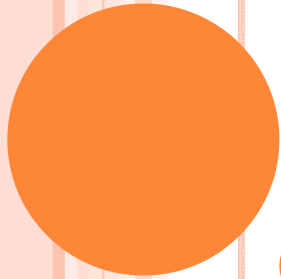




**FOOD STAMP
PROGRAM IN SAN
DIEGO COUNTY**



WHY DO FOOD STAMPS MATTER IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY?

- High **hunger** rates
- High **obesity** rates
- **Economic** uncertainty
- Low **participation** rates



HIGH HUNGER RATES

- **Hunger** or “food insecurity” means households face times when they don’t know if they will have enough food, or don’t know how they will get their next meal.



- **Over 480,000 people** in San Diego County are food insecure



HIGH RATES OF OBESITY



- **25% of children** in San Diego County are overweight or obese

- Healthy foods like **whole grains and fresh produce** cost more than processed shelf stable foods (often high in fat, salt, sugar; low in fiber and nutrients).

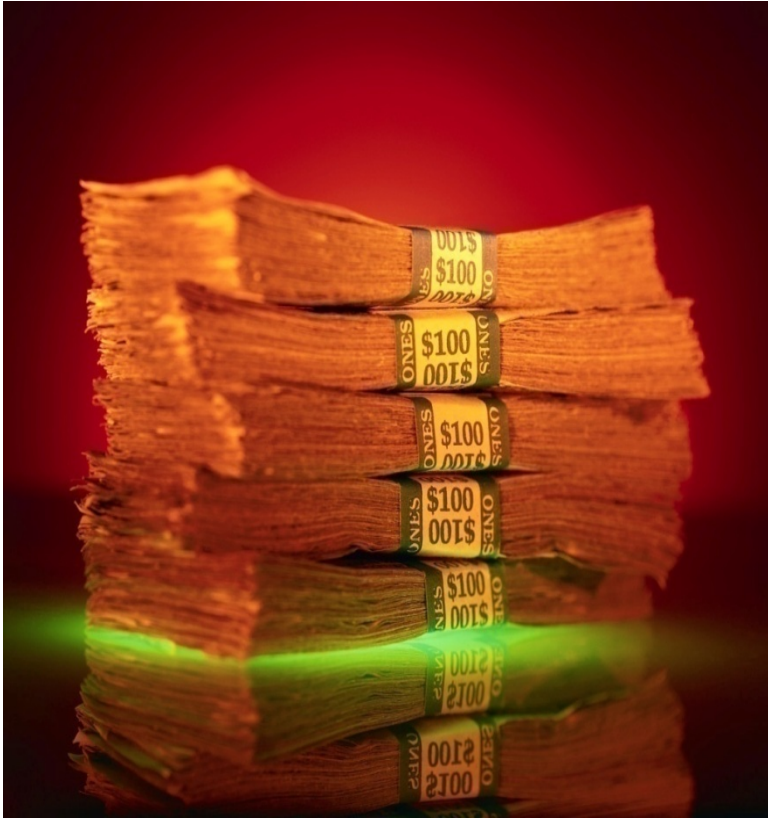


HOW FOOD STAMPS CAN HELP

- Food Stamps provide a tool (money!) that households can use to **access healthy food**
- Utilizing Food Stamps for groceries **frees up cash** that people can use for medications, bills, clothing, etc.



