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ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER  
GOVERNOR

May 26, 2009

Mr. Dennis Stewart, Director  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
Western Regional Office  
Food and Nutrition Service  
90 Seventh Street, Suite 10-100  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Stewart:

We are pleased to enclose for your information the *California Food Stamp Program Access Improvement Plan – Federal Fiscal Year 2008 Final Report*.

Thank you for your support and involvement in the ongoing implementation of California's Food Stamp Outreach Project. Please contact Mr. Michael Papin, Chief, Food Stamp Policy Bureau, at (916) 654-1880 with any questions regarding the 2008 Final Report or California's Food Stamp Outreach Project.

Sincerely,

  
for CHRISTINE WEBB-CURTIS, Chief  
Food Stamp Branch

Enclosures

# California Food Stamp Program Access Improvement Plan FFY 2008 Final Report

## INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of accomplishments, challenges, and achievements realized under the California Food Stamp Program (FSP) Access Improvement Plan (AIP) during Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008, October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008. The AIP is funded through an interagency agreement between the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). CDPH has funding arrangements with two nonprofit contractors and their subcontractors to provide services at the local level.

Since its inception in FFY 2004, the goal of the California FSP AIP has been to increase FSP participation in California. To date, this goal has been pursued through: interagency meetings at the state level; meetings with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Western Region Office, state and local agencies, and advocates; infrastructure development and improvement; and contracting with umbrella organizations and their community-based nonprofit partners (subcontractors) to provide outreach services. In FFY 2008, CDSS (through the interagency agreement) and CDPH's *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* continued to partner with the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) and began a new partnership with Central Valley Health Network (CVHN). Since the original pilot in FFY 2004, food stamp outreach in California was expanded; and in FFY 2008 CAFB had 24 subcontractors in 19 counties, while CVHN had four subcontractors in two counties. All CAFB and CVHN subcontractors are nonprofit organizations. It is estimated that collectively, AIP activities resulted in approximately 9,000 additional new food stamp households and brought an estimated \$27.7 million in food stamp benefits to California.

## MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During FFY 2008, leadership, programmatic, and administrative accomplishments were achieved through the California FSP AIP.

### ➤ Leadership Accomplishments:

- Statewide Infrastructure and Problem Solving – One of the key components of the AIP is the ongoing collaboration between and among CDSS and the *Network*, CAFB, CVHN, county food stamp agencies, local food banks, community health centers, and other community-based organizations. The forum for these collaborations is the Food Stamp and Nutrition Education Outreach and Participation Committee (FANOut), hosted by the *Network*. It is this comprehensive collaborative effort that has advanced a strong working relationship among county food stamp offices, CAFB, CVHN, and their subcontractors, CDPH, and CDSS to provide local food stamp outreach activities and increase access to the FSP.
- Coordination at the State Level – At the state level, the coordination between CDSS and the *Network* provides support for the activities in the AIP while meeting USDA guidelines and requirements. One of the ways CDSS and the *Network* maintain collaboration is through quarterly Interagency Food Access Committee (IFAC) meetings hosted by CDSS. These meetings often include representatives from California's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and the California Department of Education.
- Coordination at the County Level – At the county level, the collaboration among CAFB, CVHN, and local agencies has resulted in an outreach model that is flexible and able to incorporate new innovations. Through CDSS, the AIP and Food Stamp Outreach remains a standing agenda item at the monthly County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) Food Stamp Committee meetings. The majority of the 58 counties attend this meeting on a regular basis, and it has allowed for increased collaboration between outreach contractors and FSP coordinators.

