



Outreach and Application Assistance: Case Studies of California SNAP Outreach Trainings

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The views expressed in this report are solely those of the author, Lisa Hahn. Questions and comments about this publication can be directed to Lisa Hahn,
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Introduction

Introduction

This report is a collection of ideas for how counties, food banks, and community organizations are collaborating to do CalFresh (SNAP) outreach and provide application assistance.

The aim of this report is to:

- 1) document current, unique food stamp outreach approaches
- 2) promote the sharing of best practices
- 3) help institutionalize outreach training efforts

Background

This Case Studies and Inventory constitutes part of the research phase of a larger project for the proposed Statewide CalFresh Outreach and Application Assistance (CFAA) Certification.

In the large, multiethnic, and geographically diverse state of California, a myriad of outreach and application assistance methods have developed in the last decade of community-based CalFresh outreach. Since approximately 2005, the need for a statewide outreach training has been visible and vocalized by the California CalFresh (SNAP) outreach community. This report aims to promote greater enrollment of eligible Californians in the CalFresh (SNAP) program and support the efforts of those doing outreach.

Case Studies Overview

**On-Site Visits and Interviews via Telephone and Email
Conducted September 2010-February 2011**

1. Alameda County Community Food Bank (Oakland, CA)

ACCFB offers a two-level “CalFresh 101” and “CalFresh 102” training twice a year. The training is taught by the county Social Services Agency CalFresh Program Specialist. Each training lasts two hours. “CalFresh 101” covers the basics of CalFresh eligibility, determining household composition, and filling out the application. “CalFresh 102” covers complex issues such as senior and disabled clients, drug felons, immigrants, homelessness, and quarterly reporting. Materials include a training booklet that includes a PowerPoint overview and outreach fliers in multiple languages.

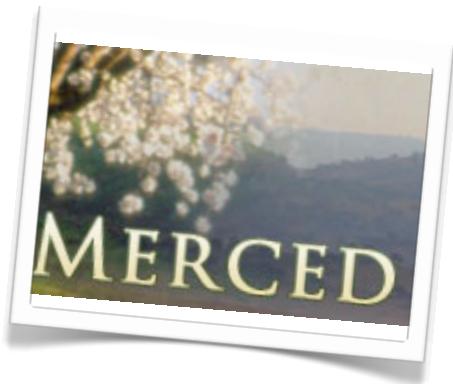


2. Benchmark Institute (San Francisco, CA)

The Benchmark Institute is a non-profit training and performance development organization that links people, learning and performance for social justice. Benchmark annually offers a three-day, two-night residential “Food Assistance Skills Training” (FAST) on food stamp outreach to Network for a Healthy California subcontractors. The training is skills-based and follows a three-section sequential model, where participants advance to the next sequence every year. Materials include a manual covering all training topics, as well as additional prescreening and negotiating tools. A CD containing these resources and more is also given.

3. Merced County Human Services Agency (Merced, CA)

Merced County provides training directly to community organizations doing outreach and application assistance and also offers a dedicated county contact to trainees. The two-day training is offered on-site to community organizations. The training topics cover the application process, prescreening strategies and scenarios, and nutrition education. Materials include a reference guide on Community Outreach and Nutritional Education (the content of the training).



4. 2-1-1 San Diego (San Diego, CA)

In its first year with its independent “over-the-phone” outreach contract, 2-1-1 San Diego and 19 additional 2-1-1 agencies throughout California conduct CalFresh outreach when potential clients call the 2-1-1 informational hotline. The training is four-hour training that includes two hours of lecture and discussion and two hours of coaching and practical experience. Materials include a manual containing a PowerPoint overview, common myths, and a phone prescreening script.



5. San Diego Hunger Coalition (San Diego, CA)



San Diego Hunger Coalition offers a two-hour “Food Stamps 101” training every month for community-based organizations. The training covers the basics of the food stamp application. Materials include a binder containing a PowerPoint overview, prescreening scenarios, dedicated county contacts, and a CD with additional outreach materials.

Alameda County Community Food Bank

Background

The Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB) is located in Oakland, CA and serves the county which includes a population of 1,491,182¹, of which approximately 10.4% are below the federal poverty level². ACCFB distributes food to individuals and families in need through a network of 300 non-profit organizations throughout the county. Each month, ACCFB connects 40,000 people with emergency food.³

In addition to emergency food services, ACCFB also offers nutrition education and CalFresh⁴ outreach and application assistance to low-income people in Alameda County. One program is a food assistance hotline, which takes 1,500 calls monthly.⁵ On this volunteer-staffed hotline, ACCFB helps people find emergency food distribution sites that are convenient in terms of time and location. Through this hotline, people can also be connected to a staff member of the Outreach Team for assistance in applying for the CalFresh Program.

ACCFB operates a comprehensive CalFresh Outreach Program and provides trainings.

- I. Initially, the program began with one bilingual Outreach Coordinator. Beginning in 2002, Social Services and ACCFB initiated a CalFresh Promotion Project, which involved

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "State & County QuickFacts: Alameda County, California." November 4, 2010. Accessed on January 4, 2011 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06001.html>

² U.S. Census Bureau. "State & County QuickFacts: Alameda County, California." November 4, 2010. Accessed on January 4, 2011 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06001.html>

³ Free Summer Lunch for Kids and Teens. "Alameda County Outreach Profile." Accessed on December 23, 2010 at <http://www.summerlunch.org/accfb.html>

⁴ Effective October 22, 2010, the name 'Cal Fresh' was unveiled as the replacement name for the SNAP Program (formerly known as the CalFresh Program).

⁵ My CalFresh. "About Outreach: California's Outreach Program." Accessed on December 23, 2010 at <http://www.misalimentos.org/aboutCalFresh.html>

training of community-based organization outreach workers throughout the county in CalFresh pre-screening techniques.

2. In 2003, ACCFB was granted a share of the CA State SNAP Outreach and Access Plan match funding.
3. In 2005, ACCFB and Social Services partnered with the City of Oakland and received a grant from USDA to replicate successful outreach strategies to underserved Asian communities.
4. In 2009, ACCFB received funding from Alameda County Social Services Agency to increase application assistance in Alameda County.

