

Santa Clara County Social Services Agency

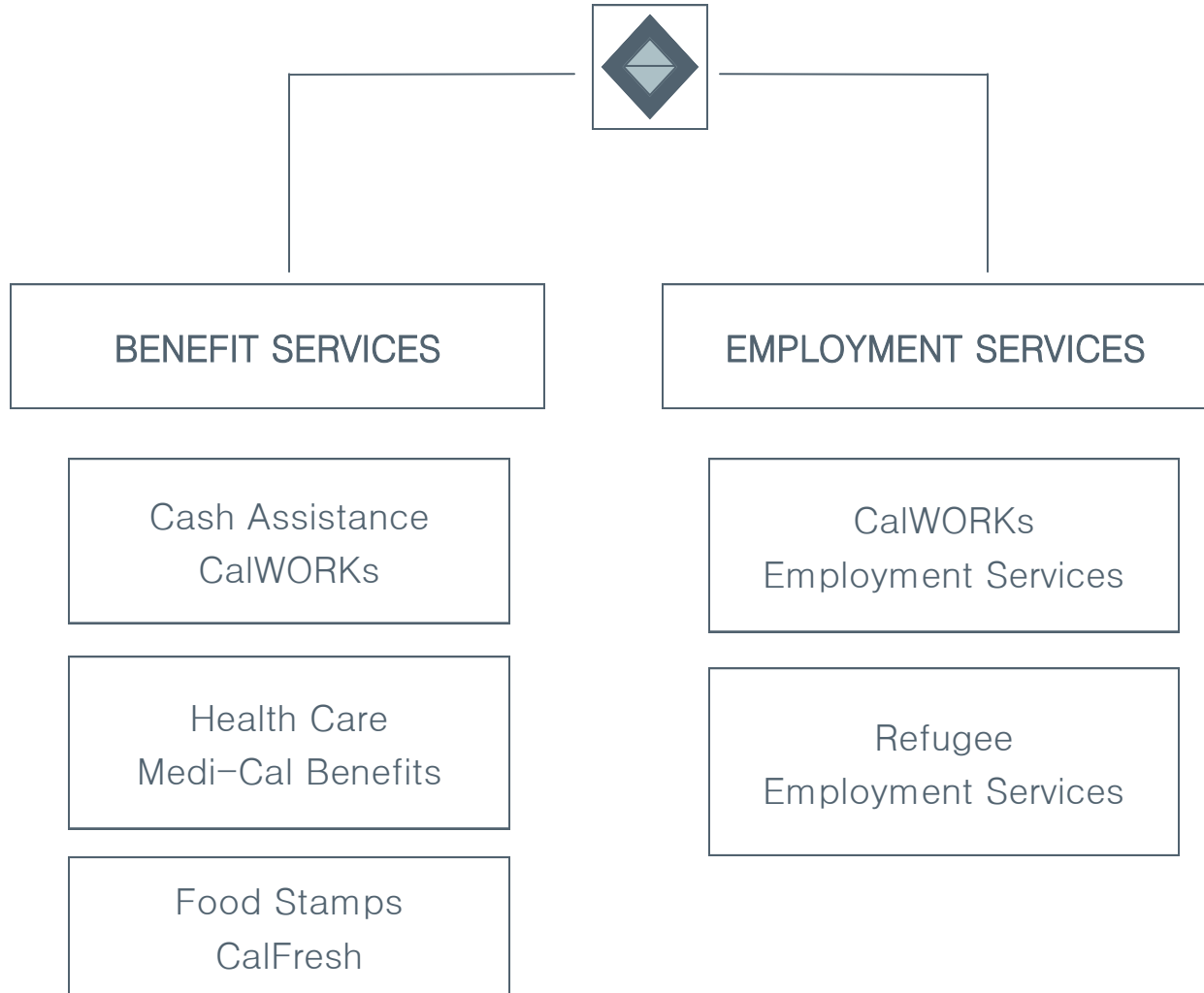
2013

# CalWORKs Employment Services Annual Report

*Strong Families, Stable Futures*



# Department of Employment & Benefits Services (DEBS)



## Menu of Services

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- ◇ Ancillary Support (Books, Tools, Uniforms)
  - ◇ Basic Education/GED Classes/English as a Second Language (ESL)
  - ◇ Behavioral Health Screening
  - ◇ Bike to Work (Bicycle, Helmet, Safety Lights)
  - ◇ CalFresh Nutritional Education
  - ◇ Cal-Learn (Teen Parent/Adolescent Family Life Program)
  - ◇ Career Closet
  - ◇ Child Care
  - ◇ Community College/University Degree
  - ◇ Community Service
  - ◇ Distance Learning iPod/Tablet Lending Library
  - ◇ Domestic Abuse Services
  - ◇ Drug, Alcohol, Mental Health Services
  - ◇ Record Expungement Services (Legal)
  - ◇ Guaranteed Ride Home Program
  - ◇ Incentive Gift Certificates
  - ◇ Job Club/Networking
  - ◇ Job Search
  - ◇ JumpStart Automotive Repair
  - ◇ Produce Mobile at Senter Road Campus
  - ◇ Second Harvest Food Bank Programs
  - ◇ Sessions to Enhance Professional Skills (STEPS)
  - ◇ CalWORKs SSI (Referral Program for SSI Application Assistance)
  - ◇ Transit
  - ◇ Transportation Services (Bus Passes, Mileage Reimbursements)
  - ◇ Transitional Subsidized Employment
  - ◇ Vocational Assessment
  - ◇ Vocational ESL
  - ◇ Work Experience
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## Providing The Building Blocks For Self-Sufficiency

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With the high cost of living in Silicon Valley, raising a family has become an increasingly difficult proposition. Last November, the U.S. Census Bureau released the latest statistics resulting from the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), a modernized means to more accurately portray the economic conditions of poverty on a national level. When measuring family income and budgets, the SPM considers family expenditures, such as; child care, healthcare, work expenses and housing. Taking these expenses into account, the SPM indicated that California has the highest poverty rate in the nation, with 23.5% of its residents living beneath the poverty threshold. Not surprising, the largest concentration of poverty is in metropolitan areas, such as Santa Clara County, where families face high housing expenses and increased child care costs.

Fortunately, CalWORKs Employment Services is designed to provide the building blocks necessary for families to reach self-sufficiency. With the array of employment programs, community partnerships and wrap around support services, families are able to address many of the expenditures recognized by the Supplemental Poverty Measure. With these services available, families are able to seek employment while developing the skills and resources to maintain long term stability.

Over the past year, Employment Services has worked tirelessly to meet this target while implementing legislative changes and striving toward new goals. Executing Senate Bill 1041 was an immense operational undertaking and with tremendous staff support, Santa Clara made a successful transition. At this point, participants have adjusted to the “24-Month State Clock,” and staff are continuing to reengage Exempt families as planned. While rolling out the new changes, Employment Services was simultaneously working on reaching a major performance milestone with the federal Work Participation Rate (WPR). As you will see on page 12, Santa Clara County maintained a monthly WPR average of 55.38%, outperforming most major counties within the state and exceeding the federal mandate.

Looking forward, we are eagerly preparing for some exciting new legislative initiatives that include enhancements to the CalWORKs program. After years of eroding benefits, the CalWORKs grant levels will finally experience an increase bringing benefit amounts closer to pre-recession levels. The healthy dose of attention that the CalWORKs program received in this year’s state budget is a welcome change compared to year’s past.



In addition to the regulatory changes, the budget included funding for new enhancements to Employment Services including:

- ◇ Expansion of Subsidized Employment programs.
- ◇ Introduction of a Robust Appraisal tool.
- ◇ Increased Family Stabilization Services to assist families experiencing acute crisis situations.

While Employment Services is engaged in strategically planning new program enhancements, Social Services is in the midst of implementing a monumental new initiative, Health Care Reform. As the program emerges, the Agency will continue to involve local stakeholders and the CalWORKs Advisory to discuss potential impacts and opportunities to optimize the new services.\* While still in its infancy, we look forward to lessening the burden of medical costs by providing families with affordable healthcare solutions.

With these exciting new changes on the horizon, we hope to help further alleviate some of the challenges that are driving low income, working families below the poverty threshold. I hope that this year's Annual Report will provide readers with a glimpse of how Employment Services is providing the support that our families need to uplift themselves, creating strong families with stable futures.

Rafaela Perez  
Employment Services Administrator

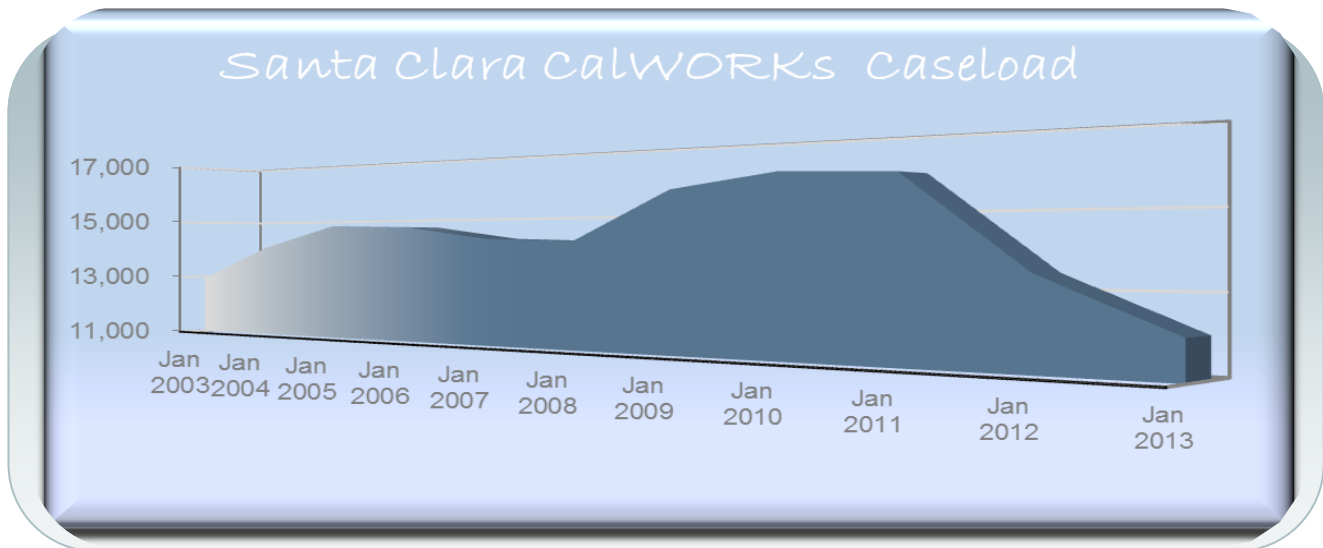
\* Interested in attending the CalWORKs Advisory meetings? See the Appendix for next year's meeting schedule.

## Table of Contents

Caseload Trends and Demographics .....	7
Work Participation Performance and Strategies .....	12
When One Door Closes, Another One Opens.....	16
The Employment Connection .....	20
Education and Training .....	24
Child Care Services .....	29
Celebrating Bike to Work day.....	30
Refugee Employment Services .....	31
The Safety Net Committee.....	34

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## Caseload Trends and Demographics



### Fledgling Economy Contributes to Waning Caseloads

Earlier this year, Santa Clara County received top honors as the “best performing metropolitan economy.” Leading the nation out of the recession, the upswing in the local economy can be directly attributed to growth in the technology, communications and media sectors. Although the area’s growth is centralized in the hi-tech industries, the trickle down effect is generating thousands of new job opportunities in supportive fields.

While not yet dropping to pre-recession levels, the County unemployment rate plummeted to 7.2% in July of this year; a significant decrease from a record high of 11.7% generated by the 2010 recession, indicating an turnaround which has directly benefitted job seekers.

As the economy regains its foothold, the CalWORKs caseload continues to decline. In January, the local CalWORKs caseload included 12,032 families, a 10% net reduction (1400 cases) from the previous 12- month period.

