlined, simple application and enrollment systems – integrated eligibility for health and human services
  - Interoperability between systems expected: the Health Benefit Exchange and the County SAWS systems
  - Goals: efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and comprehensively addressing families’ needs

- But... federal regulations and guidance have not yet been issued
  - Definitions of horizontal integration and its implications are still loose and primarily focused on health programs
Horizontal Integration

“Don’t Wait”
  - California is the first state to create and implement a health benefit exchange as envisioned in the ACA: Covered California
  - Enrollment through the web portal begins on October 1, 2013
  - Coverage begins in 2014

“Choose Integration”
  - Interested parties strongly encouraging decisions that lead to greater integration
  - CWDA, SEIU, CDSS, the Alliance to Transform CalFresh, the Horizontal Integration Coalition
Horizontal Integration & CalFresh

- Nearly everyone eligible for CalFresh will be eligible for Medi-Cal (Medicaid)
- Most newly eligible for MAGI (Modified Adjusted Gross Income)-based Medi-Cal will be eligible for CalFresh
- But...
  - There are differences in the rules between the programs
    - Example: CalFresh households based on who purchases and prepares food together whereas MAGI Medi-Cal is based on who is claimed on taxes
  - Counties are the best repository knowledge regarding eligibility and program rules – we do this work every day
Questions & Comments