A trained Outreach Associate in the Outreach Programs department conducts CalFresh prescreening and application assistance through this hotline as well as through outreach events in the community. Outreach Associates also offer referrals to other government assistance programs, such as WIC.

1. Since July 2007, ACCFB has used the FAST tool and ShareFile to submit applications electronically through a secured server directly connected to the Alameda County Social Services Agency.
2. As of December 2010, the CalFresh Outreach Department has a staff of nine and serves approximately a monthly average 550 households in the languages of Cantonese, English, Mandarin, Spanish and Vietnamese, through the 2009-10 California State SNAP Outreach and Access Plan and the Alameda County Social Services Agency.

Training Structure

ACCFB offers a two-part training to any individual or organization interested. Each part (“CalFresh 101” and “CalFresh 102”) is approximately 2 hours long. The first part, “CalFresh 101,” is for beginners. The second part, “CalFresh 102” covers specialized topics. The second part is meant to be taken after the first part.

Both training parts are offered twice a year: in the Fall (approximately September-October) and the Spring (April-May). The second part, “CalFresh 102,” follows the first part of the training, “CalFresh 101” approximately 1 month after.

The training is conducted in a PowerPoint format, by the Alameda County Social Services Agency CalFresh Program Specialist. Questions are encouraged throughout the presentation, and are also built into the schedule at the end of the training.

The training reflects the involved nature of the county in CalFresh outreach efforts. Together, ACCFB and the Alameda County SSA work to bridge the community to services, coordinating on all aspects of the training from content, providing meeting space, and bringing together community members. This partnership between the County and ACCFB is one that has grown and developed for more than eight years.

"The Alameda County Social Services Agency and the Alameda County Community Food Bank gratefully thank you for participating in the Food Stamp Program Training 101⁶ for Community-Based Organizations. We hope the information contained in this manual will give you greater knowledge of the program and information to help and guide your own clients apply for Food Stamp benefits."⁷

The audience is open to and attended by anyone interested learning more about the CalFresh Program. Attendees are comprised of organizations serving Alameda County as well as other counties. For example, at CalFresh 102 in October 2010, Sacramento, San Francisco, Yolo, and Alameda counties were represented. An RSVP is required and space is limited to 50 people.

The training is free and provides materials and resources, developed by the ACCFB Outreach Department. Refreshments are also provided to attendees. Materials differ according to whether it is "CalFresh 101" or "CalFresh 102." Materials include a book, "Training Manual for Community Agencies" that includes a copy of the topics covered in the session (see below), outreach fliers in multiple languages, referral forms, prescreening tools, interview preference cards, and quarterly-reporting client reminder cards.

Note: A "CalFresh 202" was piloted in November 2010 and will now be offered annually.

CalFresh 202 was an 'informal round-table discussion' including direct agency and program updates from the Alameda County Social Services staff. Two advocacy associates from ACCFB's Advocacy Department presented legislative updates. Three specialists from the Alameda County Social Services Agency presented updates, including recent statistics on CalFresh case processing in Alameda County. A key section of the CalFresh 202 Training was a structured question and answer period. A 'Client Advocate Listing' was also provided for the first time. This listing is a contact list for dedicated contacts in each Alameda County Social Services Agency office that the outreach community may reach.

Training Contents

CalFresh 101 covers:

- program purpose
- application process, verifications, processing timeline
- expedited services (emergency CalFresh)
- eligibility
 - residency, citizenship, income, resources, deductions

⁶ The name of the trainings changed in late 2010 from "Food Stamps 101" to "CalFresh 101," etc.

⁷ Alameda County Community Food Bank and Alameda County Community Services Agency, CalFresh 101 Training Manual (Oakland: Alameda County Community Food Bank, 2010), 2. Emphasis mine.

- benefit levels
- prescreening methods (tools, practice exercise)
- determining household composition
- filling out the application
- contact information

CalFresh 102 covers:

- non-comprehensive recap of CalFresh 101
 - eligibility basics
 - drug felon clients
 - elderly clients
 - disabled clients
 - Action on Reported Changes policies
 - special deductions (medical expenses for elderly and disabled households)
 - homeless clients
 - excluded non-citizens
 - exemption for battered non-citizen
 - mixed-status households (households with excluded members)
 - quarterly reporting (QR-7)
 - contact information

Key Points

Training Highlights

- regularly scheduled and recurring (both levels, each bi-annually)
- participatory, participants encouraged to ask questions
- experiential practice (in CalFresh 101)
- multi-lingual materials and resources (Cantonese, English, Mandarin, Spanish and Vietnamese)
- developed and jointly conducted with the County Social Services Agency
- innovative and responsive (ongoing development of trainings in response to community requests as in the creation of CalFresh 202)

Contact Information

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Figure I. ACCFB Three-Part Training



CalFresh 101 (beginners)

- “Offers the basics on program eligibility. You will learn how to prescreen and identify households that are potentially eligible.”
- First offered in 2004.
- Offered twice a year since 2004.
- Future offerings expected twice a year.



CalFresh 102 (advanced learners)

- “Offers an in-depth look at program eligibility for special populations such as seniors, disabled, immigrants, felons and homeless.”
- First offered in 2007.
- Offered twice a year since 2007.
- Future offerings expected twice a year.



CalFresh 202

- “An informal round-table discussion” including direct agency and program updates from Alameda County Social Services staff.
- First offered in November 2010.
- Future offerings expected every year.

Benchmark Institute

Background

Benchmark Institute is a non-profit training and performance development organization located in San Francisco, CA, and dedicated to eliminating poverty and promoting justice by providing innovative training, performance tools, and learning expertise for people statewide whose work requires legal knowledge. Benchmark Institute conducts trainings on substantive law, leadership and advocacy skills for the public interest legal community.

As part of its offerings, the Benchmark Institute operates the “Food Assistance Skills Training” (FAST) on food stamp outreach. The CAFB Program Director approached Benchmark about conducting a training for CalFresh outreach workers.⁸ FAST has been offered annually since 2008.