AN ECONOMIC BOOST AMIDST ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

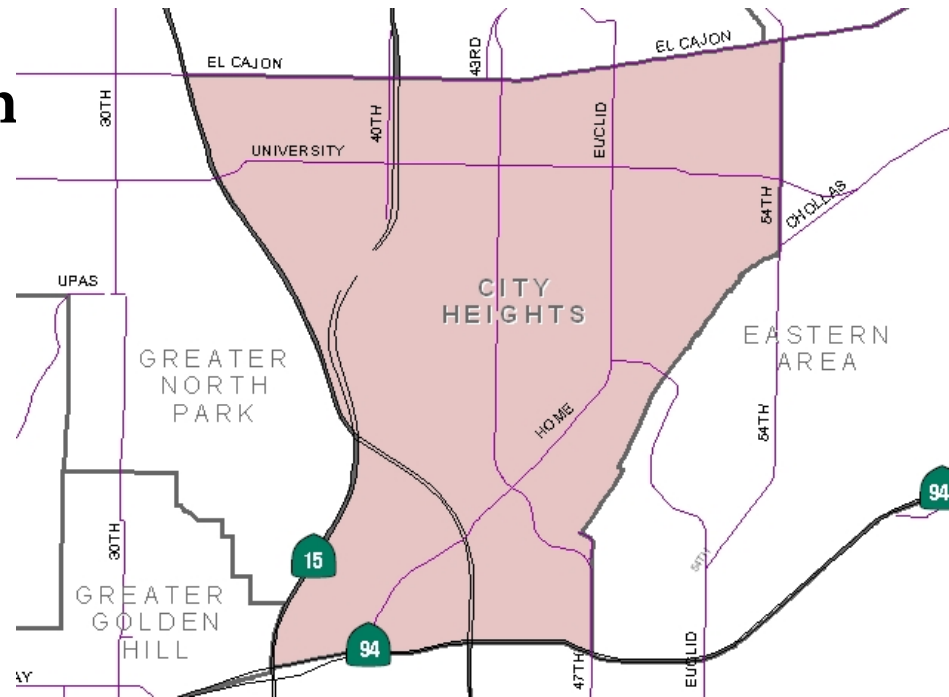


- San Diego County alone misses out on **\$144 million** federal dollars in Food Stamp Allotments
- **For every \$5** spent in Food Stamps, **over \$9** is **generated** in taxable spending thus boosting government coffers and promoting a balanced budget



SAMPLE COMMUNITY PROFILE

- Grocers in the City Heights community miss out on **\$7 million** in Food Stamp dollars each year.
- With the economic boost that FSP provides, this means City Heights could have an additional **\$12.8 million** in economic activity.



NATIONAL PARTICIPATION RATES (URBAN COUNTIES)

County	Participation %
Detroit (Wayne), MI	98%
Milwaukee (Milwaukee), WI	89%
Baltimore, MD	86%
Philadelphia (Philadelphia), PA	85%
Indianapolis (Marion), IN	83%
Houston (Harris), TX	51%
Los Angeles (Los Angeles), CA	50%
Las Vegas (Clark), NV	44%
Denver (Denver), CO	42%
San Diego (San Diego), CA	29%



CALIFORNIA COUNTY PARTICIPATION RATES (HIGHEST & LOWEST RANKED LARGE COUNTIES)

County	Participation %	Rank out of 58
Sacramento	70%	1
Fresno	65%	3
San Joaquin	59%	7
Kern	52%	16
San Bernardino	50%	18
Statewide	41%	
Los Angeles	39%	36
Contra Costa	35%	40
Riverside	32%	43
Orange	26%	51
San Diego	21%	55



WHO BENEFITS FROM FOOD STAMPS?

- Income > 130% of poverty level; eg, **family of four** income limit = **\$2,297 gross per month** or **\$27,564 per year**
- About 40% of people receiving Food Stamps are **working poor**
- Military families, seniors and people with disabilities may qualify
- Average benefit per person is **\$97-\$112 per month**



REASONS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION

- People do not know they are eligible, eg.:
 - Rules change over time
 - Income limits are adjusted each year
 - Stigma associated with receiving benefits