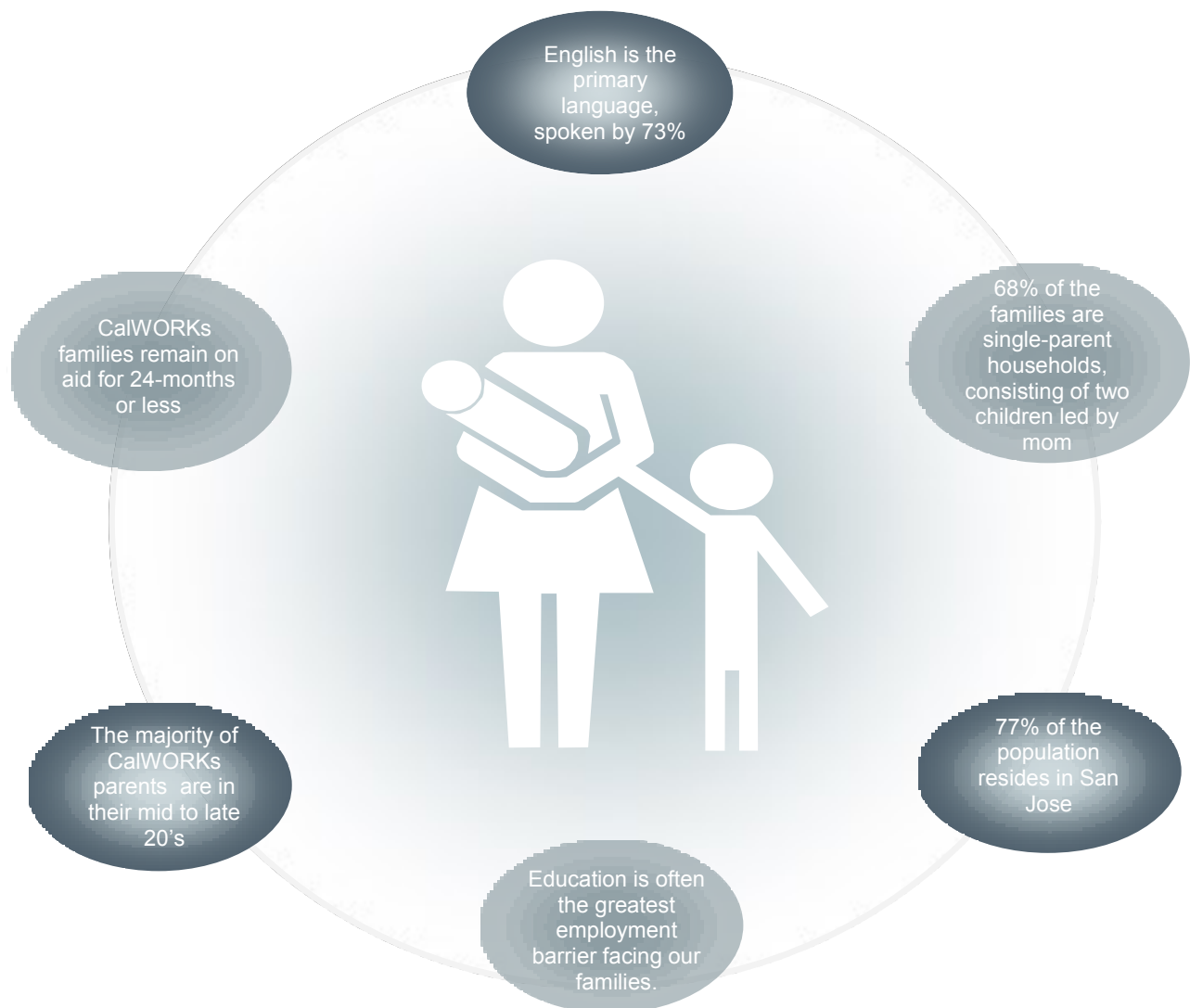
With the influx of new cases between 2010 and 2011, we are now starting to experience a decline in caseload rates as these families begin to exit the program. Participation trends indicate that an overwhelming majority, 74%, of the families that receive cash assistance remain on aid for less than two years.

Many other factors also contribute to families leaving the CalWORKs program, including: recent regulatory changes that reduced time limits to 48-months, grant reductions and allowable earning limits. With the County experiencing a more favorable job market, CalWORKs families that were once faced with increased competition and sparse employment options are now finding more hospitable conditions and new opportunities.

## Avenues to a Brighter Future

The CalWORKs program has been designed to offer families an opportunity to enhance their employment opportunities while receiving cash assistance by participating with Employment Services. For FY 2012–13, there were 12,032 active CalWORKs cases in Santa Clara County, the majority of these cases are “Child Only” cases, in which the sole recipient of aid is a child under the age of 18 and in the care of a timed-out parent or an elderly relative on a fixed income. Active participants, 5,194, are enrolled in a wide assortment of employment activities offered by Employment Services. Each family that partakes in an employment program is actively engaged in strengthening their employability and solidifying their future.

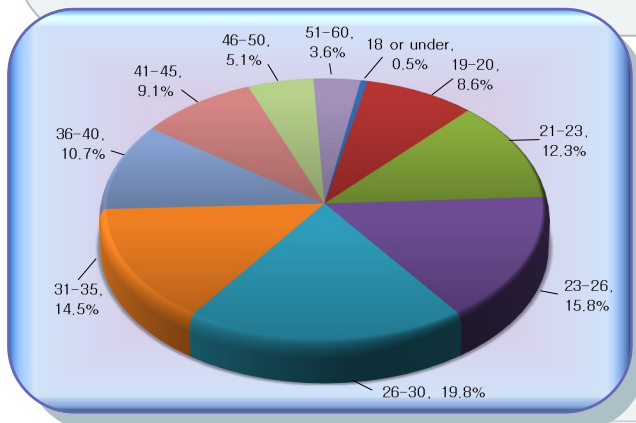
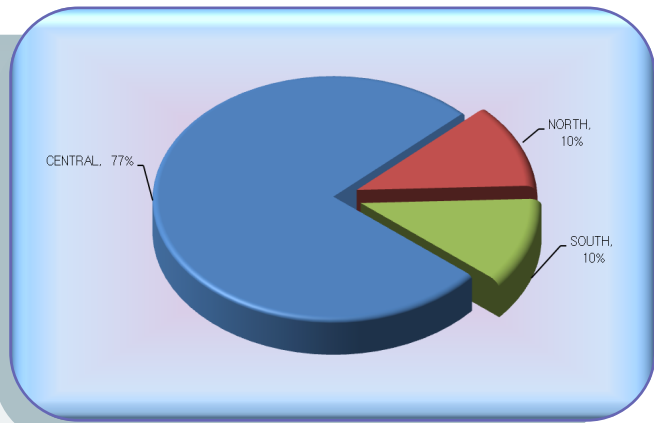
Below is an illustration of the families served by Employment Services with notes on the more commonly shared traits, the pages that follow contain a more in-depth look at the Employment Services population.





### Location

The majority of Employment Services participants reside in San Jose. To conveniently serve these families, Employment Services' main office is centrally located at the Senter Road campus. The site also hosts the Employment Connection Center and a wide variety of co-located services. Families residing in North and South County are supported by satellite offices in Mountain View and Gilroy.

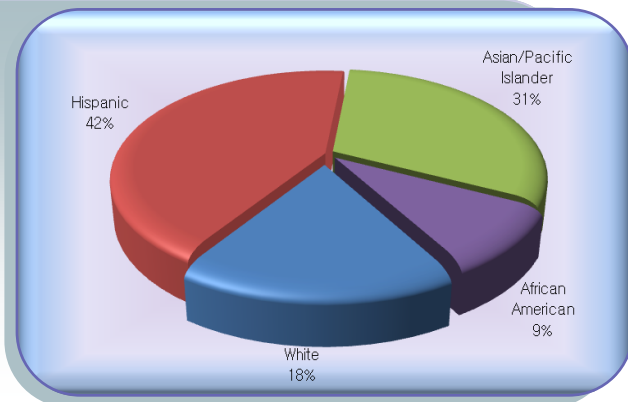


### Age

The chart on the left represent the age distribution among families participating in Employment Services. Over the past year there has been a 1%–2% increase in each of the age categories in the 20–30 year old categories, while participation in the upper age range, 41–60, has decreased.

### Ethnicity

The ethnic composition of the Employment Services population directly reflects the diversity found within the County. The Hispanic population represents the largest category of participants at 42%, followed by Asian & Pacific Islander (31%), White (18%) and African American (9%).

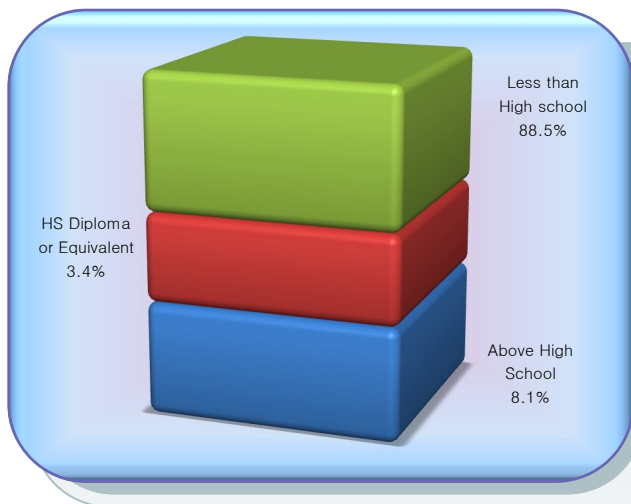


Language	
English	73%
Spanish	7%
Vietnamese	5%
Farsi	1%
Arabic	0.70%
Mandarin	0.20%
Cantonese	0.30%
Cambodian	0.20%
Amharic	0.30%
Tagalog	0.30%
Others	12%

### Language

The three most commonly spoken languages among CalWORKS families are English (73%), Spanish (7%) and Vietnamese (5%).

As refugees arrive from the Middle East and Africa we are encountering a slight increase in new languages. The "Other" category, represent these new languages and has grown to 436 cases, a 2% increase since last year. Employment Services serves these families through multi-lingual staff or by utilizing interpretation services through the County's Language hotline.



### Education

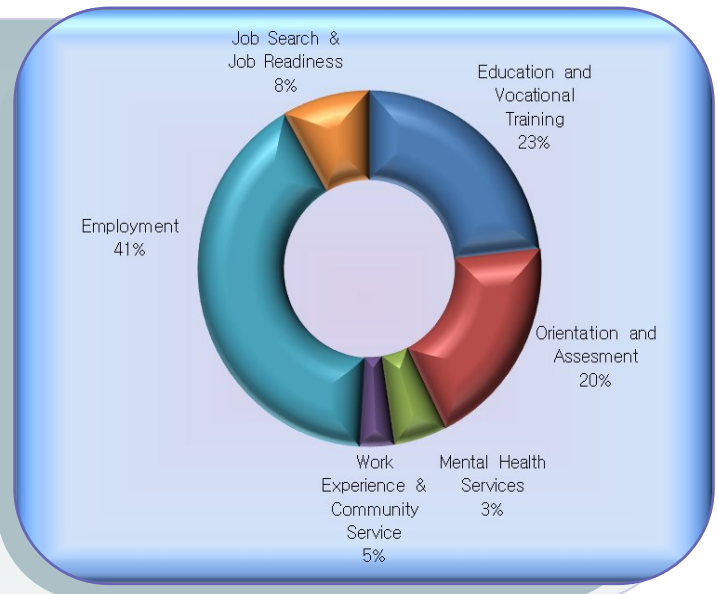
Educational attainment continues to be a major barrier for families entering the CalWORKs program. In fact, over the last 8 years, Employment Services has noted a 39.5% increase in clients with educational barriers.

Employment Services has developed a work/school model that fulfills required participation hours and offers families the opportunity to achieve their educational aspirations. (See Education and Training on page 24 for more information)

### Employment Services Activities

Families that participate in Employment Services often find themselves facing multiple obstacles that prevent them from finding gainful employment. Working with an Employment Counselor gives them an opportunity to develop an employment plan that features activities that are tailored to suit their needs.

The graph to the right illustrates the frequency in which clients participate in each categorized activity. Each category contains a wide variety of specialized programs that provide families an opportunity to increase their employability.



Employment	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
Average # of Active CalWORKs Employment Services Participants each month	6,238	4,526	3,935
Total Number of Job Placements	3,030	2,533	2,700
Percentage of Working Participants	<b>49%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Average Number of Hours Working/week	25	25	26
Average Wage at Placement	\$10.72	\$10.00	\$10.56

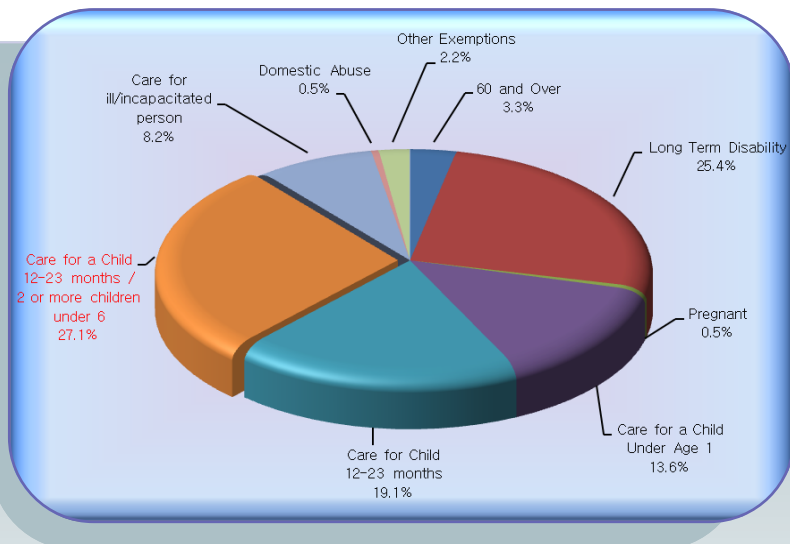
### Employment

With the introduction of new time limits and a “state clock” that restricts the time available for educational or training programs, many participants are opting to find part-time employment to fulfill their work participation requirements.