1. The first training took place in September 2008 in Malibu, CA (southern California). One section was offered. Thirty-seven people attended, each paying a small registration fee.
2. The second year of the training took place in August 2009 in Los Gatos, CA (northern California). Sections 1 and 2 were offered. Sixty people attended and the State Food Stamp Outreach and Access contract paid all costs including room and board. Participants’ organizations paid travel costs.
3. The third year of the training took place in August 2010 in Los Gatos, CA (northern California). Sections 1, 2, and 3 were offered. Sixty-nine people attended: up to the available capacity of the training facility. Again, the State Food Stamp Outreach and Access contract paid all costs except for participant travel.
4. The next FAST will be in July 2011 in Los Gatos, CA. The same cost arrangements will continue and advance registration is highly recommended as space is limited to approximately 70 individuals per training (no limit on number of people per section).

Training Structure

FAST is a three-day, two-night residential training program for Network for a Healthy California subcontractors. The first day is approximately 7 hours long, the second day is approximately 12 hours long, and the third day is approximately 7.5 hours long.⁹

⁸ Bartholow, Jessica. Personal Interview. 23 November 2010.

⁹ See Figure 2: FAST training agenda, pages 1-2 of 2 are shown.

FAST follows a three-section sequential model, where each section builds on one another. Participants must attend one section each year in the given order. Section One focuses on SNAP law fundamentals and communication skills. Section Two focuses on how to read and analyze SNAP regulations. Section Three develops negotiation skills. Section Three was offered for the first time in 2010. In 2011, FAST will include Section Four on strategic planning for participants who have completed the other three sections.

FAST trainers are lawyers and paralegals, public benefit experts, who work in public interest law firms and have experience in facilitating experiential training. The high ratio of trainers to trainees reflects the hands-on and involved nature of the training. FAST emphasizes practice and learning by doing.

Learning Methodology¹⁰

Recognizing that practice helps people learn effectively, FAST is designed to create an informal, collaborative atmosphere where participants have opportunities to practice gathering information, identifying issues and implementing strategies.

Based on a 'skills-based development' approach, participants work in practice groups of 8-10 people where they receive feedback from trainers and participants alike. As a result, participants leave the training more skilled, aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and armed with practical ways to continue building their skills and substantive expertise. The skills and competencies covered include interviewing clients, negotiation, maintaining confidentiality, cultural competence, community building, regulation reading, and competence on eligibility rules.

As a hands-on experiential learning program, FAST layers concepts and information beginning with pre-event exercises and continuing through two days of face-to-face mini-presentations and practice. Exercises also serve to build participant investment and expectations of high involvement in the learning process. There are also pre-training assignments, designed to be answered for each day of the training. These assignments serve to build high involvement and investment in the training process.

FAST expands skills ability and content knowledge and includes resources for use on the job. The training aims to empower those conducting outreach with the knowledge of who to contact for help if problems arise in the future. Additionally, the training aims to create community so that participants, trainers and others may problem solve after the face to face event is over. To that end, participants are enrolled in the **SNAP List Serve**. Seventy-five to 100 messages are posted to the list-serve each month and the number is growing. People share outreach materials, send the latest policy pronouncements, answer eligibility questions and suggest strategies for successfully completing applications. An archive contains all message threads posted to the list-serve with a search function.

¹⁰ See Figure 2: Benchmark Institute Learning Philosophy is shown.

Materials

The training provides many materials and resources. Materials differ according to whether it is section 1, 2, or 3. All participants receive the ***Food Assistance Manual***¹¹, designed for use at the face to face event as well as on-going use in participant daily work. The Food Assistance Manual contains seven sections: Roles & Responsibilities, Food Stamp Law, Immigrants, Interviewing, Administrative Agencies, Legal Analysis, and Training Materials. Each Section Three participant also receives a copy of the negotiation classic, ***Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.***

Participants also receive a CD containing these resources: Legal Services of Northern California's Guide to Food Stamp Program, Benchmark Institute's Food Stamp Calculator, Allotments and Deductions Chart, Latest Revisions to CalFresh Regulations, Quick Guide to CalFresh Regulations, SNAP Glossary, DSS Forms & Publications, NonCitizen Reference Guide, Food Stamp Operation and Access Survey Results.

Training Contents

All Section Goals:

- Process Food Stamp applications more quickly and accurately
- Make effective referrals
- Create a plan for ongoing learning
- Find and use key resource tools including forms and checklists
- Connect with others to expand resources and expertise

Day 1:

- assignment review
- food stamp program context
- due process rights
- Section 1:
 - roles and responsibilities of the outreach practitioner
- Section 2:
 - application process
- Section 3:
 - various county interests presentations
- skills demonstration and practice
 - role play interviewing
 - role play negotiation
 - mock hearing

Day 2:

- assignment review

¹¹ See Figure 2: Pages 1-2 of 3 of the Food Assistance Manual are shown.

- Section 1:
 - public benefits overview
 - food stamp program overview
 - application process
 - eligibility “practice problems”
- Section 2:
 - regulations overview and how to read
 - application process: advanced understanding
 - eligibility “practice problems”: advanced
- Section 3:
 - negotiation
 - application process: further advanced understanding
 - negotiation “practice problems”
- eligibility quiz (team game)

Day 3:

- simulations practice (different scenario per section)

Key Points

Training Highlights:

- regularly scheduled and recurring (annually)
- participatory, participants encouraged to ask questions
- interactive and unique games and activities
- skills-based approach
- experiential practice
- community-building emphasis

Contact Information

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Figure 2. FAST Materials



Benchmark Learning Philosophy

Learn by Doing
People retain knowledge and skills if they have immediate and repeated opportunities to practice what is learned.

Informal Atmosphere
Learning is increased in an atmosphere that is the least reminiscent of any formal schooling.

Variety of Methods
Research has demonstrated that learning proceeds most quickly when information reaches the learner through more than one sensory channel. We use methods directed at the visual, auditory and kinesthetic channels.

Guidance not Grades
We use no devices for comparative evaluation of your progress. We offer honest individualized feedback with explicit performance standards. We help you set achievable learning goals and suggest ways to meet them.

