



FOOD STAMP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Nick Macchione, Director

San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency

Dale Fleming

Director of Strategic Planning & Operational Support

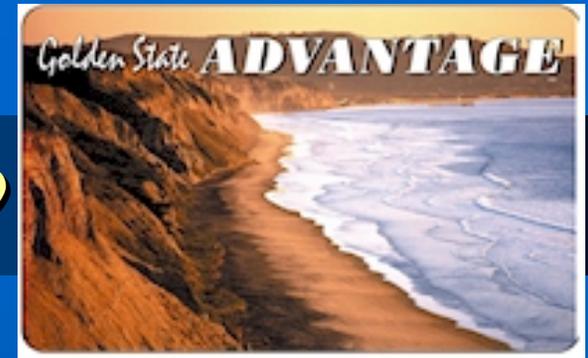
Why Food Stamps?

- Statistics show that obesity is more prevalent in low income households
- One of the leading causes of obesity is poor nutrition
- It's been estimated 27.9% of men, women and children in San Diego have had difficulty meeting basic nutritional needs due to financial constraints
- Food Stamps can bridge that gap

What are Food Stamps?

- A Federally funded nutrition assistance benefit to help low-income people buy nutritious foods
- National oversight by USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
- State oversight by California Department of Social Services
- Administered by the 58 California counties

What are Food Stamps?



- No longer a stamp or coupon, but an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card
- In California, it's called Advantage
- Federal name change: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- State name change pending

County Role

- County of San Diego administers food stamps in accordance with California law, and State and federal regulations
- “Administration” includes:
 - Ensuring program availability
 - Determining eligibility for the program
 - Maintaining program integrity
 - Internal audits
 - Administrative hearings
 - Fraud investigations

Basic Food Stamp Eligibility

- Applicant/household must meet eligibility requirements and provide information and verification of household circumstances
- U.S. citizens and some non-citizens who are admitted for permanent residency may qualify
- All household members must provide a Social Security Number or apply for one
- Applicant must be fingerprinted to prevent duplicate eligibility determinations

Basic Food Stamp Eligibility

- Property/resource limit is \$2,000 or \$3,000 for households with an aged (60 or older), or disabled member
- The home is not counted as a resource if the participants live in it
- All vehicles are exempt
- Deductions for verified shelter, utilities and dependent care costs are considered in determining income eligibility and benefit level

Basic Food Stamp Eligibility

Household Size	Gross Mthly Income (130% of poverty)	Net Mthly Income (100 % of poverty)	Maximum FS Allotment
1	\$1,127	\$867	\$176
2	1,517	1,167	323
3	1,907	1,467	463
4	2,297	1,767	588
5	2,687	2,067	698
6	3,077	2,367	838
7	3,467	2,667	926
8	3,857	2,967	1,058
Each additional member	+390	+300	+132

Food Stamps CAN Buy...

- Foods for the household to eat, such as:
 - breads and cereals;
 - fruits and vegetables;
 - meats, fish and poultry; and
 - dairy products
- Seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat

Food Stamps CANNOT Buy...

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco
- Any nonfood items, such as:
 - pet foods;
 - soaps, paper products; and
 - household supplies
- Vitamins and medicines

Low Participation Rates

- San Diego's participation rate ranked lowest in nation among urban centers
- Lack of awareness of Food Stamps eligibility rules and dissatisfaction with the eligibility process

County's Approach

- Improving availability of services
- Community investment and support
- Commitment to collaboration

Improving Availability

- County Agency's commitment to increasing participation
 - Two years ago, targeted 5% increase in participating seniors
 - This fiscal year, targeted 9% increase in participating children (increase of over 6,200)

Improving Availability

- Re-engineering Eligibility Processes by May 2010
 - Document imaging
 - Customer contact center
 - Same-day intakes
- Maintain and improve program integrity
- Direct benefit to recipients
 - Fewer office visits, faster process
 - Go to any office/any eligibility worker

Community Investment & Support

- Supervisor Ron Roberts contributed \$14,550 in addition to staff time to support City Heights Farmers Market
 - First Farmers Market to accept EBT cards
 - In discussions with federal officials to obtain financial support for Farmers Markets and increase access to fruits and vegetables for Food Stamps recipients
- Farmers Market staffed by a County Health & Human Services Agency eligibility worker

Commitment to Collaboration

In 2006, the Board of Supervisors adopted “Call to Action” proposed by Supervisors Pam Slater-Price and Ron Roberts.

This action plan emphasizes the importance of good nutrition and physical activity in improving health outcomes for children.



Commitment to Collaboration

- Childhood Obesity Initiative strategies include
 - increasing the availability of affordable nutritious foods,
 - partnering and empowering community based organizations, and
 - promoting nutritional education



Commitment to Collaboration

- The County Health & Human Services Agency leads a Nutrition Education Workgroup
 - A collaborative to identify, design and implement strategies for promoting the role of the Food Stamps Program in nutrition assistance
 - Members include Agency staff and representatives from hunger and nutrition organizations

Commitment to Collaboration

- Workgroups in our six County Health & Human Services regions are convened with a number of the leading nutrition and hunger advocacy organizations to:
 - Identify partnership opportunities, and
 - Address barriers to participation and improve service

Commitment to Collaboration

- Agency staff promote Food Stamps at Health Fairs and community events including:
 - Wells Fargo Senior Center
 - Meet the Pharmacists Day
 - Women's Resource Fair
 - YMCA Jackie Robinson Back Pack give away
 - Back to School Nights

Commitment to Collaboration

- Agency staff are working with Military Outreach to identify potentially eligible families
- County staff reach out to eligible seniors
 - Aging & Independence Services Call Center
 - Food Stamps on weekend radio show
 - American Association of Retired Persons – EITC services

Commitment to Collaboration

- Agency participating in a Foster Youth Workgroup with the State and 6 other Counties to increase enrollment of former foster care youths
- Working with the San Diego County Office of Education's Migrant Education Program by giving overviews of the Food Stamps Program at "parent nights"

Commitment to Collaboration

- County/School/San Diego Hunger Coalition collaboration
 - Partnered with 2 elementary schools in San Diego Unified /School District
 - Conducted Food Stamp screening & application assistance
 - Supported the nutrition education programs offered to parents at the school

Enrollment Outcomes

Food Stamp Enrollment	December 2006	December 2008	Increase
Overall Participation	90,730	120,669	33%
Seniors	1,925	3,052	58.5%
Children	61,162	76,731	25.5%

Enrollment Outcomes

County of San Diego
Total Food Stamp and CalWORKs Recipients
October 1999 - December 2008



Value to the Community

Supplemental Nutrition Programs help:

- State and Local Communities by
 - Generating economic activity
 - Leveraging Federal Funds
 - Supporting local food retailers
 - Supporting farms

Value to the Community

Supplemental Nutrition Programs help:

- Low-Income families
 - Stretch food dollars
 - Fight obesity through education
 - Keep elderly family members independent
 - Transition to self-sufficiency

Good nutrition for a healthy, thriving
community...