The benefits of working are dually beneficial as participants are able to supplement their cash grants while developing work skills and building a resume.

## Exemptions

Recognizing that families may be experiencing extreme circumstances that prevent them from fully participating in Employment Services, State and Federal guidelines provide Exemptions that temporarily excuse them from work participation requirements. California presently permits 10 Exemption categories, although only 2 are recognized under Federal guidelines. The graph to the right illustrates the Exemption distribution among Employment Services families.



In the past, approximately 50% of the Exempt population qualified for the “Young Child Exemption” that excused families caring for a child between 12–24 months or those with two children under age 6. Recent legislation has changed the Exemption requirements to excuse only those parents with a child under 24–months.

Young Child Exempt families (455), noted in the red highlighted category, are currently being encouraged to participate by reengaging with Employment Services, families may opt to remain Exempt under the new category if meet the eligibility requirements.

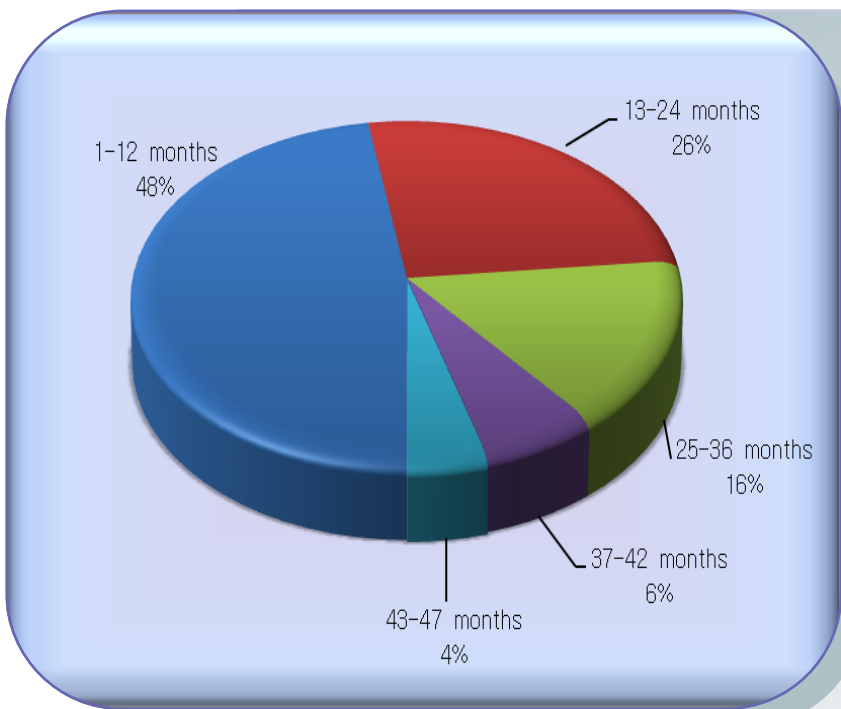
(To read more on the Reengagement process see “When one Door Closes, Another One Opens” on pg. 16.)

## Time On Aid

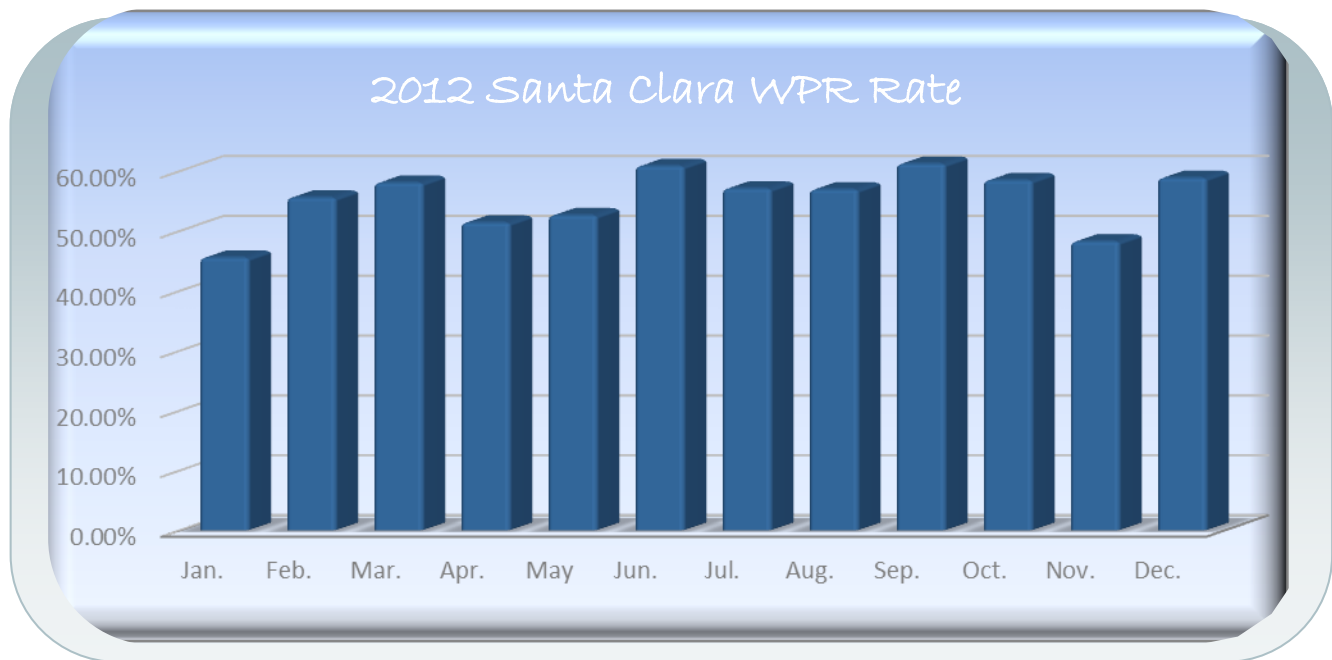
CalWORKs participants are currently limited to a lifetime total of 48–months on aid.

“Timing Out” of the program is an event that very few families ever reach. As indicated in the graph to the left, 48% of the participants are on aid less than one year and 74% are discontinued from aid within 24 months.

Generally, families that are eligible for an Exemption remain on aid longer than those that participate in an employment activity. To encourage families to participate, Employment Services provides Exempt families with an option to participate as an “Exempt Volunteer”.



## Work Participation Performance and Strategies



While the most gratifying measure of success for the CalWORKs program is the sparkle gleaming from the eyes of our families as they obtain employment, Employment Services also adheres to tangible performance measures that are set by state and federal guidelines. Originally implemented in the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program identifies key areas of service delivery and provides federal performance mandates for state administered public assistance programs, including CalWORKs. The bottom line performance indicator that determines the health of the program is the Work Participation Rate (WPR). WPR is a highly complex formula that measures the rate of client participation and failure to meet the minimum WPR rate carries stringent financial penalties. Since its inception, TANF guidelines have mandated that states engage at least half of all CalWORKs families, in work or work related activities. While the goal appears simple, there are a number of factors that complicate the WPR rate, including sanctions, weekly fluctuations in work hours, lead time between core activities and Exemptions.

### Meeting the Goal

In order to receive CalWORKs financial assistance, families are required to fulfill a minimum hourly requirement in employment or an employment based activity; the requirements vary by family size and age of children. For a two-parent family, participants must complete 35 hours per week; single parents with a child/children over the age of 6 must complete 30 hours per week, and single parents with a child under 6

must complete at least 20 hours of participation each week. The table to the right illustrates the number of work hours and allowable employment activities that families may select.

Santa Clara County takes an innovative approach to achieving WPR success. By developing a strong network of community partnerships, innovative program development and intense case management, Employment Services has been able to consistently perform at top levels.

### Tools of the Trade

Utilizing every resource available, Employment Services has worked exhaustively to develop various tools and strategies to assist, both participants and the County, in meeting WPR requirements.

### Rapid Response Team

To measure WPR rates each month, the state selects a random sample of participants drawn from the Employment Services population. These cases are referred to the Rapid Response Team for concentrated case management. Team members con-

duct an initial analysis of the case to determine what activities the client is enrolled in and then work directly with them to ensure that they fulfill the required hours each month. Since its inception in 2008, the team has proved to be one of the most effective tools in maintaining WPR.

Hours Required In Work Activities		
	ONE-PARENT FAMILY	TWO-PARENT FAMILY
Minimum total hours	*30 hours per week	35 hours per week
<b>Core Activities</b>		
Unsubsidized employment	At least an average of 20 of the 30 hours per week must be from core activities	At least an average of 30 of the 35 hours per week must be from core activities
Subsidized employment		
Work experience		
On-the-job training		
Job-search and job readiness assistance**		
Community services programs		
Vocational education training***		
<b>Noncore Activities</b>		
Job-skills training directly related to employment	Beyond 20 hours per week in core activities, participation in noncore activities may be counted	Beyond 20 hours per week in core activities, participation in noncore activities may be counted
Education directly related to employment, in the case of an individual who has not received a high school diploma or certificate of high school equivalency		
Satisfactory attendance in high school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, if an individual has not completed high school or equivalent		
*20 hours per week for single parents with children under age 6 ** 6 to 8 week limit per year ***12 month limit		

## Transitional Subsidized Employment

Employment Services has expanded its partnerships with Sacred Heart Community Services, Second Harvest Food Bank and Foothill/DeAnza's Occupational Training Institute to include a paid work experience program named, Transitional Subsidized Employment (TSE).

Through the program, participants are able to be placed into temporary paid working positions earning \$10.00 an hour. Since the employment period is time limited, their new income will not affect their CalWORKs grant. Upon referral to the TSE program, participants are placed in jobsite positions that best match their skills and experience.



The TSE program is earmarked specifically for those that are chosen for the WPR sample and are time-out, exempt, unemployed or not actively engaged in an employment program. Traditionally, this has been one of the hardest populations to reengage, however, since their participation is reflected in the WPR rate, Employment Services makes every effort to connect with them. This past year, approximately 60 participants have found employment in TSE and contributed positively to the WPR rate.



## Making a Difference

Stacy, is a single mother of three boys, six, nine and thirteen years old. Stacy time-out of CalWORKs approximately two years ago, however, she was able to receive a "child only" grant which allotted her a reduced cash benefit, CalFresh and medical coverage for her children.

Stacy's case was part of the February Work Participation Rate (WPR) review. At an initial meeting with a Rapid Response Team (RRT) Counselor, Stacy was offered an opportunity to fulfill her work requirements by participating in the Transitional Subsidized Employment program. Stacy was eager to join the program and was subsequently placed in a position at Sacred Heart Community Services.

Stacy's enthusiasm, work ethics and positive attitude were immediately recognized by her supervisors and not long after starting, she received an offer for a full-time permanent position. Stacy is now securely employed as an Office Assistant.

She is extremely motivated excited about the opportunity. Stacy has expressed great gratitude to the CalWORKs program, noting that the opportunities offered through the program will help provide her children with a better life.

## Distance Learning

Leveraging mobile technology has become a key WPR tool for participants that may need extra hours to fulfill their WPR requirements. By using electronic aids our participants can supplement their core hours by accessing learning materials and employment based skills programs. Employment Services maintains a lending library that currently offers iPods with materials downloaded directly onto the device and has recently added 100 new Samsung tablets.



With the Wi-Fi enabled tablets, clients can access various online programs, personal development materials and perform online job searches. Tablets are proving to be a convenient option for participants that find themselves needing to make up hours or those facing unexpected circumstances like caring for an ill child.

## WPR Steering Committee

Providing guidance and helping to direct WPR based efforts is the job of the WPR Steering Committee. The committee is comprised of cross-departmental and multi-level personnel that closely monitor WPR, employed strategies and performance indicators to ensure that services continue to meet participants needs while meeting both state and federal requirements. The collaborative meets regularly to perform several key functions to ensure continued success. Typical tasks carried out by the committee include performance reviews, strategic planning, dissection of new legislation, identifying barriers within bureaus and disseminating information and trends to respective bureaus.

## Knocked One Out of the Park

For the last several years, Santa Clara County has been a top WPR performer among California counties and is the only county in the greater Bay Area to steadily meet WPR and avoid financial sanctions. This past year, Employment Services exceeded the 50% WPR standard, a cause for celebration. Employment Services Management team hosted a World Series celebration to honor the major league achievement, 55.38% WPR at year end.



The Big League baseball card created for the event complete with performance stats!

## Setting the Bar for the Future

Santa Clara's challenge is in replicating this success. Employment Services recognizes the task ahead and continues its pledge to focus on achieving this performance standard. With innovative strategies and strong community partnerships, striving for continued success is a goal that's well within reach.