No tricks, traps or red herrings
Such artifice hinders and sometimes prevents learning.

Learning by Layering
We believe in layering information — basic information first, followed by exercises and experiences to use and practice applying the information. We aim to set cognitive hooks in the mind so that you can identify issues, recognize critical information in life-like situations. We do not believe in "memorize and regurgitate."

Learning How to Learn
Information and knowledge are increasing exponentially. A key skill is learning how to improve your ability to learn. A first step is to become aware of your own learning style and how you can broaden it to improve your learning ability.



2010 FAST		
Section 1	Section 2	Section 3
Day 1 8/11		
1. Overview [ML] 2:00 – 3:00 • Goals/Objectives • Agenda Review	1. Overview [ML] 2:00 – 3:00 • Goals/Objectives • Agenda Review	1. Overview [ML] 2:00 – 3:00 • Goals/Objectives • Agenda Review
2. Roles & Responsibilities [S] 3:15-5:45 • Icebreaker • Participant presentations on their organization, client population, goals (See assignment) • Confidentiality • Learning Goals	2. CWD: The Application Process [S] 3:15-5:45 • Icebreaker • Participant presentations on their CWD's application process (See assignment) • Learning Goals	2. CWD: Interest Based Negotiation [S] 3:15-5:45 • Icebreaker • Participant presentations on their CWD's interests (See assignment) • Learning Goals
3. Skill Demonstration [ML] 7:00-9:00 Goals: • demonstrate good use of skills involved in doing Food Stamp work • give context of the Food Stamp World (participants don't do hearings, but need to see one) • review basic due process rights • practice interviewing Icebreaker: participants interview in pairs	3. Skill Demonstration [ML] 7:00-9:00 Goals: • demonstrate good use of skills involved in doing Food Stamp work • give context of the Food Stamp World (participants don't do hearings, but need to see one) • review basic due process rights • practice interviewing Icebreaker: participants interview in pairs	3. Skill Demonstration [ML] 7:00-9:00 Goals: • demonstrate good use of skills involved in doing Food Stamp work • give context of the Food Stamp World (participants don't do hearings, but need to see one) • review basic due process rights • practice interviewing Icebreaker: participants interview in pairs
Demonstrations: (all trainers) a. Interview – Outreach worker helps person apply for Food Stamps; discuss techniques etc. b. Negotiation - Person denied; receives notice of action; get info from EW; negotiate with appeals worker. c. Hearing – testimony; argument.	Demonstrations: (all trainers) a. Interview – Outreach worker helps person apply for Food Stamps; discuss techniques etc. b. Negotiation - Person denied; receives notice of action; get info from EW; negotiate with appeals worker. c. Hearing – testimony; argument.	Demonstrations: (all trainers) a. Interview – Outreach worker helps person apply for Food Stamps; discuss techniques etc. b. Negotiation - Person denied; receives notice of action; get info from EW; negotiate with appeals worker. c. Hearing – testimony; argument.
Day 2 8/12		
4. Introduction to Public Benefits [L] 9:00-10:15 • Use simplified Public Benefit Chart to introduce main programs: CW; FS; SSI; SSA; Medi-Cal; Medicare; IHSS; UIB; SDI; GA/GR; Foster Care • Ask them to complete Chart • Find an image for each • Use Food & Money	4. Regulations [S] 9:00-10:15 Hierarchy of Laws • What are regulations? • Hierarchy of Laws • Consistency arguments: why regs must be consistent with statutes and constitutions; why state law must conform to federal law	4. Introduction to Principled Negotiation [S] 9:00-10:15 • Separate the People from the Problem • Focus on Interests Not Positions • Invent Options for Mutual Gain • Insist on Using Objective Criteria • BATNA

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	
5. Food Stamps Overview [L] 10:30 – 12:00 • The Basics w/ interaction	5. How to Read Regulations (with skill and grace) [S] 10:30 – 12:00 • Presentation • Element Analysis	5. Introduction to Principled Negotiation [S] 10:30 – 12:00 Continue #4	
6. SNAP Application Round Robin [ML] (1:00-2:00) • become familiar with the whys and wherefores of the SNAP Application The SNAP application (DFA 285 A2) has 25 questions. In groups of 5, participants will visit 12 "stations" where they will discuss the reasons behind each question.	6. SNAP Application Round Robin [ML] (1:00-2:00) • become more familiar with the whys and wherefores of the SNAP Application The SNAP application (DFA 285 A2) has 25 questions. In groups of 5, participants will visit 12 "stations" where they will discuss the reasons behind each question.	6. SNAP Application Round Robin [ML] (1:00-2:00) • become even more familiar with the whys and wherefores of the SNAP Application The SNAP application (DFA 285 A2) has 25 questions. In groups of 5, participants will visit 12 "stations" where they will discuss the reasons behind each question.	
7. SNAP Problem Solving [S] (2:00 – 4:30) • Do Problems (some in the form of interviews)	7. Advanced SNAP Problem Solving [S](2:00 – 4:30) • Do problems using element analysis.	7. Negotiation Analysis [S](2:00 – 4:30) • Do problems using Negotiation Analysis Form.	
8. SNAP: The Game [ML] 7:00 – 9:00 People compete to answer questions about Food Stamps and other benefit programs. Trainers act as coaches and judges.	8. SNAP: The Game [ML] 7:00 – 9:00 People compete to answer questions about Food Stamps and other benefit programs. Trainers act as coaches and judges.	8. SNAP: The Game [ML] 7:00 – 9:00 People compete to answer questions about Food Stamps and other benefit programs. Trainers act as coaches and judges.	
Day 3 8/13 9. Simulations [S] 8:30 – 12:30 A la College of Advocacy, participants do interviews in their small groups. Everyone will observe all interviews, participants will play each other's "clients", and everyone will give feedback. Interview content is ...food stamps.	9. Simulations [S] 8:30 – 12:30 • Preparation time (Interview to get facts?) • Participants present completed problems to trainer	9. Simulations [S] 8:30 – 12:30 Participants do negotiations in their small groups. Everyone will observe all negotiations and everyone will give feedback. Negotiation content is ...food stamps.	
Lunch 12:30 – 1:30 10. Translating Training into Practice [S] 1:30 – 2:15	10. Translating Training into Practice [S] 1:30 – 2:15	10. Translating Training into Practice [S] 1:30 – 2:15	
11. Closing [ML] 2:30 – 3:00	11. Closing [ML] 2:30 – 3:00	11. Closing [ML] 2:30 – 3:00	
S - small group of 10-12 within each section	L - large group of all section members	ML – mega large group of everyone in the training.	