- USDA Round Tables – *Network* staff participated in round tables hosted by USDA's Western Region Office and CDSS. Round tables were held in Fresno, Los Angeles, and Tulare Counties; USDA Undersecretary Nancy Montanez Johner attended.
- Radio Ads – The *Network*, CDSS, CAFB, and CVHN coordinated with the participating counties and USDA around their radio ads that ran in Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Tulare Counties (January/February and May/June). Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) partners in the four counties were notified of the ads and encouraged to promote them when communicating with clients.
- Communication, Education, and Promotion – *Network* staff provided status reports and updates to both IFAC and FANOut. The *Network* and CAFB also presented at California Food Policy Advocates' Food Stamp Forum. Additionally, CAFB provided updates and presentations at CWDA's Food Stamp Committee meetings, CWDA's Annual Conference, California Food Stamp Automation Summit, Food Research and Action Center, and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities meeting. CAFB served on USDA's Food Stamp Outreach Coalition and Online Application Subcommittee, Feeding America's (formerly America's Second Harvest) Food Stamp Outreach Committee, and led Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium's food stamp outreach meetings and planning.

➤ **Programmatic Accomplishments:**

CDSS, the *Network*, CAFB, CVHN, and subcontractors continued to work toward increased participation in the FSP through collaboration, technology, such as the Food Stamp Information Line (FSIL), and one-on-one interactions with clients.

**State-Level Initiatives**

- 9,000 New FSP Households (estimated) – Through the combined efforts of CAFB's and CVHN's subcontractors and the FSIL, an estimated 9,000 households (more than 22,000 people) were enrolled in the Food Stamp Program, bringing an estimated 27.7 million in federal food stamp dollars to California.
- Food Stamp Information Line – The *Network* continued its statewide pilot of the toll-free FSIL through angel.com. The hotline is collaboration among CAFB, community partners, county food stamp offices, CDSS, and the *Network*. It allows callers to find out more about FSP, where to go to apply, and in some cases to be prescreened or fill out an application over the phone. In FFY 2008, the FSIL provided more than 42,000 callers with food stamp information.
- Statewide Call Center – The *Network* partnered with Professional Exchange Service Corporation (PESC), a statewide call center, to answer calls made to the hotline from seven counties. In counties whose food stamp office elected to have calls answered by PESC, operators were available 24/7 to prescreen and provide information about food stamps. (Other options were to have calls sent to a trusted nonprofit partner, to the food stamp office, or to a recorded message.) PESC also began working on turning the current Microsoft Access-based Food Stamp Application and Screening Tool into an online food stamp screener.
- Specialized Training – The Benchmark Institute was contracted to develop and conduct training for food stamp outreach practitioners. The FAST (Food Assistance Skills Training) took place September 8 to 10 at the Serra Retreat Center and trained 51 partners. The FAST training was highly participatory and included mock interviews, as well as information about the FSP. The training culminated with simulated eligibility interviews.
- Print Materials – The "Need Help Buying Food" brochure was updated, printed, and made available to contractors through the *Network's* online ordering system. The brochure was renamed "Food Stamps Make California Stronger" and is available in Spanish and English.
- Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows – CAFB and the *Network* each hosted Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows. Both Hunger Fellows presented posters at the *Network's* annual conference.
  - Katherine Moos, who was placed with CAFB, conducted research on indigenous Mexican farm workers in the Central Valley and food insecurity, which resulted in a report ("Documenting Vulnerability: Food Insecurity Among Indigenous Mexican Migrants In California's Central Valley") and poster presentation at the American Public Health

Association's annual conference. Additionally, Katherine worked on developing <http://misalimentos.org>, a Spanish-language web resource for food stamp outreach.

- Rachel Winch was placed with the *Network* and developed a protocol for screening callers over the phone, the SuperFAST (Food Stamp Application and Screening Tool) Call Center Operator Instruction Guidebook, and a report titled "Untangling the Lines: Using Phone-Based Assistance to Increase Access to Food Stamps". In addition, Rachel conducted quality control calls to the FSIL and made connections with California's 2-1-1s, many of which are part of the FFY 2009 AIP.