## When One Door Closes, Another One Opens



Families enter the CalWORKs program seeking financial support to aid them through the challenges they're facing. They are surprised to learn that CalWORKs Employment Services is the first step in opening a world of new opportunities for their family.

Through Employment Services, participants are presented with an array of work based activities, community resources and support services that are designed to help them achieve their goals and successfully fulfill state and federal Welfare-to-Work requirements. These services are administered by specialized case management units that engage clients and work proactively with their families to assess their needs and develop gainful employment plans.

### *Intake Case Management*

A participant's initial introduction to the Employment Services program starts with the Intake Unit where they attend CalWORKs Employment Services Orientation and receive a comprehensive Appraisal interview. Orientation is designed to provide participants with an overview of their program responsibilities, a brief look at their employment activity opportunities and an explanation of the supportive services they may receive in their pursuit of employment. The Appraisal process presents participants with an in-depth assessment of their work history, skills, employment goals and may reveal barriers that have inhibited their progress. The Appraisal process is concluded with the development of a personalized Welfare-to-Work employment plan. Each plan is a roadmap that outlines each family's path to self-sufficiency, including; their chosen employment activities, supportive services and referrals for other services to address barriers, such as mental health services or domestic violence counseling.



## Continuing Case Management

Once an employment plan is developed in Intake, each participant's case is seamlessly transferred to the continuing unit for progress monitoring and ongoing case maintenance. Workers within the continuing unit serve a more personal role with participants; they are able to develop a long term working relationship and a thorough understanding of their needs as they progress through their employment plans. With the added individual attention they can align clients with additional supportive services as new needs arise, arrange entry into subsequent activities and ensure compliance with work participation requirements. Additionally, the Continuing Unit works hand-in-hand with community partners and staff to keep direct linkage between our educational providers, Social Workers, partner agencies and Employment Connection staff.



## Adjustments to Meet New Legislation

This year the operations staff developed and revised approximately 7,000 Employment Plans, managed and issued 12,000 childcare payments, authorized and issued payment for 5,000 ancillary requests, issued 28,000 transportation payments, and provided Post Aid Services to approximately 4,000 clients who were discontinued off cash aid due to employment.

Due to the implementation of SB1041 in December 2012, Employment Services prepared an operational plan to meet the demands of these new regulations. The plan included informing all program participants that the required hours of participation had changed, and a new young child exemption was introduced.

Employment Services developed a six month goal to contact, and have in-depth discussions about these changes and new options, with each active participant. Approximately 3,000 active participants required this transition. As of June 30, 2013, 100% of the active clients had been informed and contacted and all employment plans are projected to be complete by the end of the fiscal year (June 2014).



## Employment Services Portrait of Success

Jennifer is a single mother of two young children who, up until recently, elected to be Exempt from participation to stay home and to provide full-time care for her children. As part of the SB 1041 Reengagement process, Jennifer was invited back to Employment Services to discuss the new program requirements and review her options.

Under the new guidelines, Jennifer was still eligible to remain Exempt from participating, however, the length of time that she'd be allowed to receive aid would have been shortened significantly. Her Employment Counselor, George, explained this to her and also presented her with the different merits of each employment activity offered by Employment Services. George explained the long-term benefits of partaking in an employment plan that could include; returning to school, receiving vocational training, attending job preparation workshops or brushing up her work aptitude in a skills development program. The Employment Counselor also utilized an in-house tool, known as the "Work Pays Worksheet" to provide Jennifer with a real world earning comparison between living solely off cash assistance grants versus a combination of working and receiving supportive services.

In addition to the discussion, Jennifer also had an opportunity to visit the Employment Connection Center to talk with some of the participants who were enrolled in Job Club. There, she met several other women who found themselves faced with a similar choice and decided to participate. The testimony of a single mom, like herself, sold her on participating. The mom explained that she too experienced some apprehension about re-entering the work force and was a bit concerned about leaving her children at daycare but she needed to begin moving in the right direction. She had been participating in the job prep workshops and recently applied for several jobs. As a result, she'd received several different job offers, each full-time and the best news of all, her monthly income would be at least 3x the amount she'd have received from CalWORKs grants.

After hearing from others, Jennifer grew excited about her prospects and decided to participate as an "Exempt Volunteer". Her Employment Counselor quickly went to work, aligning her with transportation services, providing a referral to the Resource and Referral program to find a suitable child care provider and another to Career Closet for professional dress attire to attend job interviews. She elected to participate in the Employment Connection Job Club and, not long after, she had accepted a job offer as an Office Support Specialist and would be making \$13.00 an hour with full benefits to start! Way to go Jennifer!

## *A Glimpse of What's to Come*

For the first time in several years, the state budget has allocated funding to improve CalWORKs benefits and provide Employment Services with some exciting new enhancements.

### *CalWORKs Benefits*

Family grants that were previously reduced to 1980's funding levels will begin to experience incremental restoration, starting with a 5% increase in March of 2014. Though modest, the increase is a step in the right direction for families overcoming employment barriers in Employment Services.

The new budget also makes vehicle ownership less inhibitive, the state is raising the Vehicle Asset limit which will allow families to own a vehicle with up to \$9500 in equity value. For families, the benefit of reliable transportation will be a huge asset in attending employment activities and obtaining or maintaining employment.

### *New Tools for Employment Services*

Further improving the effectiveness of Employment Services, several new tools have been made available to augment its core services.

Inspired by the temporary programs developed through the American Recovery and Restoration Act (ARRA), the new budget allocates increased funding to expand the role of subsidized employment programs throughout the state. Locally, the new funding stream will allow growth of the Transitional Subsidized Employment program.

Employment Services will also be adopting a Robust Appraisal Tool that is designed to more clearly assess the employment barriers facing each participant. The new tool is expected to identify each participant's goals and needs through an extensive survey. Based on the results, Employment Counselors will be able to develop an employment plan that perfectly aligns the appropriate activities and supportive services to meet each participant's needs.

Additionally, the new budget introduced Family Stabilization Plans, that assist families in overcoming severe crisis situations, like homelessness, substance abuse, mental health or domestic violence. The new plans will provide targeted supportive services accompanied by intensive case management to closely monitor the progress of each family.

Employment Services is always looking for new opportunities to leverage additional resources. The increased grant levels and program enhancements will go a long way in helping families stay on the path to self-sufficiency.

## The Employment Connection



The Employment Connection Center (ECC) offers CalWORKs job seekers a “One-Stop Employment Shop” that hosts multiple County developed employment activities and a bevy of co-located services that are provided by our community partners. Employment Services provides three Employment Connection Sites throughout the County (Mt. View, San Jose, Gilroy) to ensure accessibility and convenience for those participating in employment activities. All three of the Employment Connection facilities make available the necessary tools, equipment and training needed by the CalWORKs job seeker to conduct a successful job search.

### The Basics

The ECC employs several different strategies and unique services which contribute greatly to building self-sustaining careers. With an emphasis on working directly with both participants and employers, ECC staff are able to develop mutually beneficial relationships that maximize opportunities for families, while simultaneously providing employers with qualified candidates. This is accomplished by focusing on three core service components: Job Preparation, Job Development and Job Placement.

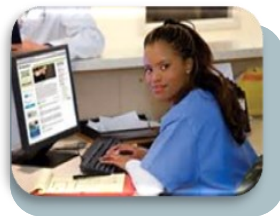
Job Preparation includes a series of workshops that program participants are required to attend. Workshop topics are aimed at priming participants for their Job Search, including; completing job applications; resume writing; preparing for interviews; and how to seek employment utilizing online job search engines via the internet. To compliment these areas of skill development, the Employment Connection sponsors an average of three job retention and professional advancement workshops per month, each facilitated by professionals from the private business sector or members of the Employment Services team.

Additional workshops calendar is posted to the ECC website (ecstaffing.com) each month, allowing CalWORKs job seekers the opportunity to tailor their job search efforts to meet their particular needs.

The Job Development and Job Placement components share a common link; through mutually beneficial partnerships with employers, the Employment Connection is able to identify and create job opportunities that are earmarked for CalWORKs participants. Employment Connection staff strategically market their staffing services in niche markets that are suitable for the average CalWORKs job seeker. By participating, Employers are assisted with recruitment, testing and pre-screening of potential candidates that can fill their job openings. These services are often conducted on site at the Employment Connection Centers during specialized recruitment events or at job fairs sponsored throughout the year. For CalWORKs participants, the streamlined process offers direct linkage to hiring employers and an opportunity to be placed in a position that matches their experience and employment goals.

The Employment Connection also offers Job Placement services through highly structured job search efforts.

Working with an Employment Counselor, participants learn to fine-tune their online job search techniques to align their employment goals with available jobs. While engaged in the process, they also receive support with application and resume development to help them highlight the skills and experience that employers look for.



Locally, the boost in the job market and the improved hiring trend has sparked an increase in employment opportunities for CalWORKs families. In fiscal year 2012–2013, the Employment Connection served over 1,450 program participants, of which, 525 job seekers secured employments at an average hourly wage of \$11.44 per hour.

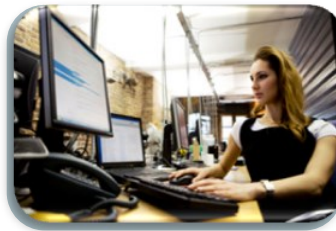
*“525 job seekers  
secured employment  
at an average  
hourly wage of  
\$11.44”*

## Programs and Performance

The Employment Connection also manages a number of employment based activities that enable CalWORKs families to meet the mandated work requirements while providing avenues to employment.

## Work Experience

As part of its job preparation efforts, the Employment Connection provides a vast network of Work Experience assignments. Worksites have been developed to offer program participants an opportunity to advance their skills and abilities in a wide range of occupations. The program also provides the participants with current work experience references as they prepare to seek employment. Over the past year, the Work Experience program has averaged twenty-five (25) program participants assigned to work experience sites throughout the County each month.



## *Transitional Subsidized Employment*

Briefly mentioned in WPR Article as a key tool in maintaining the Work Participation Rate, Employment Services partners with DeAnza College's Occupational Training Institute to administer the Transitional Subsidized Employment program. Through the program, employers are reimbursed for a portion of the wages earned by the participant in exchange for providing "On the Job Training". The goal for participants is to be hired into a full-time position, unsubsidized position at the end of the subsidized period, which typically ranges between three to six months. Over the course of the year, over seventy-four (74) program participants were placed into subsidized employment positions. With the passing of the 2013-14 State Budget, Employment Services is looking forward to expanding its subsidized employment programs next fiscal year.

## *County Unclassified Recruitment Program*

One of the more premier employment programs offered by the Employment Connection is the CalWORKs Unclassified Recruitment Program. Partnering with the County, the program provides recruitment efforts among the CalWORKs population to fill entry level positions with eligible job seekers. Program participants are subject to the same hiring process as any other applicant; hiring departments are referred candidates for interviews, and, if selected, hire applicants into unclassified positions that may transition to classified status following a probationary period. Over the past year, 25 participants have been hired into the unclassified position with the county.

## *The Work Pays Pilot Project*

The Work Pays Project is designed as an outreach model with an ability to serve a broad range of skilled and unskilled CalWORKs participants that are currently attending adult education or college. The jobs developed through the program offer flexibility that allows students to work schedules that range from part time employment with varying hours to full-time employment of up to 40 hours per week. The Work Pays Project team meets with interested students at their respective campuses and assists them in creating resumes, completing applications, interview coaching and job placement. In its pilot year, students from adult education and selected community college sites have benefitted from this new exciting program.



## Job Fairs

The Employment Connection Center has hosted a number of large scale Job Fairs that attract a variety of Employers, providing them an opportunity to engage prospective employees. Although the Employment Connection traditionally serves current or past CalWORKs participants, this event is open to the public and always draws a large crowd.



Attendance levels at this year's event reached maximum capacity for both employers and job seekers. A record breaking, forty employers participated in the event, taking the opportunity to meet over 1100 job seekers. Throughout the event, employers were able to provide information about job openings, perform on-site interviews and, in select cases, hire applicants.

The atmosphere at this year's job fair was abuzz with energy as job seekers eagerly networked with employers and worked the room finding new employment opportunities. Many noted that they felt the abundance of employers really increased their odds of landing a job and others praised the Employment Connection for simplifying an arduous job search process for them. According to David, a job fair attendee, "I've been aggressively looking for a job ever since I got laid off six months ago. Driving to different businesses and searching online normally takes a couple hours out of my day. Today, I filled out two applications and submitted my resume to eight different companies in a little over an hour. Its great being able to have so many businesses, that are actually hiring, in one place."