Food Assistance Manual: Contents	
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Merced County Human Services Agency

Background

Merced County is located in the center of the San Joaquin Valley, spanning from the coast to the edge of Yosemite National Park. Merced County has a population of approximately 245,321 people¹² and 27.9% of households experienced food insecurity¹³. The Merced County Human Services Agency (HSA) is the department of Merced County that provides services and connects residents to aid¹⁴.

As part of its services, the Merced County HSA offers the “Community Outreach Training” on CalFresh outreach and nutrition education. Part of a larger CalFresh outreach program, the HSA operates a two-day food stamp outreach training that has been in operation from 2006 to present. Other aspects of Merced County’s HSA CalFresh outreach program include marketing of online e-application and direct outreach. Merced County’s HSA has a dedicated CalFresh Outreach Coordinator to oversee these trainings.

- 1.** The Community Outreach Training was created from a combined effort of trainers in the Staff Development department and the CalFresh Outreach Coordinator.
- 2.** Trainings were first offered on-site to community-based organizations, starting in 2006.
- 3.** Trainings were then customized; compressed in content to accommodate the site and time specific needs of community-based organizations.
- 4.** Over the years, the number of organizations requesting prescreening training has reduced in number. There is great and increasing demand for continuing education training for community based organizations that are already trained.

¹² U.S. Census Bureau. "State & County QuickFacts: Merced County, California." November 4, 2010. Accessed on January 11, 2011 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06047.html>

¹³ California Food Policy Advocates. "2010 County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profiles: Merced County." 17 February 2010. Accessed Jan 11, 2011 at <http://www.cfpac.org/2010CountyProfiles/Main.html>

¹⁴ Merced County. "Departments A-H." Accessed Jan 11, 2011 at <http://www.co.merced.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=146>

Training Structure

Merced County Human Services Agency offers an intensive two-day training program to any community member or organization interested. The first day is approximately 8 hours long, and the second day is approximately 6 hours long.

The training is conducted by trainers within the Human Services Agency. The completely county-initiated and implemented nature of this Community Outreach Training and the HSA's larger CalFresh outreach program, reflect the County's hands-on and community-partnership approach to outreach.

"With the assistance of our community partners we can broaden the concept of the food assistance program (Food Stamps¹⁵) from merely an eligibility issuance program to its complete purpose, as a nutritional services supplemental program that will assist our neighbors in becoming food secure.

...
Community Based Organizations (CBO) provide an essential factor in our outreach efforts.

...
Any contact these families make with your organization is a vital one; they are building a rapport with you, your organization, and trust in the information you provide."¹⁶

The Merced County Human Services Agency Community Outreach Training is an innovative training program that provides a comprehensive training to community-based organizations upon request. County trainers present the training in lecture format, but the training also includes role-play activities to conceptualize household status, real-life scenarios to practice prescreening, and interactive "shopping" activities to practice nutritional shopping on a limited budget.

The training is distinctive not only because it is completely led by the county, but also because it is very comprehensive on eligibility rules and regulations. Each topic covered under eligibility content is also presented with references to the code and law that corresponds to the topic.

These trainings are usually provided off-site, at the site requested by the community-based organization. Sometimes, the training can be condensed, depending on the community-based organization requesting the training. For example, sometimes the Eligibility and Application portion of the training is only provided. In this sense, the training is customized by the county to meet the needs and request of the community-based organization.

¹⁵ Now called CalFresh in California.

¹⁶ Merced County Human Services Agency, Community Outreach Training Manual (Merced: Merced County Human Services Agency, 2008), Foreword.

The C4Yourself online application system training is another option that is offered independently, in-house and off-site by County staff.

The training provides resources for the community-based organization to utilize if questions later arise. Resource materials include the Community Outreach Training Manual, which is 41 pages long and includes an outline of the topics covered in the session, in-depth explanations of each topic, county forms, a food stamp interview planning guide, a food stamp checklist, a prescreening worksheet, and a dedicated county contact listing.

The Community Outreach Training is completely funded through Merced County Human Services Agency and is free to participants. From 2006-2010, 44 participants were trained through the Community Outreach Training. Participants are from various community entities, including Merced City School District, Head Start, Atwater Elementary School District, Gateway Community Church, Delhi Unified School District, WIC centers, GVHC, LMG, Salvation Army of Los Banos, CDHS, and Catholic Charities.

Training Contents

Day 1:

- community outreach approach
- households
- statuses: student, striker
- residency
- social security number verification
- citizenship
- income, expenses, resources
- work registration and able bodied adults without dependents

Day 2:

- application process
- prescreening: overview and practice
- healthful eating
- forms and materials

Key Points

Training Highlights:

- Community Outreach Training is overseen by a dedicated County CalFresh Outreach Coordinator
- comprehensive eligibility content
- code and legal references for all content in manual

- prescreening exercises and practice
- nutritional education component

Contact Information

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2-1-1 San Diego

Background

2-1-1 San Diego (2-1-1 SD) is located in central San Diego, CA and provides a live service to the county, a population estimated at 3,053,793.¹⁷ 2-1-1 San Diego is the only free, confidential, dialing code service in San Diego, and their highly trained Client Service Representatives (CSRs) aim to connect individuals and families to community, health and disaster services. Assistance is offered 24/7 and in more than 150 languages.

In San Diego County, there are more than 6,000 community agencies and 5,000 health and human service programs.¹⁸ Each month, 2-1-1 SD receives an average of 22,000 calls and connects 20,000 people with local programs such as food and housing assistance, financial and employment services, and parenting and senior help.¹⁹

In addition to live phone service, 2-1-1 SD also maintains an extensive online database of more than 5,000 highlighted programs on topics such as services for children, disaster, and homeless individuals.