➤ **California Association of Food Banks:**

- Program Support and Infrastructure – CAFB managed and provided support to 24 subcontractors operating in 19 of California's 58 counties. Of CAFB's 24 subcontracting agencies, 13 also provide FSNE services to their clients.
- Direct Services – CAFB's subcontractors distributed nearly 247,000 food stamp outreach materials, prescreened more than 13,000 households for food stamp eligibility, assisted more than 15,000 households with their food stamp applications, trained over 1,000 people to conduct food stamp outreach activities, and participated in more than 400 meetings with county food stamp staff and other food stamp outreach partners. These efforts are estimated to have resulted in over 7,000 new food stamp households in California.
- \$23.7 million in Food Stamp Benefits (estimated) – Through the efforts of CAFB's nonprofit subcontractors, an estimated 19,000 people were enrolled in the Food Stamp Program bringing an estimated 23.7 million in federal food stamp dollars to California.
- Peer-to-Peer Collaboration – CAFB held its first-ever meeting for food stamp outreach subcontractors to help build a peer-to-peer network throughout the state and encourage peer-to-peer sharing and collaboration. This meeting was held the evening before California Food Policy Advocates' 2008 Food Stamp Forum.

➤ **Central Valley Health Network:**

- Program Support and Infrastructure – CVHN added two new partners during the course of the year: Golden Valley Health Centers (Merced County) and Sequoia Community Health Centers (Fresno County) for a total of four subcontractors operating in two counties. All four subcontracting health clinics also provide FSNE services to their clients.
- Direct Services – CVHN's subcontractors distributed nearly 35,000 food stamp outreach materials, prescreened more than 500 households for food stamp eligibility, assisted more than 500 households with their food stamp applications, and participated in meetings with county food stamp staff and other food stamp outreach partners. These efforts are estimated to have resulted in more than 250 new food stamp households in California.
- \$778,000 in Food Stamp Benefits (estimated) – Through the efforts of CVHN's subcontractors, more than 600 people were enrolled in the Food Stamp Program bringing an estimated 778,000 in federal food stamp dollars to California.
- County Partnerships – CVHN's Merced County subcontractors worked with the county food stamp office to establish a Food Stamp Outreach Committee that meets quarterly.
- USDA Undersecretary Visit – Undersecretary CVHN hosted a tour at Clinica Sierra Vista in Kern County to demonstrate the integrity of food stamp outreach and FSNE for Undersecretary Johner. USDA's Western Region Office, the *Network*, and CDSS attended.
- C4Yourself – CVHN subcontractors in Merced and San Bernardino Counties utilized C4Yourself, an online application only available in four counties, to help clients apply for food stamp benefits.

➤ **Administrative Accomplishments:**

- Training and Fiscal Monitoring Capacity – Both Paul Maas of CAFB and Maribel Morales of CVHN attended the *Network's Performance Compliance Review (PCR) Team Desk Review Training* to ensure that they understood desk review monitoring requirements.
- Fiscal Monitoring Performance Standards – Both CAFB and CVHN were able to meet the subcontractor fiscal monitoring recommendations of seven to 12 subcontractors per year for

CAFB and two subcontractors for CVHN. The *Network* participated in an oversight capacity with the review of the CAFB subcontractor, Alameda County Community Food Bank.

- Technical Assistance – The *Network* provided ongoing technical assistance to CAFB during 2008. The *Network* conducted a follow-up desk review for the third quarter of 2008 on CAFB and noticed substantial improvements from the 2007 desk review.
- Staff Capacity – CAFB increased its administrative staffing, resulting in more support for and monitoring of subcontractors.