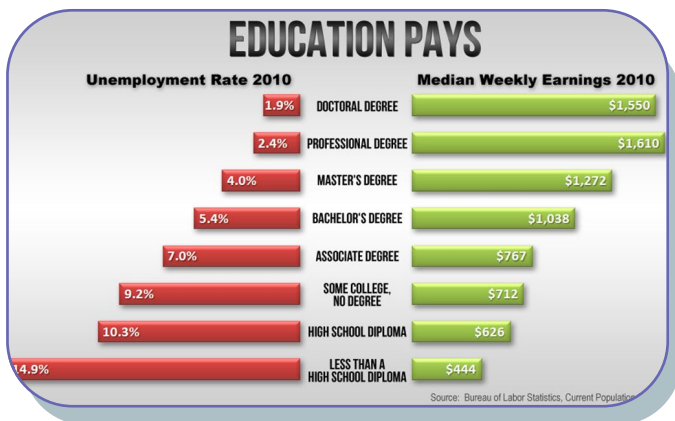
Capitalizing on the success of the larger events, the Employment Connection has been hosting an ongoing series of smaller scale job fairs to maintain opportunities for Employment Services participants between the major annual events. Two of these "mini" job fairs were hosted over the past year, the first on October 19, 2012 and the second on March 21, 2013. Both job fairs had twenty five (25) employers and approximately 800 job seekers in attendance. Each event proved to be a success and the elevated attendance levels reinforced the need for jobs fairs in our community.

The Employment Connection will continue to host both large and smaller scale Job Fairs throughout the coming year. For the dates and times of upcoming events, be sure to check out the website at [www.ecstaffing.com](http://www.ecstaffing.com).

## Education and Training



In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau released the results of a projected earnings study which provided a comparative analysis between income, employment rates and education. The results, posted in the graph



to the left, indicate a direct correlation between education and earning potential. Those with higher educational attainment earn a higher income than their counterparts. Additionally, unemployment rates are highest among those with lower educational levels.

To help families overcome educational deficiencies and achieve self-sufficiency, Santa Clara has established a robust educational network, consisting of local Adult Education providers and Community Colleges. Through the collaboration, clients are able to attend school or a vocational training program while simultaneously building a resume by participating in work experience, community service or part-time work.

Balancing the responsibilities of raising a family, maintaining CalWORKs compliance and keeping up with school can be a daunting task; many would find themselves overwhelmed by the experience. To alleviate some of the pressure, Employment Services maintains partnerships at campuses across the County to



provide students with a specialized on-site resource, the CalWORKs Liaison.

### *CalWORKs Liaisons*

CalWORKs Liaisons are a critical link between CalWORKs regulatory knowledge and campus expertise that provide students with support and mentorship; contributing greatly to their educational success. Each Liaison provides students with an orientation to familiarize incoming participants of the services they offer, arrange placement testing, help students navigate the enrollment and registration process, counsel students on coursework needed to obtain certification or degrees, arrange work experience or community service and closely monitor student participation and progress. With the aid of a Liaison, CalWORKs students are able to smoothly transition into academia without experiencing “growing pains”.

### *The Essentials of Education*

Competing for jobs without a high school diploma can be uphill battle. Approximately 88% of our participants are hampered by educational barriers. Employment Services is able to help these families overcome this hurdle by working with local Adult Education providers that offer an avenue to earn a High School Diploma, General Education Diploma or Certified Vocation Training. Adult Education providers also offer specialized learning programs like English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education that help refine fundamental learning skills.

To ensure academic accessibility to clients residing throughout the county, Employment Services

collaborates with a number of Adult Education districts to host a CalWORKs liaison at 12 campuses, including; Mountain View Los Altos School District, Metropolitan Adult Education, Eastside Union High School District and Campbell Adult Education. On average, there were 308 CalWORKs students enrolled in an educational program each month in FY 2012–13.

### *A Time of Transition*

Adult Education providers across the nation are working to adapt their curriculum to new GED testing guidelines that are scheduled to take effect in October of 2013. The new GED test will be condensed to a streamlined, 4 test series that is administered electronically via computer. New guidelines place a limit of 3 attempts to pass any single subject before the test taker must wait one year before being granted a retake.

Locally, our Adult Education partners are developing strategies to address the new guidelines and prepare students for the changes. At present, the greatest impact will be felt by students currently engaged in the testing process; new rules dictate that they must successfully pass all portions of the test before the October implementation date or start the testing process all over again.

As a result, the areas only testing site, Metropolitan Adult Education is adjusting their schedules

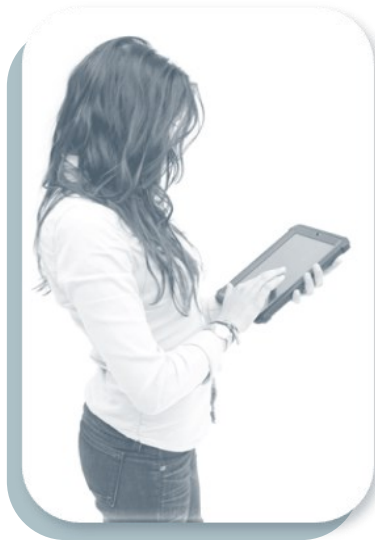
to offer more test dates and providing additional preparatory classes to prime students for the test.



and those that have not yet attempted the GED testing series are now receiving pre-testing and practice test packages based on the new computerized form to acclimate students to the new format.

### Mountain View and Los Altos

Mountain View/Los Altos (MVLA) School District continues to serve the community with an emphasis on today's job market and its demand for the utilization of technology. This past year, staff have rolled out an array of new iPod curriculum that directly align with classroom materials to support



the GED, ESL and ABE programs. MVLA also took part in the Samsung tablet pilot program and will be adopting tablets as a learning resource for their students. The school is making good use of the tablets by creating interactive applica-

tions (apps) that support specific areas of study like GED Math and Office Skills. Instructor, Ly Nguyen, noted that the app he created, "Math Problem Generator," was used over Spring Break by students enrolled in his GED Math course. Through the App, the instructor was able to verify each students participation hours and conveniently review their work online. The tablets are proving to be popular among the student body as the CalWORKs liaison reports that students are eager

to work with new technology and families without home computers are benefitting from the new resource.

MVLA also hosts Career Technical Education programs that offer certifications in Medical Assisting, Medical Records and Nursing Assistant. Working closely with neighboring healthcare providers, MVLA has developed relationships that offer students an avenue to employment.

Approximately 90% of the students completing a technical training program in the medical field were able to secure a job within the community.

*Approximately 90% of the MVLA students completing a technical training program in the medical field*

### Eastside Union

Eastside Union High School District is also adopting hi-tech educational resource to compliment their GED program. They recently introduced, Aztec, a specialized GED learning software, to their curriculum. Aztec is an online diagnostic, learning and practice program that offers students targeted instruction and individualized learning plans. The new software allows for a fine tuned, interactive learning experience that is tailored to each students needs. The program provides GED testing materials in all subjects covered by the test and includes practice tests, subject lessons, audio and graphic presentations and test tips. Students are adapting quickly to the new software.

## Forward Progress

Further enriching the Work/School model, Employment Services provides a path to long term self-sufficiency and increased employability. Through CalWORKs, students have access to over 300 certified training programs that offer direct access to gainful employment. CalWORKs students have the option to attend one of seven local community college campuses; DeAnza College, Foothill College, West Valley College, Evergreen Valley College, San Jose City College, Mission College and Gavilan College.



Since the option to attend college is available to any aspiring student that meets the requirements, the CalWORKs college population represents a diverse composition of participants. Through encouragement and support from a CalWORKs liaison at an Adult Education Campus, many students that successfully complete a GED or High School Diploma program are able to make the transition to a two-year college. Some CalWORKs clients have found themselves needing a skills upgrade or educational enhancements in order to return to the workforce. Perhaps the most common participants are college students who seek CalWORKs assistance and supportive services in order to complete their education, these students are known as Self Initiated Program (SIP) participants.



Within the past year, the Community Colleges hosted a combined 1,396 CalWORKs students. For Fiscal Year 2013-14, 97 students fulfilled their coursework requirements and graduated with an Associates Degree in their area of study. 40 students that transferred to a four-year university successfully competed for scholarships. To fulfill their work participation hours, many students work part-time in work study positions, in fact, 98 students were able to find work on campus.

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## A Monumental Step in Sacramento

Over the past year, our local college personnel have been busy actively advocating in Sacramento on behalf of CalWORKs students. With fluctuating budgets and shrinking CalWORKs time limits, the need for CalWORKs Priority Registration has become increasingly evident. Each semester, students undergo a frenzy of scheduling

some vital supportive services like child care. Students that are enrolled in high demand degree or training programs often find themselves competing for classes.

To ensure that the legislature fully understood the importance of Priority Registration and the benefits to CalWORKs students, the CalWORKs College consortium made a trip to Sacramento to address the Senate Sub-Committee directly. Speaking on local impacts was former CalWORKs Association President, Susan Sweeney of Gavilan College, who provided the committee with an outline of the challenges facing students today and the solutions on the table that would alleviate registration issues. Further illustrating the concerns and perhaps the most compelling, was the testimony

of two DeAnza College CalWORKs students who painted a clear picture of how their lives would be affected by new legislation. Their efforts were a success on many fronts; students gained invaluable experience in advocating on their own behalf and, starting this year, CalWORKs students statewide will have Priority Registration. Thank you College Liaisons!



### *A Letter from María Giron of DeAnza College*

*The first week of spring quarter at De Anza College, I was asked to speak in Sacramento. This meant that I would have to miss classes and set aside my fear of public speaking, I jumped at the chance. Many people do not understand how the CalWORKs program is designed and they can be quick to judge or downsize the importance of priority registration. Going to Sacramento and speaking was my opportunity to share my personal struggles in hopes of enlightening the Senate on what a real day in the life of someone in the CalWORKs program is all about.*

## Child Care Services



Today, child care expenses can quickly consume large portions of a working family's budget and these financial impacts are intensified for low income families with young children. For many, a week's earnings may barely be enough to cover the cost of child care, leaving families with little incentive to continue working. The CalWORKs Child Care program helps families bridge this gap by providing short-term child care options for parents starting to work or attend welfare to work activities. The program also offers a smooth transition to long-term child care as families move towards self-sufficiency.

In order to provide seamless child care services, the CalWORKs Child Care Program is administered in three stages. Stage One is administered by the Department of Social Services. Stages Two and Three are administered by the Alternative Payment Program (APP) agencies under contract with the California Department of Education. In Santa Clara County the two agencies are: Community Child Care Council of Santa Clara County and Choices for Children.

### Three Stages of CalWORKs Child Care:

**State One** — begins when a family enrolls with Employment Services.

**Stage Two** — begins when the family's work or work activity has stabilized. The family may continue to receive Stage Two child care for up to 24-months after they are no longer eligible for cash aid. At this stage families may start paying a family fee, which operates on a sliding scale that adjusts to the family's income.

**Stage Three** — begins when the family times-out of stage two.

Child care is essential to CalWORKs participants and working families. On average, there are 960 families enrolled in Stage One, 3,707 enrolled in Stage Two and 1,064 enrolled in Stage Three each month. Families choosing to enroll in the program have a wide range of options when choosing a child care provider, many opt for a licensed child care facility or a "license exempt" provider, typically a sister, mother, friend of the CalWORKs family.

Due to state budget allocations, the Child Care system may be in jeopardy. At present, Stage Three is still being offered but the funding stream that supports the program is not guaranteed. Depending on the availability of state funds, this final tier is at risk and families may lose this child care option. Employment Services and the APPs are closely monitoring this situation and will develop solutions to provide timely and safe transitions, if needed.

## Celebrating Bike to Work Day



The Bike to Work program is one component of the Family Transportation Services program that helps Employment Services families resolve transportation deficiencies that hinder their participation in employment or employment based activities. The Bike to Work program enables participants that previously walked or relied on public transportation a more expedient or efficient means to commute.

This past May, Outreach & Escort Inc. and the Employment Connection teamed up to celebrate the 19th Annual Bay Area Bike to Work Day by hosting an on-site distribution of bicycles to participants in the Bike to Work program. Eligibility guidelines for the Bike to Work program require that each recipient be actively participating with Employment Services and not own a vehicle. In addition, all participants must be employed or engaged in a Work Experience activity. The program provides each participant with everything they need to safely commute to work, including a fitted bicycle, a helmet, bike lock and a bike lighting system.

Mobility Managers from Outreach began promoting the event over a month in advance to strengthen the program's presence and generate awareness amongst the Employment Counselor staff. Exceeding the expected turnout, the event was a success with 25 participants receiving a bicycle. According to Employment

*"I referred a client who was able to reduce his morning bus commute by nearly an hour and a half"*

Counselor, Billy Khong, the bikes enable participants to get to work more conveniently, "I referred a client who was able to reduce his bus commute by nearly an hour and a half. The bicycles really helped to bridge the gap between bus routes to eliminate his wait times."

The Bike to Work program administered by Outreach is quickly becoming a key element in providing mobility to the Employment Services population. With innovative transportation programs, clients have a wider array options designed to continually engage in an employment activity or maintain their job.