Because of the phone-based nature of 2-1-1 SD's services, 2-1-1 SD has developed advanced phone based outreach techniques. Starting in 2009, 2-1-1 SD also serves as the leader for phone-based CalFresh outreach training among other 2-1-1 call centers throughout California. In 2010, 2-1-1 SD became the primary contractor for phone-based outreach, granted by the California State Department of Public Health.

2-1-1 SD has been an independent non-profit agency since 2003 and received designation from the Public Utilities Commission to use the 2-1-1 dialing code in 2005.

- 1.** In 2007, 2-1-1 SD partnered with CAFB as a subcontractor to provide phone-based outreach services. During the 2007-08 contract year, 2-1-1 SD provided 5,028 referrals for Food Stamps to people in San Diego County.
- 2.** 2008 also marked the beginning of 2-1-1 SD's phone-based FSO training program where 9 other 2-1-1 agencies with over 80 attendees were trained to provide FSO services to their clients.

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. "State & County QuickFacts: San Diego County, California." November 2010. Accessed on January 4, 2011 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06073.html>

¹⁸ San Diego Hunger Coalition, "What is 2-1-1?" Accessed on January 4, 2011 at <https://211sandiego.communityos.org/cms/node/786>

¹⁹ Oksayan, Claire. Program Manager. 2-1-1 San Diego. Personal Communication. February 2, 2011.

3. In 2009-10, 2-1-1 SD, still in partnership with CAFB, organized and monitored the other 2-1-1 agencies performing FSO activities under the CAFB contract. In addition, 2-1-1 SD again provided the statewide training to 17 2-1-1 call centers and over 100 attendees.
4. Starting October 1, 2010, 2-1-1 SD began its first year as a prime contractor for CalFresh Outreach contracting directly with the California Department of Public Health and managing 19 subcontracting 2-1-1 agencies

The 2-1-1 SD's Chief Operating Officer regularly oversees the trainings provided to staff at the 2-1-1 San Diego call center. As part of 2-1-1 SD's CalFresh Outreach contract, the Program Coordinator from 2-1-1 San Diego and the Agency Trainer from 2-1-1 Los Angeles provide on-site trainings annually to other 2-1-1 centers in the state.

1. The first outreach training was offered in 2007 for 2-1-1 SD staff at the 2-1-1 SD call center. Then was offered to all participating 2-1-1 centers starting in 2008.
 2. Since 2008, all participating 2-1-1 call centers have received the annual training and the number of participating centers continues to increase each year. Nine agencies were trained in 2008, 17 in 2009 and 19 in 2010.
-

Training Structure

2-1-1 SD offers trainings annually to its subcontractors: other California 2-1-1 call centers.²⁰ Each “2-1-1 Phone-Based Outreach Training” on-site is approximately four hours long, and is usually offered twice in one day as a morning session and an afternoon session. The training is meant to cover the basics of phone-based outreach for the CalFresh Program and is appropriate for both beginners and those seeking more practice and review.

The 2-1-1 Phone-Based Outreach Training is offered to each 2-1-1 call center yearly, usually in October-November.

The training is conducted by the Program Coordinator from 2-1-1 San Diego and the Agency Trainer from 2-1-1 Los Angeles, in a PowerPoint format. A ‘pop quiz’ begins the training. Questions are encouraged throughout the presentation, and answered in detail when asked. Time for additional questions is also built into the schedule at the end of the training. Coached exercises to practice phone calls conclude the training.

The training is free and provides materials and resources. Materials include a manual that includes a copy of the topics covered in the training, official outreach protocol, official prescreening questions, past training notes, statewide SNAP²¹ renaming talking points, a glossary, and fliers about immigration concerns. A CD containing all of these materials is also

²⁰ Note: only the on-site training provided by 2-1-1 SD to other 2-1-1 centers was observed for this case study.

²¹ SNAP is the federal Contact of the program formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. States may opt to choose their own Contact. On October 22, 2010, California unveiled its new Contact, ‘CalFresh’ for SNAP.

provided. In addition, a tri-fold quick reference standing chart about common myths and how to address misinformation is provided. A card, "All About the 'Ss,'" detailing the difference between various income assistance programs is another reference material provided.

Training Contents

2-1-1 Phone-Based Outreach Training covers:

- program purpose
- statewide phone-based outreach plan
 - official outreach protocol
 - official prescreening questions
 - eligibility questions from attendees answered
- referrals
- application process, timeline
- coaching 1-on-1 practice sessions

Key Points

Training Highlights:

- regularly scheduled and recurring (annually)
- participatory, participants encouraged to ask questions
- experiential practice (coaching)
- statewide phone-based outreach plan and protocol

Contact Information

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San Diego Hunger Coalition

Background

The San Diego Hunger Coalition (SDHC), through a network of 45 coalition members, serves the county which includes a population of 3,053,793.²² SDHC aims to reduce hunger in San Diego county, which owns the unfortunate distinction of holding the lowest participation rate amongst US urban counties, and where an “estimated 500,000 San Diegans experience hunger,” by connecting individuals and families in need to resources such as farmer’s markets and federal services, such as SNAP, the School Breakfast Program, and the School Lunch Program.²³

In addition, SDHC serves as a leader in regional anti-hunger leadership efforts. For example, at the “World Cafe: Food for All - A Conversation to End Hunger” in October 2010 SDHC convened members of the anti-hunger community, the sustainable food community, faith-based organizations, the business community, schools and government to discuss a hunger-free San Diego.²⁴

Another major effort in the SDHC coalition is the “Food Stamp Taskforce,” founded in 2006.²⁵ Members include the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHS)²⁶, food pantries, and community-based organizations. Through the Taskforce, the SDHC facilitates outreach by providing trainings, resources, and consultation to those conducting CalFresh enrollment outreach. The Taskforce works to:

“help identify barriers to access, educate community outreach partners about Food Stamp policies and procedures, and provide

²² U.S. Census Bureau. "State & County QuickFacts: San Diego County, California." November 4, 2010. Accessed on December 24, 2010 at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06073.html>

²³ San Diego Hunger Coalition. "Reducing Hunger in San Diego." Accessed on December 24, 2010 at <http://www.sandiegohungercoalition.org/>

²⁴ San Diego Hunger Coalition. "Regional Anti-Hunger Leadership." Accessed on December 24, 2010 at <http://www.sandiegohungercoalition.org/regional-anti-hunger-leadership>

²⁵ As of February 7, 2011, the Taskforce was still named the Food Stamp Taskforce (despite the California SNAP name of ‘CalFresh’).