➤ **Best Practices Developed by California Association of Food Banks:**

- Time Tracking
  - Time Reporting Forms – CAFB requires all subcontractors to submit time reporting forms with their invoices. Contract manager Paul Maas reviews the time reporting forms prior to approving the invoice. While this is not a requirement of the *Network*, CAFB has decided to review time records each quarter in order to more closely monitor this line item. This is a considerable amount of extra work; however, it allows for closer monitoring of this important line item.
  - Time Documentation – CAFB helps ensure that subcontractors select the correct month for time studying each quarter by e-mailing out tailored time study forms to each subcontractor for every staff member on their individual contract. This is done on a quarterly basis with a reminder as to which month to time study for that quarter. This is an excellent example of good technical assistance and quality control.
- Proration and Documentation of Actual Costs
  - Invoice Guide – In an effort to assist subcontractors with calculating actual costs, CAFB has developed an Invoice Guide for utilization by its subcontractors. The Invoice Guide assists subcontractors to calculate a proration percentage that is then automatically applied to their non-direct expenses in Operating and Other Costs. The Invoice Guide also prompts subcontractors to call CAFB if they have any equipment purchases before billing for them. The Invoice Guide appears to be an excellent tool to provide to subcontractors who may be struggling with how to calculate actual costs, especially given the two areas that *Network* subcontractors have historically had difficulty with – prorating and determining actual FTEs based on time records.
- Project Accounting
  - FSNE/Food Stamp Outreach Accounting – CAFB is using the pre-approved travel claim form for its employees. The form includes a column titled “Account: Project” in which CAFB staff code for food stamp outreach and FSNE depending on the purpose of their trip. This code is provided in addition to a more detailed description of the purpose of the trip. These features of the travel claim form are an excellent way to ensure that funds are allocated to the appropriate USDA project (FSNE or food stamp outreach).
- Orientation of Local Partners
  - Application Materials – CAFB provides potential subcontractors with application packets that include documents CAFB is required to provide the *Network* (e.g., budget justification form, scope of work), as well as a sample letter to the Food Stamp Specialist in their county that notifies the county that they intend to begin food stamp outreach activities and invites collaboration.
  - Finance Packets – Once contracts are awarded and before the beginning of the first quarter every year, CAFB mails out a Finance Packet to each subcontractor. The Finance Packet is essentially an orientation folder tailored for each subcontractor that contains materials to help them navigate the requirements of their contract. The following documents are included in the packet for their use:
    - Indirect cost certification form
    - Approved annual budget
    - Quarter 1 Invoice and State Share Documentation Forms
    - Quarter 1 Time Studies/Weekly Time Logs
    - Approved Travel Reimbursement Form

The Finance Packet has proven to be an excellent communication tool to 1) ensure that subcontractors are clear about what their final approved budget numbers are, 2) help ensure accurate fiscal reporting, and 3) provide reminders about the forms that subcontractors are required to use (e.g., time studies, travel forms).

## MAJOR CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS DEVELOPED

CDSS, the *Network*, County Food Stamp Agencies, CAFB, CVHN, and subcontracting organizations addressed challenges that presented themselves during FFY 2008.

### Program

- Coordination – CAFB and CVHN subcontractors continue to work on improving partnering with their county food stamp offices. CDSS continues to provide support and coordination between county FSP staff, CAFB and CVHN.
- Public Perception – CAFB and CVHN subcontractors also reported challenges related to misinformation and stigma attached to the FSP, as well as client fears about public charge, immigration status, and finger-imaging. These challenges continue to be addressed through FFY 2009 scopes of work.
- Client Hardships – For many clients, going to the county food stamp office is a barrier. Some subcontractors, in partnership with their county food stamp agencies, are submitting hardship cards with applications to encourage the county to waive the face-to-face intake interview.
- Local-Level Capacity – CAFB relieved two subcontractors (Ukiah Community Center and Lake Community Action Agency) from their contracts due to changes in staffing.

### Administration

- State Budget Impasse – California's budget impasse of 2008 and the Governor's Executive Order (E.O.) issued on July 31, 2008 presented several challenges for the *Network* and participating community-based organizations, CAFB and CVHN. At the state level, Public Health Institute contract services were suspended for two months during which PHI advanced two support staff and completed outstanding trainings until CDPH was able to secure exceptions on September 10, 2008. At the same time, CAFB and CVHN were not able to receive timely reimbursement on their invoices from CDPH which impacted their spending due to uncertainty and lack of cash flow. Once the budget was signed, there was a significant backlog (three months) at CDPH Accounting, so cash flow was not restored until mid-November. This presented fiscal hardships for CAFB, CVHN and their subcontracting organizations.
- State Share Fell Short – CAFB subcontractors fell short of predictions for State Share contributions resulting in fewer revenues to qualify for Federal Financial Participation reimbursement than initially planned. The following activities were put on hold:
  - Radio Bilingüe media partnership
  - Resource development from the Public Health Institute partnership
  - The hiring of an additional Program Assistant that was budgeted by CAFB to provide support to CAFB's Project Coordinator and Contract Manager