## Refugee Employment Services



Santa Clara County has long been a safe harbor for refugees fleeing war ravaged homelands, religious, persecution, natural disasters and victims of human trafficking. The Federal Refugee Program was established by the Refugee Act of 1980 and later amended in 1987. Under the Refugee Act, funding is provided to states and counties to supply temporary financial assistance, medical benefits and Employment Services to aid them in resettlement.

This year, 304 refugees resettled in Santa Clara County. Following the trend from last year, a majority of the refugees are new arrivals from Iran, Iraq, Eritrea and Somali. Through Employment Services and a network of community partners, these refugees receive employment preparation services that aid them in transitioning to a new way of life and entry into the US labor force.

### *Community Partners Provide the Critical Link*

Employment Services has partnered with community based organizations that possess the specialized linguistic and cultural competence and experience to serve refugee populations. Currently, the roster of partners includes Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, International Rescues Committee, Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley, and Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation. Together, the network provides new arrivals with up to 8 months of transition assistance, during which community partners provide language training, legal services, skills development, job training and



placement. Through the community partnerships, 247 new refugees have been provided with resettlement service over the past year.

### Office of Refugee Resettlement Visit

In August 2013, the Office of Refugee Resettlement and California Refugee Program Bureau came to the Bay Area for a visit and met with the local, state and refugee service providers. During this visit, providers had an opportunity to participate in a round table discussion, in which they shared insights and common challenges facing new arrivals. Out of the many topics raised, much of the discussion focused on the growing need for mental health services within the refugee population and availability of resources. Locally, our partners highlighted their collaboration with Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) that provides mental health services for refugees.

### Request for Proposal

In June 2013, Employment Services issued a public Request for Proposals, offering the community an opportunity to partner with the county to provide Refugee Employment Services and Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) programs. Four agencies were awarded grant funding: Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County, International Rescue Committee, Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley, and Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation.

Each agency will implement a comprehensive refugee employment services plan with a goal of serving at least 270 refugees for FY 2013–14. Refugee Employment Services plan will include:

- ◇ Job Preparedness Lessons
- ◇ Vocational English Lessons
- ◇ Placement Follow-up and Retention Support
- ◇ Job Development and Placement Support

The partner agencies will provide intensive case management support including an upfront comprehensive assessment of each client's personal goals and identification of employment barriers. With the information gathered from the assessment, a client-centered employment plan will be developed with the client, which will include detailed short-term job search goals and strategies for the enrollment period, and a long-term, multi-year career planning and exploration with emphasis on career upgrade and continuing education beyond the first year of arrival.

### The Elderly Refugee Program

The Elderly Refugee Program focuses on serving refugees (over 60 years old) with citizenship classes, linkage and referral to community services, food and nutrition education, legal workshops, referrals for healthcare, food and social activities. The goal of the program is to enhance the quality of life in older refugee population and encourage participation as a member of the new community. In the past 10 months, 66 older refugees participated in this program.



Bella and Yuri

Bella and Yuri are a couple enrolled in the Elderly Refugee Program at Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley (JFS). They arrived in the U.S. as refugees from Russian in 2007 at the age of 70. Both enjoyed long careers as engineers prior to their arrival in the U.S. At JFS, they attended English and Citizenship classes where they learned essential communication skills and also made friends.



Through the program, the couple was referred to low-income/subsidized housing services, linked with food assistance, Life Line telephone services, utility discount programs and health care services. After many years of hard work, Yuri and Bella have passed the citizenship test, completed the naturalized process to become citizens in 2013. Currently, both Yuri and Bella are active volunteers at Jewish Family Services.



Mary John

Needing to flee post-war religious persecution in her native Iraq, Mary John, was forced to separate from her family, abandon all her belongings and leave the country as soon as she could. Mary was able to make it to Jordan, where she lived for two years while seeking refugee resettlement in America.

Upon her arrival, Mary was referred to Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County where she received Refugee Employment Services, employment training and linkage to a mental health program. With the help of her case managers, Mary was also able to receive additional resources with the Council on Aging program. Mary's determination and desire to work were immediately evident to the staff at Catholic Charities and not long after enrolling there she was offered a job as an Administrative Assistant.

Mary remains grateful for the services that were provided to her at Catholic Charities and she cherishes the opportunity to assist other refugees hoping to achieve similar success.

## The Safety Net Committee



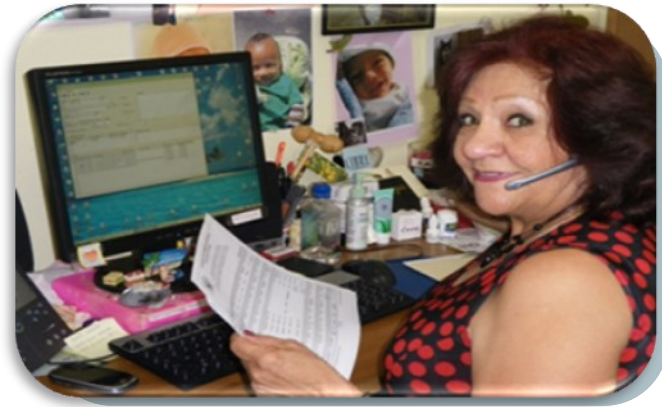
The Safety Net Committee is co-chaired by the Social Services Agency and Second Harvest Food Bank. It is comprised of Community Based Organizations that come together in partnership to educate, develop and implement strategies to strengthen food access and other essential services throughout Santa Clara County.

### *Food Assistance*

Last year, the Safety Net organizations witnessed another year for increased food assistance. For FY 2012-13, an average of 176,485 people were provided with nutritional assistance each month. Working together, Safety Net partners distributed a net total of 39 million pounds of food, a 16% increase compared to the previous year, with over 50% of the total distribution comprising of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Throughout the year, Safety Net partner organizations participated in focus group meetings that were hosted in geographic areas and by service types throughout the County. The purpose of these meetings was to garner feedback on ways to better coordinate in helping people access food services, identify emerging needs and consider how to leverage the use of technology to support the work. Safety Net organizations also participated in a capacity survey that will help inform Second Harvest Food Bank's strategic planning related to gaps in food services, identify barriers and organizational infrastructure.

## Making Connections



“The Food Connection”, is the food referral hotline that provides a critical resource for food insecure households. Following, is a list of highlights:

- ◇ Over 38,000 food referrals to Santa Clara County residents, an increase of 9% over last year.
- ◇ Referrals to nearly 7,200 first time callers.
- ◇ Access to CalFresh application support. Food Connection staff submitted 697 applications, or 20% of the overall applications submitted by the Food Bank for Santa Clara County residents. These applications were taken over the phone and at the Food Bank’s Curtner Center location.
- ◇ This year SHFB updated and distributed multi-lingual (English, Spanish, Vietnamese) resource listings of county-wide hot meal programs, holiday (Nov. & Dec.) meal programs and children’s summer meal program lists.

- ◇ Provided referrals to 2,489 homeless individuals and families, an increase of 72% compared to the previous year.
- ◇ Multi-lingual assistance in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. For approximately 5% of the callers, the hotline utilizes volunteers and SSA’s Language Line.
- ◇ Increased referrals to stable sources of food for callers, increasing referrals to the weekly senior Brown Bag program and monthly Family Harvest and Produce Mobile programs.
- ◇ Distribution of multi-lingual resource information packets to schools prior to summer break. In the Spring, Food Connection distributed over 67,000 Food Connection/ CalFresh flyers to children at 256 elementary schools in 22 Santa Clara County school districts.


**food to life**  
 Your Food Connection.

**Ask About cal fresh**  
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Pregunte Sobre CalFresh    詢問有關食品券    Có câu hỏi về CalFresh

1-800-984-3663

Interested in receiving some Food Connection cards?  
contact Vu Tran at (408) 266-8866 ext. 263



## CalFresh Outreach

Second Harvest Food Bank (SHFB) continues to partner with Social Services Agency with a common goal, to increase CalFresh outreach, access and participation. Each month, SHFB's CalFresh Outreach Team banded together to host events at over 40 community locations from Gilroy to Palo Alto. At each site, attendees are linked with resources and provided with free food and access to CalFresh benefits. Throughout the year, SHFB provided CalFresh application information and assistance to 3,548 Santa Clara County households.

The CalFresh Outreach Team distributed over 274,000 informational materials to keep community members informed about local resources available services. One of the newer informational pamphlets is the multi-lingual, CalFresh "Truth Cards" that were created in collaboration with the Safety Net Collaborative and SSA representatives. (See appendix Item X for a full size copy of the Truth Card or contact Nicole Martinez if you are interested in receiving truth Cards for your agency)

### The Truth Card Addresses a Serious Need in the Community

The Truth Card is designed to encourage more people to apply by addressing common fears and misconceptions about CalFresh program guidelines and requirements. While working with families, CalFresh Outreach Workers still encounter potentially eligible families that are hesitant to seek assistance, below is one account of a common occurrence.

**cal fresh**  
BETTER FOOD FOR BETTER LIVES

There is a lot of confusion about CalFresh.  
**The TRUTH about CalFresh . . .**

**What is CalFresh?**

- ✓ CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps) is for people with limited income, to pay for food at most stores. Benefits come on an EBT card that works like a debit card.
- ✓ CalFresh is a nutrition program, funded by the USDA, which also funds free lunches at schools and WIC. CalFresh is not the same as CalWORKS or welfare.
- ✓ You will not have to pay any money back unless you are overpaid.
- ✓ You do not need to report CalFresh on your tax return.

**Who can get CalFresh?**

- ✓ You can get CalFresh even if you get money from a job, disability, unemployment, Social Security, CalWORKS, General Assistance or retirement.
- ✓ People who get SSI are not eligible for CalFresh. However, their family members may be eligible.
- ✓ CalFresh will not harm your ability to become a legal resident or citizen.
- ✓ People who do not have children can get CalFresh.
- ✓ Many college students can get CalFresh if they meet student requirements.

[Learn More on the Back](#)

A lawyer from Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (650-558-0915) who is an expert in benefits rights has reviewed these statements and agrees that they are all true.

### Calming Fears

"My mom referred a client to me from my daughter's elementary school, the family was in desperate need of CalFresh application assistance. This family of five has been struggling since the father, who is no longer working, underwent surgery and treatment for a brain tumor. Initially, they were afraid to get the benefits but I answered their concerns and fears; after a few weeks they were finally convinced it would be safe. They were able to get CalFresh for their three small children and will receive over \$400 per month for food purchases at the grocery store. The mom gave my mom a big hug and thanked her. This was a good day!!!!!!"

## Leveraging Social Media Outlets

Reaching out to the increasing population of tech savvy families, CalFresh Outreach has gone to the web to increase access to food benefits. A new video was developed to familiarize families with the CalFresh application process. The video offers the viewer step-by-step instructions on different ways to apply for benefits including live, onsite visits and scenes filmed at the Application Assistance Center. After watching the video, applicants will be prepared to access the online application in the lobby kiosks. The video is posted on YouTube, search keyword “How to apply for CalFresh,” or access the video from the Social Services CalFresh page at the County’s website ([www.sccgov.org](http://www.sccgov.org)).



## Innovative Grant Pilot Project

In 2012, the California Department of Social Services awarded funding to the Santa Clara County Social Services Agency to collaborate with Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and the Public Health Department to provide nutrition education to CalFresh recipients. The purpose of the grant was to increase access to CalFresh resources and to provide CalFresh eligible clients with nutrition education in the following ways:

- ◇ Distribute 45,000 nutrition resource bags for homeless or families. Homeless bags contained information about eating without electricity, CalFresh, where to use EBT cards at farmers’ markets and restaurants, and a can opener. Family bags contained cookbooks, Sesame Street nutrition materials, crayons and CalFresh promotion materials.
- ◇ Provide nutritional education materials, including produce recipe cards. Materials were distributed via nutrition education classes and homeless nutrition education resource bags, and through Second Harvest food distribution partner agencies.
- ◇ Collaborate with the Public Health Department to develop and distribute promotional awareness materials through direct mail, billboards and transit shelters in targeted zip code areas where at least 50% of the population is below 185% Federal poverty level. Two different billboard and transit shelter campaigns were introduced in Gilroy, San Jose and Mountain View.
- ◇ Introduce participants to new, healthy foods, especially produce, and observe cooking demonstrations by piloting the use of a mobile teaching unit/kitchen, partners’ licensed kitchens, and other nutrition education activities. Over the course of the 16-month grant, over 25,000 individuals enjoyed food samples and cooking demonstrations.

## Initial Reports Indicate Success

An evaluation was conducted with San Jose State University evaluators and the California Association of Food Banks to see if the innovative five-minute lessons for clients waiting in line for food resulted in increased produce consumption. The evaluation discovered that not only did the education increase the likelihood that clients would take, prepare and eat the produce, but they also used their own funds to purchase the same produce at the grocery store.



## CalWORKS Nutrition Academy

Through Innovative Grant Funding the Public Health Department developed an “Eat Healthy Eat Smart” program to engage CalFresh participants and encourage them to make healthy food choices within a limited budget.