²⁶ Note: social services agency names differ by county; this may be a source of confusion.

HHSA with feedback and best practices for increasing eligible enrollment.”²⁷

The San Diego Hunger Coalition has been in operation from 2005 to present.

1. Starting in 2005, when SDHC first received funding from the State Outreach and Access Plan to conduct CalFresh outreach, SDHC began work with about a half dozen organizations that included about 20 people conducting outreach in Central, South & North County of San Diego.²⁸
2. In 2006, SDHC partnered with the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) to provide outreach services. The San Diego HHSA worked with SDHC to create the Food Stamp Task Force, address barriers in the system, and address case questions.
3. Between 2006 and 2010, “SDHC in partnership with HHSA and its Food Stamp outreach partners have increased the participation rate among eligible people from 29% to over 40%.”²⁹

The SDHC CalFresh Outreach Manager regularly provides a ‘general’ training, “Food Stamp Outreach 101”³⁰, to interested parties.

1. In early 2007 SDHC began offering offered its first trainings. Upon request, a SDHC trainer would go out to the partner organizations on their site.
2. Since 2008, the trainings have been regularly offered (monthly) and partner organizations come to SDHC. SDHC still provides onsite trainings as needed and available to organizations throughout the county.
3. In 2010, SDHC “provided 24 trainings to 224 people from 50 organizations. We provided technical assistance, training and on-going support to 50 organizations conducting CalFresh outreach activities. [SDHC] held 35 regional Food Stamp Task Force meetings at which we addressed barriers to participation, shared best practices and facilitated partnerships between HHSA & CBOs.”³¹

²⁷ San Diego Hunger Coalition. "Regional Anti-Hunger Leadership." Accessed on December 24, 2010 at <http://www.sandiegohungercoalition.org/regional-anti-hunger-leadership>

²⁸ Tracy, Jennifer. CalFresh Outreach Manager. San Diego Hunger Coalition. Personal Communication. January 28, 2011.

²⁹ San Diego Hunger Coalition. "Federal Nutrition Program Outreach." Accessed on December 24, 2010 at <http://www.sandiegohungercoalition.org/federal-nutrition-program-outreach>

³⁰ As of February 7, 2011, the training was still named Food Stamp Outreach 101 (despite the California SNAP name of ‘CalFresh’).

³¹ San Diego Hunger Coalition. "Reducing Hunger in San Diego." Accessed on December 24, 2010 at <http://www.sandiegohungercoalition.org/>

Training Structure

SDHC regularly offers trainings to its community-based organization (CBO) partners. Each “Food Stamp Outreach 101” is approximately 2.5 hours long, and usually takes place in the morning. The training is meant to cover the basics of CalFresh outreach and is appropriate for both beginners and anyone wishing to review or practice.

The Food Stamp Outreach 101 training is offered at least once a month. The dates of upcoming trainings are usually published two months at a time (e.g. October-November, December-January). Due to spatial limitations and to ensure adequate time to answer questions, each training session is limited to 12-14 people. An RSVP is required to attend.

The training is conducted by the CalFresh Outreach Program Manager, in a PowerPoint format. A video begins the training. Exercises to practice determining eligibility and prescreening are also included in the training. Questions are encouraged throughout the presentation, and are also built into the schedule at the end of the training.

The training is free³² and provides materials and resources. Drinks and refreshments are also served to attendees. Materials include a binder that includes a copy of the topics covered in the training, outreach fliers in multiple languages, a contact list, a tracking form, a military income worksheet, a student eligibility worksheet, a medical deduction worksheet, a self-employment income statement, a shared housing statement, application methods overview. A CD containing all of these materials and more is also provided.

Before the end of the training, training attendees are asked to provide information about what populations, levels of outreach, and geographic regions the community-based organization partner serves. This information is added to a SDHC database. Training attendees are also added to a SDHC list-serv that supports the “Food Stamp Taskforce” efforts.

Other Trainings

In partnership with the San Diego County Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA), SDHC provides a training on how to fill out the CalFresh Program application forms and how the client may provide verifications. This training is offered approximately once per quarter.

In partnership with Legal Aid Society of San Diego, an organization based in San Diego and providing free legal aid to low-income populations, SDHC offers a training on immigration and its relation to public benefits programs. This training is offered approximately 2 to 4 times per year.

³² Note: There is a building parking fee, but street parking is also available.

Training Contents

Food Stamp Outreach 101 covers:

- context of local hunger and health issues (San Diego)
- program purpose
- application process, timeline
- eligibility
 - determining household composition
 - other assistance grants (income)
 - citizenship, proration
 - financial tests: income, resources, deductions
- special populations
 - ABAWDs
 - students
 - seniors
 - homeless individuals in shelters
- prescreening methods (tools, practice exercise)
- how to fill out application forms
- case management process (specially negotiated system with the county)
 - contact information
 - sample communication templates
 - filing appeals

Key Points

Training Highlights:

- regularly scheduled and recurring (at least once a month)
- participatory, participants encouraged to ask questions
- experiential practice
- PowerPoint has helpful visuals, diagrams and charts
- cooperation with County HHSA (dedicated agency office contacts list)

Contact Information

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Inventory of CalFresh Outreach Training Practices

Additional entries may be submitted to lhahn@hungercenter.org for inclusion into a master listing.