## EVALUATION TARGETS, METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The FFY 2008 California Food Stamp Access Improvement Plan included a goal to increase by at least 7,420 the number of households participating in the Food Stamp Program by September 30, 2007. Assuming an average 2.7 persons per household, this would represent an estimated 20,340 additional people or approximately a 1 percent increase in the number of FSP recipients.<sup>1</sup>

Assessing progress toward these FFY 2008 goals is based on program activity reported by CAFB and CVHN subcontractors and the statewide, toll-free Food Stamp Information Line (FSIL). The estimated number of additional FSP participants is based on the number of households that outreach

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<sup>1</sup> This target was set in comparison to the average monthly number of food stamp recipients in California which was 2,035,295 for calendar year 2006. Source: CDSS' DFA 256 monthly reports.

subcontractors assisted with their FSP applications, as well as the number of callers to the FSP information line during the year. On a quarterly basis, CAFB subcontractors reported their food stamp outreach activity via a web-based tracking system. Similarly, CVHN collects this information from its subcontractors on a monthly basis. Subcontractors also submit year-end reports summarizing their accomplishments, challenges, technical assistance and resource needs and intentions for change in the coming year. The FSIL provides monthly call volume reports.

Face-to-Face Services

Table 1 summarizes the FFY 2008 targets for material distribution, prescreening and application assistance activity that CAFB and CVHN subcontractors reported for the year. The original FFY 2008 plan targets were revised to reflect changes and the available reporting information.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: FFY 2008 Subcontractor Reported Activity—  
FSP Information, Prescreening and Application Assistance**

	FSP Information Provided*			Prescreened (households)			Assisted Applications		
	Original Target	Revised Target	Actual	Original Target	Revised Target	Actual	Original Target	Revised Target	Actual
CAFB Subcontractors	178,680	167,623	246,852	28,050	24,634	13,392	11,560	10,128	15,356
CVHN Subcontractors	1,500	3,100	34,636	500	900	526	180	320	505
Total	180,180	170,723	281,488	28,550	25,534	13,918	11,740	10,448	15,861

\* "FSP Information Provided" is reported as # of outreach materials distributed by CAFB and CVHN subcontractors.

As is evident in Table 1, the 29 active subcontractors greatly exceeded the FSP outreach materials distribution targets. These materials are principally pamphlets or brochures providing information about the FSP program, eligibility requirements, as well as contact information; however, they also include targeted pieces that address issues of particular concern, such as immigration implications. CAFB's subcontractors distributed almost a quarter of a million pieces of FSP material, exceeding their target by 42 percent. CVHN subcontractors reported distributing almost 35,000 FSP materials which was many times more than their revised target of 3,100.

As for prescreening households, CAFB's and CVHN's subcontractors met only 54 percent and 58 percent of their FFY 2008 targets, respectively. The number of households prescreened for FSP was 13,392 by CAFB subcontractors and 526 by CVHN subcontractors (see Table 1).

Conversely, subcontractors with both organizations greatly exceeded their application assistance targets. Overall, CAFB subcontractors assisted more than 15,000 individuals with their FSP application (152 percent of their target), and CVHN subcontractors provided application assistance to over 500 individuals (158 percent of their target). The outreach subcontractors bring a wealth of cultural and linguistic competency to this work and often tailor their efforts to a particular sub-population of people potentially eligible for the FSP. As just a few examples, specific outreach efforts were designed to better serve Arabic speakers in San Diego County's Eastern Region, farm workers in Fresno and other Central Valley counties, Vietnamese and Mandarin/Cantonese speakers in Alameda county, and the homeless population in specific areas of Oakland, Albany and Berkeley.

In addition to their direct work with clients, CAFB subcontractors also undertook a great deal of training and coordination that will also contribute to increasing FSP participation. CAFB's subcontractors conducted more than 862 prescreening or application clinics, and they trained 1,448 people to conduct food stamp outreach. A limitation of the information reported in Table 1 is that it does not fully capture the

<sup>2</sup> The original FFY 2008 plan targets were based on projections for 28 subcontractors; however, one agency ultimately did not provide outreach services, and two subcontractors were added during the year through an informal amendment to CVHN's contract. Table 1 summarizes the reported information for 29 active subcontractors. In addition, six of the 29 subcontractors submitted only three quarters of the data, so their targets were revised to reflect the partial reporting period.