Public Health utilized numerous strategies to increase awareness of the program and promote healthy active lifestyles. According to participating families, the most interactive and exciting component of the project was the CalWORKs Nutrition Education Academy. This 20 hour intensive education program was delivered to 60 CalWORKs students enrolled at Evergreen Valley and Gavilan Colleges. The interactive classes included an overview of basic nutrition, the relationship between healthy eating and physical activity in decreasing chronic diseases, and the new USDA MYPlate recommendations. Most importantly, the class provided an opportunity for students to learn about and use tools they can use to improve their



health and that of their families. These include how to read food labels, plan and shop for healthy eating on a limited budget, engage in physical activity through easy exercises, and easy weight loss tips.

The workshops were very well received, with one attendee noting, “This is a very helpful and educational workshop, the information is helpful for the whole family.”



## The "Get Fresh" Project

Santa Clara County was awarded a second year of funding from the California Department of Social Services to continue collaborating with SHFB for FFY 2013 to 2015 to implement the Get Fresh Project. The County will continue its collaboration with SHFB to support nutritional education geared toward the needs of local low-income communities. The project will include the train-the-trainer food safety classes; nutrition education, promotion of other food programs and resources; promotion of use of EBT cards to purchase healthy foods and further development of healthy recipes and related healthy eating materials.

## SAFETY NET COMMITTEE

The Safety Net Committee encourages all interested community based organizations or individuals to participate in this forum.\* The committee focus on identifying emerging needs, gaps in services, resource sharing and communication about services for low-income communities.

\*The Safety Net Committee meets on the fourth Thursday each month at Second Harvest Food Bank, 750 Curtner Ave., San Jose, 95125 from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.





# Appendix

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A. Supplemental Poverty Measure

B. California Budget Project

Final 2013-14 Budget Agreement Signals a New Chapter for California,  
With More Work to Be Done

C. Health Care Reform

D. CalWORKS Advisory Committee

E. Refugee Forum

F. Safety Net Committee

G. CalFresh Truth Card

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# ASPE

## ISSUE BRIEF

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### INFORMATION ON RESEARCH SUPPLEMENTAL POVERTY MEASURE A SUMMARY OF 2012 CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY DATA

- The Census Bureau recently released data on the research supplemental poverty measure (SPM) indicating that 16.1 percent of the U.S. population in 2011 was poor, representing 49.7 million individuals. This compares to 15.1 percent of the U.S. population, or 46.6 million individuals, under the official measure.<sup>1</sup> Both the official poverty rate and the SPM poverty rate remained statistically unchanged from 2010 to 2011.
- This is the second year the Census Bureau has published research SPM estimates. The SPM adds greater refinement and thus differs from the official measure in both the measurement of needs (or thresholds) and resources available to meet those needs.
- The official poverty thresholds were initially set in the early 1960s to represent the cost of a minimum food diet multiplied by three to allow for costs of other goods and services. The SPM thresholds, on the other hand, are based on out-of-pocket spending on food, clothing, shelter, and utilities for families at the 33<sup>rd</sup> percentile of the spending distribution with some adjustments for housing ownership and geographic cost of living. For resources, the official measure counts only before-tax cash income. The SPM adds to cash income the value of federal in-kind benefits and tax credits that help to meet the needs identified in the thresholds, and subtracts the value of taxes paid and other necessary expenses such as childcare costs and out-of-pocket medical care expenditures.
- Similar to last year, the overall poverty rate measured using SPM methods was higher than the rate using official poverty measure methods. For example, poverty was higher among the elderly in large part due to medical out-of-pocket expenses that reduced their available resources. Poverty also was higher for working families because of work expenses and childcare costs that reduced available resources and for individuals living in metropolitan areas where costs of living were higher.
- For children under 18, poverty in 2011 was lower when measured using the SPM compared to the official measure, largely due to the receipt of federal in-kind program benefits and federal tax credits among families with children.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2011 *official* poverty estimates in this Issue Brief have been modified by the Census Bureau to include unrelated individuals under the age of 15, since these individuals are included in the SPM but are not counted in the official poverty definition used by the Census Bureau.

- Social Security, Refundable Tax Credits and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) had the largest poverty-reduction effects of all tax and transfer programs included in the SPM, reducing poverty by 8.3, 2.8 and 1.5 percentage points in 2011, respectively.
- Poverty measured with the SPM in 2011 was higher for individuals identifying as Asian, Hispanic of any race, or White non-Hispanic, but was lower for those identifying as African-American or Black, compared to the official measure. Foreign-born individuals had higher poverty rates in 2011 under the SPM compared to the official measure.
- A larger proportion of individuals living in metropolitan areas and a smaller proportion of individuals living in non-metropolitan areas were poor in 2011 using the SPM compared to the official measure.
- Poverty measured using the SPM was higher in the West and Northeast, and lower in the Midwest, than poverty measured using the official poverty measure.
- SPM poverty rates in 2011 were higher than official poverty rates for individuals in married-couple families, workers (including full-time/year-round workers), those with private health insurance, and the uninsured. Poverty rates in 2011 were lower for those with public health insurance and not statistically different for individuals in female-householder families using the SPM relative to the official poverty measure.
- Roughly half of all individuals in the country lived below 200 percent of the poverty threshold in 2011 using the SPM, compared with about one-third using the official measure.

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**POVERTY IN 2011: OFFICIAL MEASURE AND RESEARCH  
SUPPLEMENTAL MEASURE**

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	Official Poverty	SPM Poverty
<b>Demographic characteristics:</b>		
All individuals	15.1	16.1
Children under age 18	22.3	18.1
Individuals ages 18 – 64	13.7	15.5
Individuals age 65 and older	8.7	15.1
Hispanic	25.4	28.0
Black	27.8	25.7
Asian	12.3	16.9
White, non-Hispanic	9.9	11.0
Foreign-born	19.0	25.8
In married-couple units	7.4	10.0
In female-householder units	29.6	30.0

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**POVERTY IN 2011: OFFICIAL MEASURE AND RESEARCH**  
**SUPPLEMENTAL MEASURE *continued***

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	Official Poverty	SPM Poverty
<b>Employment and insurance:</b>		
All workers	7.2	9.4
Full-time/year-round workers	2.8	5.1
With private health insurance	5.0	7.6
With public health insurance, no private	36.7	31.3
Not insured	28.3	30.9
<b>Geographic areas:</b>		
Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	14.7	16.6
Non-metropolitan Areas	17.1	13.5
West	15.9	20.0
South	16.1	16.0
Northeast	13.2	15.0
Midwest	14.1	12.8
<b>Poverty by threshold:</b>		
0 – 50 % of the poverty threshold	6.7	5.2
50 – 100 % of the poverty threshold	8.4	10.9
100 – 200 % of the poverty threshold	19.4	32.0

Data: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2012.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, “The Research Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2011”, *Current Population Reports*, Series P60-244.

## BACKGROUND

The Census Bureau, in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), developed the SPM after years of research and collaboration. The SPM is based on the 2010 recommendations of an Interagency Technical Working Group, which included representatives from the Census Bureau, BLS, the Economics and Statistics Administration, the Council of Economic Advisors, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Office of Management and Budget. The Working Group’s suggestions drew on the recommendations of a 1995 National Academy of Sciences report and the extensive research on poverty measurement conducted over the past 15 years.

The SPM makes changes to how income is measured. Compared to the official measure, where only gross before-tax income is included, the SPM:

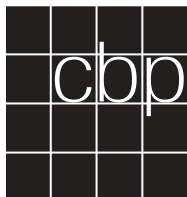
- Counts the value of federal in-kind benefits that are available to satisfy basic food, clothing, shelter, and utility (FCSU) needs, including nutritional assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and school meals.
- Subtracts income and payroll taxes paid and adds refundable tax credits received.

- Subtracts from income other necessary expenses such as the cost of child care, other work expenses, child support payments, and out-of-pocket medical expenditures.

The SPM makes changes to the poverty thresholds. Compared to the official poverty threshold, which is set at three times the cost of the minimum food diet in 1963 and updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (all items), the SPM poverty threshold incorporates the following changes:

- The SPM poverty threshold is the 33<sup>rd</sup> percentile of out-of-pocket FCSU expenditures of consumer units with two children multiplied by 1.2.
- The SPM threshold varies based on the shelter and utility expenses of three groups: home owners with mortgages, home owners without mortgages, and renters.
- The SPM threshold is adjusted for geographic differences in housing costs to account for regional cost of living differences.
- The SPM uses the five-year moving average of FCSU expenditures to account for inflation.

The Census Bureau continues to release the official measure, which is not being replaced by the SPM. The new SPM thresholds are not intended to assess eligibility for government programs. The SPM is an additional macroeconomic statistic providing further understanding of economic conditions and trends.



CALIFORNIA BUDGET PROJECT

Updated July 8, 2013

## Final 2013-14 Budget Agreement Signals a New Chapter for California, With More Work to Be Done

On June 27, Governor Jerry Brown signed the 2013-14 California state budget and related legislation. This budget marks a significant turning point in California's fiscal outlook, thanks to additional revenues approved by voters last November as well as gradually improving economic conditions in the state. The 2013-14 budget agreement signals a new chapter for California by expanding Medi-Cal eligibility under federal health care reform, fundamentally restructuring school finance to increase resources for disadvantaged students, and beginning to reinvest in other vital public systems and services. The budget agreement also builds toward future fiscal and economic stability by paying down budgetary debt and maintaining a reserve.

The 2013-14 budget agreement calls for \$96.3 billion in General Fund expenditures and total state spending of \$145.3 billion, which includes General Fund, special fund, and bond fund dollars. Highlights of this budget agreement include:

- Increasing funding for K-12 schools, community colleges, the University of California, and the California State University;
- Restructuring K-12 school finance with the goal of providing additional dollars to educate disadvantaged students;
- Expanding Medi-Cal eligibility to cover over a million additional low-income Californians;
- Modest improvements and enhancements to a number of services severely cut in recent years, including adult dental care, mental health care, child care and preschool, and CalWORKs;
- Paying down budgetary debt as part of a multiyear effort to reduce it from \$35 billion in 2010-11 to less than \$5 billion by 2016-17; and,
- Maintaining a \$1.1 billion reserve.

California's leaders have work left to be done. Poverty and long-term unemployment are still high in the wake of the Great Recession, while the social safety net and critical employment services remain weakened by recent years' spending cuts. Still, the 2013-14 budget begins to lay the foundation for stronger communities and broadly shared prosperity.

The following sections review key provisions of the budget agreement and their implications for Californians. The CBP will release additional commentary and analysis in the coming weeks. Please check the CBP's website ([www.cbp.org](http://www.cbp.org)) for the latest information and updates.

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## Budget Agreement Maintains the Minimum Funding Level for Schools and Community Colleges in the May Revision

Approved by voters in 1988, Proposition 98 constitutionally guarantees a minimum level of funding for K-12 schools, community colleges, and the state preschool program. The 2013-14 budget agreement assumes a Proposition 98 funding level of \$56.5 billion for K-14 education programs in 2012-13 and \$55.3 billion in 2013-14. These are approximately the same levels included in the Governor's May Revision, but significantly above the \$47.2 billion Proposition 98 funding level in 2011-12. Specifically, the budget agreement:

- **Provides \$4.3 billion over two years to partially restore previously deferred payments to schools and community colleges.** In 2011-12, \$10.4 billion in annual Proposition 98 payments to K-14 schools (21 percent of the total Proposition 98 funding level) were delayed until 2012-13. Of these deferred payments, the budget agreement repays schools and community colleges \$4.0 billion in 2012-13 and \$272 million in 2013-14. Outstanding payment deferrals at the end of 2013-14 – that is, the amount the state still owes schools and community colleges – will be \$6.2 billion under the budget agreement.
- **Provides \$2.1 billion in 2013-14 Proposition 98 funds to begin implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).** The LCFF restructures the state's education finance system by providing all school districts with a base grant per student, adjusted to reflect the number of students at various grade levels, as well as additional resources to reflect the higher costs of educating English learners, students from low-income families, and foster youth.
- **Provides \$1.25 billion in one-time funding to support implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), \$250 million more than was included in the Governor's May Revision.** In August 2010, the State Board of Education adopted CCSS for California's K-12 schools. The budget agreement provides school districts and county offices of education (COEs) with CCSS implementation funding of \$1.0 billion in 2012-13 Proposition 98 dollars and \$250 million in 2013-14 Proposition 98 dollars. These funds are provided on a per pupil basis and may be used at any time during 2013-14 or 2014-15. The budget agreement requires school districts and COEs to:
  - Use CCSS implementation dollars for specific purposes, including instructional materials and professional development for teachers, administrators, and other staff involved in the direct instruction of students;
  - Adopt a plan delineating how CCSS implementation dollars will be spent; and
  - Report by July 1, 2015 how CCSS implementation dollars were spent.
- **Provides \$428 million in Proposition 98 funds – from Proposition 39 revenue – for energy efficiency programs in schools and community colleges.** Approved by voters in November 2012, Proposition 39 (the California Clean Energy Jobs Act) provides for the transfer of up to \$550 million annually from the General Fund to a Clean Energy Job Creation Fund. The 2013-14 budget agreement provides \$381 million of these funds to the California Department of Education for allocation to school districts and COEs and \$47 million to the California Community College Chancellor's Office for allocation to community college districts. Of the dollars provided to school districts and COEs, 85 percent must be allocated based on average daily attendance and 15 percent based on students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. In addition, the budget agreement provides \$28 million in Proposition 98 funds – also from Proposition 39 revenue – to the California Energy Commission to support low-interest and no-interest revolving loans for eligible energy projects at, and technical assistance for, schools and community colleges.
- **Provides \$250 million in one-time funding to establish the California Career Pathways Trust (CCPT).** CCPT funds will be allocated to schools and community colleges through competitive grants. These dollars would



fund career pathway programs that aim to align educational activities with regional economies, such as by establishing regional partnerships between K-14 education and business entities. To qualify for a CCPT grant, recipients must provide their own funding, and obtain funding from partners, to support ongoing program costs. The CCPT grants can be used at any time from 2013-14 through 2015-16.