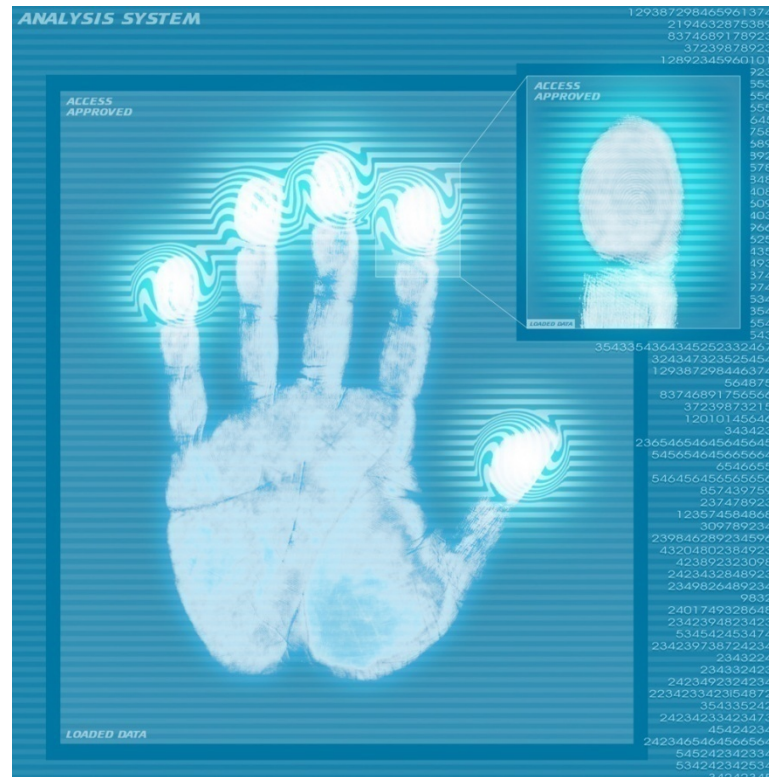
REASONS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION RATE CONT...

- Application process is time consuming and cumbersome
 - Average of 4 one-hour visits to go from start to finish in the process
 - May encounter poor customer service from staff
 - Clients often feel overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork and verifications required



REASONS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION RATE CONT...

- Adult members of the household must be finger printed and photographed
 - Only 3 other states (TX, AZ, NY) have fingerprinting
 - People feel criminalized
 - Clients don't know how the information is used
 - Costs the State \$8 million to administer



REASONS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION RATE CONT...



- Rumors and misinformation about the program, eg:
 - Think their kids could be drafted into military service
 - Think assistance must be repaid
 - Think assistance may affect their ability to become US citizens
 - Think they have to have kids in order to be eligible



REASONS FOR LOW PARTICIPATION RATE CONT...



- Fraud investigators may conduct unannounced home visits
 - Investigators are supposed to only be sent for CalWorks or Medi-Cal cases
 - If people are not able to meet the investigator within a certain time period (eg, because they are at work) they will be denied eligibility
 - Enormous disincentive for people to participate
 - **This program is unique to San Diego County**



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACCESS



- Outstation workers at community sites
 - Many clients are intimidated to go to the County offices, but are comfortable attending appointments at familiar sites such as schools and community based organizations.



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACCESS

- Encourage Food Stamp Offices to focus on customer service
- Create a standardized “Hunger 101” training for all staff
- Provide training for staff to deal with clients in crisis
- Reward excellent customer service as well as low error rates



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACCESS

- Reduce stigma for receiving assistance
- Promote access to the Food Stamp Program as an Economic and Health incentive



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACCESS

- Encourage the Board of Supervisors to provide additional funding to HHSA Food Stamp offices for increased staffing
 - Offices have seen an overwhelming increase in the applications being submitted, yet there is a hiring freeze
 - HHSA is in the process of implementing new procedures that will make the application process quicker and more user friendly however lack of staff and increased need have put this implementation behind their target dates



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACCESS



- Use alternative methods to prevent fraud
 - Work with the State to eliminate Finger Printing
 - Encourage the County to do away with in home searches



SAN DIEGO HUNGER COALI

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Jennifer Tracy

Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator

office: 619.501.7917

cell: 619.399.9836

jennifer@hungeraction.net

4305 University Ave #630, San Diego 92105