FSP outreach activities that some of these trained individuals subsequently conduct with potentially-eligible clients. CAFB subcontractors also reported organizing or participating in 411 meetings with county and outreach partners during the year. Several subcontractors are also working more closely with other government programs such as WIC in San Mateo and Calaveras County, the Mexican Consulate in Orange County, and schools in Sacramento's Del Paso Heights area. The likely benefits of these collaborative efforts are also very difficult to measure; but, they have tremendous potential for improving the effectiveness of FSP outreach activities and FSP services in general.

Food Stamp Information Line

Table 2 summarizes FFY 2008 targets and caller information for the FSIL. During FFY 2008, there were fewer calls to FSIL than expected based on the over 56,000 call volume in FFY 2007. During FFY 2008, there were 42,520 calls as compared to the 62,000 target. Depending on the county, callers received FSP information either through a pre-recorded message or live person. In some areas, such as Alameda County, a CAFB subcontractor fields the calls. In seven counties, Professional Exchange Service Corporation (PESC), a statewide call center, fields the calls. For FFY 2008, PESC operators also provided FSP prescreening to interested callers, a service improvement that began in the final quarter of FFY 2007. As with previous years, the call volume greatly increased during the months corresponding with USDA's FSP radio promotions.

**Table 2: FFY 2008 Food Stamp Information Line (FSIL) Reported Activity—FSP Information and Prescreening**

	FSP Information Provided	
	Target	Actual
Calls to the Food Stamp Information Line	62,000	42,520

\* "FSP Information Provided" is reported as number of callers.

New FSP Participants

Table 3 estimates the increase in FSP participation and benefits. On average, county food stamp offices reportedly have a 50 percent approval rate of FSP applications. As a result, it is assumed 50 percent of the FSP applicants assisted by outreach subcontractors will be approved. New participant targets for the FSIL are based on the assumption that five percent of the callers will ultimately apply for food stamps. This estimate is based on a previous year's county data which showed a five percentage point increase in application submissions corresponding to USDA's media campaign that promoted the FSIL number. Again, it is assumed half of the applications submitted will be accepted to receive food stamp benefits.

**Table 3: FFY 2008—Estimated "New" FSP Participants and Annual Benefit**

	Estimated "New" FSP Households			Estimated "New" FSP Participants			Estimated Additional Annual Food Stamp Household Benefit
	Original Target	Revised Target	Actual	Original Target	Revised Target	Actual	
CAFB Subcontractors	5,090	5,064	7,678	12,572	12,508	18,965	\$23,667,896
CVHN Subcontractors	90	160	253	222	395	624	\$778,346
Statewide Food Stamp Information Line	1,550	n/a	1,063	3,828	n/a	2,626	\$3,276,761
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,730</b>	<b>6,774</b>	<b>8,994</b>	<b>16,622</b>	<b>16,731</b>	<b>22,215</b>	<b>\$27,723,003</b>

\* For subcontractors, assumes 50 percent of assisted applicants are approved to receive food stamps. For toll free hotline, assumes 5 percent of callers submit applications and half are approved. For estimating participants, the most recent data were used (2.47 persons per household). Source for CA FSP household size: USDA (2008) Food Stamp Program Household Characteristics Report 2007.

\*\* Applies average per person per month food stamp benefit of \$104 for California. Source: USDA (2008) Food Stamp Program Household Characteristics Report 2007.

With these assumptions, both CAFB's and CVHN's outreach subcontractors exceeded their targets by more than 50 percent. CAFB subcontractors' application assistance efforts are estimated to have resulted

in 7,678 “new” FSP household or 18,965 actual (Table 3) new FSP participants (on average, 2.47 people per FSP household in California). For CVHN’s subcontractors, the number of “new” FSP households is estimated to be 253 and “new” participants 624. The FSIL is estimated to bring in an additional 1,063 FSP households and 2,626 participants. Applying California’s average per person per month food stamp benefit, these “new” participants are estimated to receive 27.7 million federal food stamp dollars in a year.