TRAINING PRACTICES, LISTED BY ORGANIZATION

This section is a collection of outreach training approaches. Groups were asked the question: "What does your organization do for CalFresh outreach training?" Below are the responses, listed in alphabetical order by the organization name. By compiling this information, we hope to make it available as a resource for other groups considering SNAP outreach methods.

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton (Stockton, CA and Modesto, CA)

Contact: Simona Rios

Position: Program Director, Nutrition Assistance Services

We have attended the Benchmark Institute training. We also do on the job training or shadowing. We are planning to have some staff attend a training sometime next year offered by one of the food banks as well.

Chico State Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion (Chico, CA)

Contact: Wendy Kaplan

Position: CalFresh Outreach Coordinator

I provide our subcontractors with training on CalFresh eligibility and program requirements as well as fiscal/programmatic orientation to contract management. I also educate stakeholders and community agencies on the basics of CalFresh underutilization, eligibility, and outreach efforts of our subcontractors.

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano (Concord, CA)

Contact: Barbara Stanley

Position: Advocacy Specialist

1. Food Stamp Facts and Myths, this training takes place 3 times a year in each of our Counties. This training is 4 hours long, with county staff presenting a power point on the basic eligibility of Food Stamp for CBO's. We also provide handout sheets in a packet for each attendee on the guidelines that are

covered in the power point.(example: eligibility for expedited Food Stamp) A question and answer session is also included;

2. Partnership Meetings: (four times a year in each county) all people who have attended a Facts and Myths training are invited to attend this lunch meeting(we provide lunch). Again the county staff presents in detail on topic of eligibility (example: student eligibility) this training last 2 hours. This again is an opportunity for the attendees to meet and ask questions of the Food Stamp county staff.

At all of our training we offer outreach materials for agencies and clients.....posters, fliers and Food Stamp applications. We also inform agencies about calling/email Food Bank Staff for assistance with eligibility questions and how we work to resolve problems with the county process.

3. We also offer a shorter version of Facts and Myths for clients at the request of an agency who has a number of clients who are interested in applying for Food Stamp.

Food for People (Eureka, CA)

Contact: Michael Canning

Position: Community Education & Outreach Coordinator

The two attached documents outline our typical CalFresh Training; we pass out the 'FS Training Notes – blank' document to participants and then work through the sections, pulling info from our 'FS Training Notes – script' document, with the participants ideally filling in the blank boxes. We also do a different training with our county that is co-facilitated by county and Food for People staff. The county training is in PowerPoint and just runs over basic eligibility and the application. We used to do the attached version more often, but now that we have the option of doing one with the county we usually do that unless there is some sort of scheduling conflict.

For both trainings we distribute and talk about our 'best practices' document.

Four Winds of Indian Education, Inc. (Chico, CA)

Contact: Angela Martin

Position: Community Education Specialist

Our organization attends appropriate trainings as requested through CNAP-CSU, Chico Research Foundation, Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion. We also will attend trainings from California Food Stamp Forum and Benchmark Institute. The next upcoming FREE training will be the 12th Annual California Food Stamp Forum held on February 9th, 2011 in Sacramento from 9-4pm. For more information you can contact fsforum@cfpa.net or call 510-433-1122.

Jewish Family Service of San Diego (San Diego, CA)

Contact: Shelly Hahne

Position: Supervisor, Hand Up Youth Food Pantry

- New JFS staff are encouraged to attend a food stamp training conducted by Jennifer Tracey, San Diego, Hunger Coalition
- Existing JFS staff are encouraged to attend Jennifer's advanced training
- I have attended Benchmark's FAST training (module 1) and am available to all JFS staff for questions/consultation

San Francisco Food Bank (San Francisco, CA)

Contact: Liliana Sandoval

Position: Benefits Outreach Coordinator (as of 8/30/2010)

Research and Q&A with former Benefits Outreach Coordinator, Attend Alameda County Community Food Bank Food Stamp Trainings, will be attending a 2-day training with the Benchmark Institute on public benefits programs.

United Farm Workers Foundation (Los Angeles, CA)

Contact: Laura Urias

Position: Program Coordinator

- Internal, Cal Fresh and public benefits program powerpoint based on Benchmark Institute materials and the CA Guide to the Food Stamp Program (created by Jodie Berger of LSNC).
- Internal, powerpoint based on NILC and CIPC materials on public benefits and immigrants
- At least one refresher internal training for staff during the year to go over some of the more complicated rules especially regarding immigrants
- Staff attends the Cal Fresh only training held by Benchmark in Los Gatos
- Staff are encouraged to look out for and attend any training opportunities throughout the year.

Recommendations

Best Practices in CalFresh Outreach Trainings

Based on the highlighted case studies and inventory listings, the following seem to be important factors and components to consider in CalFresh outreach trainings.

- **Practice.** Learning through practice and reinforcement seems to be a very effective way to learn both eligibility content and skills.
- **Community.** A community and network can help reinforce content and skills beyond a training, and provide a space for “training” (helping and teaching) each other.
- **County involvement.** Eligibility rules and implementation methods can vary greatly from time to time, and from county to county. In order to stay current on eligibility content and other important updates related to the program, a high level of communication and involvement between the county social service agency and community groups is vital; continuous updates of eligibility content is only possible through an ongoing relationship.
- **Skills-based.** In addition to eligibility content, an emphasis on skills such as active listening, negotiation, ability to look up regulations, interviewing, coalition-building, and ability to keep confidentiality should be emphasized. Knowledge of eligibility content is not complete with the skills to deliver and act upon knowledge.

Based on analysis of outreach training approaches and methods not highlighted in this report, I further recommend that the following elements be included in a CalFresh outreach training.

- **Shadowing.** Extending on the idea of learning through practice, shadowing can be very helpful for understanding how eligibility content and skills interact in order to produce an effective and pleasant interaction between clients and those doing outreach.
- **Specialized training components for various groups and regions.** In addition to a county-community organization relationship to stay current on regulations, it would also be very helpful to recognize the unique and specific needs of various communities and groups (ethnic, agricultural, rural, urban, farm-worker, migrant, elderly, etc.) and develop specialized components to address these communities, which may be present and more common in some counties as opposed to others.