It is important to note that limitations of this approach are as follows. The estimated number of “new” households and participants is likely a conservative figure. For subcontractors, it is solely based on the number of assisted applicants and fails to include the new participants brought into FSP due to these prescreening, training and collaborative efforts. In addition, assuming only five percent of the callers to the statewide information line will submit a FSP application, this is likely a relatively conservative estimate. And, while the application success rate of 50 percent is based on county by county experience, some of the subcontractors may have a higher and others a lower rate. Ideally, application success rates would be based on actual case determination information. While several subcontractors have been able to track this information themselves or receive it from the counties for a sample or sub-group of assisted applicants, it has not been widely or consistently available. Finally, the estimated annual benefit assumes an average per person FSP benefit amount of \$104 per month which might be higher, or lower, than the actual per capita benefit received by the household.

## **INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

California’s AIP maintains a vast range of FSP outreach and access improvement activity by leveraging and supporting the institutional networks and talents of dozens of nonprofit agencies through investments, such as the FSIL, with large-scale benefit. These outreach efforts address many of the barriers to FSP participation, such as lack of information or misinformation, transportation, and fear or difficulty with the application process.

The FFY 2008 State (\$1.2 million) and Federal Share (\$1.13 million) dollars invested in the California’s AIP is more than matched by the estimated additional approximately 27.7 million federal dollars brought into the state by “new” recipients. On average, households were estimated to have 3,000 additional annual dollars to meet their food needs. And, since it is estimated that each food stamp dollar stimulates \$1.84 in new local economic activity, 27.7 million in additional federal food stamp dollars would create approximately \$51 million in local economic activity.

The FSP informational materials, one-on-one interaction, group workshops and telephone help lines provide information about the FSP and are helping to address potential clients’ fears and misinformation about issues such as Food Stamps and public charge. AIP subcontractors greatly exceeded their targets for informational materials distribution and, in addition to using USDA- and *Network*-developed materials, they continue to develop, share and request additional materials. AIP subcontractors also bring FSP information and outreach services, such as prescreening and application assistance, out into the community which can be more convenient and potentially less intimidating for potential applicants.

Outreach services are provided at a tremendous number of community venues, including but not limited to health clinics, food banks and closets/pantries, commodity distribution sites, WIC sites, family resource centers, schools and community events. Outreach subcontractors’ strong cultural and linguistic capacities advance efforts to assist applicants to organize the necessary documentation as well as providing follow-up assistance to applicants in order to successfully navigate the FSP system. Almost all the AIP subcontractors reported on efforts to work more closely with their county food stamp offices, as this is essential for effective outreach and client service. Among the AIP subcontractors there are many examples of excellent collaboration and more seamless coordination between outreach subcontractors and the county offices, such as the following:

- In Merced and San Bernardino Counties, CVHN outreach subcontractors submit FSP applications through the web-based C4Yourself application.
- In Alameda County, the Alameda County Community Food Bank also submits assisted applications electronically--a practice they believe has improved timely processing and application success rates.

- In San Diego County, the outreach subcontractor held listening sessions with community members about their FSP experiences and many of the recommendations based on these sessions have been included in the County's Business Process Reengineering Plan.
- In Santa Clara County, the county food stamp agency has a designated eligibility worker to work with the food stamp outreach agencies.

Coordination and collaboration with county welfare offices will continue to be an area of focus for AIP subcontractors, in part because the policy and administrative environment that influence county operations also profoundly influence the success of outreach efforts and whether assisted applicants ultimately enroll in the Food Stamp Program. Other areas of focus for the current year include 1) greater institutional partnerships with additional community-based organizations, 2) targeted media campaigns coupled with efficient and customer-oriented call centers, 3) technological advances, such as online screening and applications, and 4) coordination with other nutrition-oriented programs such as WIC.

*for*   
CHRISTINE WEBB-CURTIS, Chief  
California Department of Social Services  
Food Stamp Branch  
Welfare to Work Division

5/26/09  
Date