## **Budget Agreement Includes the Local Control Funding Formula, But Compromises on Revenue for Disadvantaged Students**

In January, Governor Brown proposed to restructure the state's K-12 education finance system through a Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). The budget agreement maintains the main components of the Governor's original proposal: eliminating the majority of programs currently earmarked for specific purposes (so-called "categorical" programs), consolidating that funding with state general purpose revenues, and establishing a new education funding formula designed to provide additional resources for disadvantaged students. The Governor's original LCFF proposal created three grants weighted to reflect the costs of educating different students: a base grant per student for all school districts, adjusted to reflect students' grade levels; a supplemental grant per student based on a district's unduplicated number of English learners and students from low-income families; and a concentration grant per student for districts based on the share of disadvantaged students above a specific threshold (set at 50 percent in the original proposal). The budget agreement maintains this basic LCFF structure, but changes the formulas used to calculate the supplemental and concentration grants and extends the estimated amount of time to fully implement the LCFF from seven to eight years. Under the budget agreement, the LCFF:

- Increases the average target base grant by \$537 per student, from \$6,772 per student in the Governor's original proposal to \$7,309 per student (this refers to the average of four different target base grants that the LCFF designates based on students' grade levels);
- Reduces the supplemental grant from 35 percent of the base grant to 20 percent;
- Increases the concentration grant from 35 percent of the base grant to 50 percent;
- Increases the threshold at which school districts qualify for the concentration grant, with disadvantaged students having to account for at least 55 percent of district enrollment – up from the original threshold of 50 percent; and
- Eliminates time limits for supplemental and concentration grant funding for English learners.

The budget agreement includes payments to school districts whose funding under the LCFF would not be sufficient to restore their funding to 2007-08 levels. These "economic recovery target" (ERT) payments will only be provided to school districts that receive a level of funding per student that is below the top 10 percent of school districts statewide. After the LCFF is fully implemented, districts will receive ERT payments in perpetuity.

In sum, the budget agreement changes the share of *total* LCFF dollars allocated to each grant compared to the May Revision. Under the May Revision, 80 percent of LCFF dollars would have gone toward base grants, 16 percent to supplemental grants, and 4 percent to concentration grants. Under the budget agreement, 84 percent of LCFF dollars will be allocated to base grants, 10 percent to supplemental grants, and 6 percent to concentration grants.

The budget agreement also specifies several accountability provisions for the LCFF. These include the following requirements:

- The State Board of Education (SBE) must adopt regulations by January 31, 2014 that govern the spending of LCFF dollars for disadvantaged students.
- The SBE must adopt a template for local control and accountability plans (LCAPs) by March 31, 2014.
- School districts and COEs must adopt LCAPs, using the SBE template, by July 1, 2014 that include annual goals for all students and specific actions that will be taken to achieve these goals.
- Each school district must present the LCAP, prior to its adoption, to a parent advisory committee and an English learner parent advisory committee for review and comment and must hold at least one public hearing regarding the specific actions and expenditures proposed to be included in the LCAP.
- School districts and COEs must update their LCAPs by July 1, 2015 with a description of how spending will serve disadvantaged students.

### **Budget Establishes Middle Class Scholarship Program and Increases Overall Higher Education Spending**

Beginning in 2014-15, the Middle Class Scholarship Program will provide scholarships at the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) for some in-state students who come from families with incomes of between \$100,000 and \$150,000. Upon full implementation in 2017-18, eligible UC and CSU students will receive tuition discounts of between 10 and 40 percent, depending on family income. The budget agreement caps the total annual cost of the program at \$305 million.

The budget agreement also increases General Fund spending by more than \$250 million each for the UC and the CSU in 2013-14. However, state support for the UC and CSU will remain significantly below 2007-08 levels. Also, the current budget agreement does not restore reductions that last year's budget agreement made to maximum Cal Grant awards for certain categories of students. These reduced award levels will be carried forward to 2013-14. Cal Grants help hundreds of thousands of in-state students from lower-income families pay for higher education each year.

In signing the 2013-14 budget, the Governor vetoed provisions that established enrollment targets for the UC and the CSU as well as provisions that earmarked a portion of UC and CSU funds for specific programs.

### **Policymakers Require School Districts to Maintain Adult Education Spending for the Next Two Years**

In his May Revision, the Governor issued an adult education proposal that put on hold for two years his plan – introduced in January – to shift significant responsibility and funding for adult education away from K-12 school districts, where adult schools have traditionally resided, to community colleges. Consistent with the provisions of the May Revision, the budget agreement brings some measure of stability to adult education programs by protecting them from cuts for the next two years; cuts made in prior years have led to a decline in adult education spending of well over 50 percent since 2007-08.

Under the 2013-14 budget agreement, districts that currently receive state funding for adult education will be required to maintain 2012-13 spending levels for these programs through 2014-15. This is the year prior to when a transition to a regional partnerships system – comprised of K-12 and community college districts and other adult education providers – is slated to be implemented. The budget agreement provides \$25 million in 2013-14 for two-year planning and implementation grants to help districts form these regional partnerships and develop plans to integrate existing programs into the new partnership program.

## **Budget Reflects Major Expansion of Medi-Cal, Shifts Dollars Currently Used for Indigent Health Care From Counties to the State**

Medi-Cal – the state’s Medicaid Program – provides health coverage to more than 8 million low-income Californians, primarily children, youth, and women. This number is expected to rise substantially beginning in January 2014 due to a major program expansion adopted by state policymakers. As authorized by federal health care reform, California will extend Medi-Cal coverage to parents and childless adults who are currently excluded from the program and whose incomes do not exceed 138 percent of the federal poverty line (\$15,856 for an individual in 2013). About 1.4 million Californians under age 65 will become eligible for Medi-Cal under the expansion, with roughly 500,000 to 800,000 of these newly eligible residents expected to enroll during 2014. The federal government will pay the full cost of the expansion for the first three years, phasing down to a still-high 90 percent of the cost by 2020. The budget agreement assumes California will receive \$1.5 billion in federal funds in 2013-14 to support the expansion.

The budget agreement also redirects – from counties to the state – funding that counties currently use to provide health care to low-income, uninsured (“medically indigent”) residents. Counties receive these dollars as part of the state-to-county transfer – or “realignment” – of services that was implemented in 1991. The budget deal reflects the Governor’s assertion that counties will no longer need all of these 1991 realignment dollars to support their health care safety nets as many medically indigent adults newly enroll in Medi-Cal under the expansion. Up to \$300 million will be shifted from counties in 2013-14. The amount shifted is likely to grow substantially in subsequent years. However, the size of each year’s shift will depend on various factors, including which of two formulas each county initially adopts to determine how much of its health care “savings” must be shared with the state each year. (Counties that participate in the County Medical Services Program will not have an option; they must use a specified formula.)

Under either formula, the state would claim the majority of savings – either 80 percent or 60 percent – with counties retaining the remainder. The state’s share of these 1991 realignment revenues would be used to pay for CalWORKs grant costs that would otherwise be funded with General Fund dollars, thereby generating substantial ongoing state savings in the CalWORKs Program. It is uncertain whether the formulas established by the budget agreement will leave counties with sufficient funds to provide health care for the 3 to 4 million Californians who are projected to lack coverage even after full implementation of health care reform.

## **Budget Agreement Restores Some Medi-Cal Dental Services for Adults and Boosts Mental Health Funding, but Assumes a Deep Cut to Medi-Cal Provider Rates**

In addition to expanding Medi-Cal, the budget agreement increases the state’s investment in two key health policy areas: dental care for low-income adults and mental health services. Specifically, the budget:

- **Restores selected dental services for adults in Medi-Cal effective May 1, 2014 – nearly four years after state policymakers eliminated adult dental care in the Medi-Cal Program.** Medi-Cal will cover basic exams and fluoride treatments, crowns, root canal therapy, complete dentures, and certain other services. Restoring these services for adults is estimated to cost \$33.8 million (\$16.9 million General Fund) in 2013-14. Annual costs are estimated to be \$211.3 million (\$85.6 million General Fund).
- **Provides \$206.2 million (\$142.5 million General Fund) to boost local mental health services and improve outcomes for individuals with mental health disorders.** This includes expanding access to early intervention and treatment services, adding at least 25 mobile crisis-support teams and 2,000 crisis stabilization and residential treatment beds, and adding at least 600 triage personnel to help provide appropriate services to individuals with mental health disorders.

In contrast, the budget agreement leaves in place the Medi-Cal provider rate cut enacted in 2011, which has not yet taken effect due to litigation. A federal appeals court has ruled in the state's favor, and the Administration is likely to implement the cut later this year unless the US Supreme Court grants a stay while health provider associations prepare an appeal. The cut will be applied retroactively to June 2011 and means that doctors and other health care providers who participate in Medi-Cal will face payment cuts of 15 percent or more at the same time the state is expanding the program in early 2014.

### **Budget Agreement Reinstates a Tax on Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans, Assumes Extension of Current Fee on Hospitals**

The budget agreement temporarily reinstates a tax on Medi-Cal managed care plans that expired last year. The new tax is retroactive to July 1, 2012 and will remain in effect through June 30, 2016. For 2012-13, the tax equals the gross premiums tax rate of 2.35 percent. For 2013-14 to 2015-16, the tax equals the state sales and use tax rate of 3.9375 percent. The tax proceeds will be used to draw down matching federal dollars. The total revenues (tax proceeds plus federal funds) will be used for two purposes: to reimburse the managed care plans for the cost of the tax – that is, to make the plans whole – and to offset state General Fund costs for health care services. Replacing General Fund dollars with revenues attributable to the new tax will result in estimated state savings of \$128.1 million in 2012-13 and \$342.9 million in 2013-14.

The budget agreement also assumes \$310 million in General Fund savings in 2013-14 due to extending the current "quality assurance fee" on hospitals, which is set to expire on January 1, 2014. A bill that would extend the fee through December 30, 2015 – SB 239 (Hernandez) – was not included in the budget package, but is currently moving through the Legislature as a policy bill.

### **Budget Funds Early Engagement Strategies, Applies Child Poverty Adjustment to CalWORKs Grant**

The CalWORKs Program provides modest cash assistance for 1.1 million low-income children while helping parents overcome barriers to employment and find jobs. State policymakers made deep cuts to the program in recent years, including substantially reducing cash aid for families. Last year, the Governor and state legislators enacted a significant program change: a new 24-month limit on the amount of time CalWORKs parents can access the full array of welfare-to-work activities available under state law before having to meet less flexible federal work participation requirements as a condition of receiving cash aid. As a result of this change, CalWORKs participants – whose time clocks under the new limit began "ticking" on January 1, 2013 – face a still-challenging job market with less time to access resources for securing long-term employment.

The 2013-14 budget agreement includes an increase of \$142.8 million to support counties in providing CalWORKs employment services consistent with the new time limit as well as other changes to the program structure made last year. The budget also allocates roughly \$48 million in 2013-14 to help counties implement "early engagement strategies" to maximize CalWORKs parents' limited time to participate in state-allowed welfare-to-work activities and successfully transition into the workforce.

In addition, the budget agreement:

- Adopts a "child poverty adjustment" to the CalWORKs grant, to be funded with special fund growth dollars from the 1991 realignment. A 5 percent increase to the maximum grant will occur March 1, 2014, for an estimated cost of \$51 million in 2013-14. In 2014-15 and beyond, additional increases could be made based on the level of growth dollars available. The increased grant amount for a given year would become the base level for the following year. If growth funds in a given year fall below the base level, the amount needed to fully fund the base would come out of the General Fund.

- Increases the vehicle asset limit used in CalWORKs eligibility determinations, effective January 1, 2014, to \$9,500 in equity value – from the current amount of \$4,650 – with annual inflation adjustments.

The budget agreement's changes to CalWORKs are modest compared to the significant funding restorations and improvements proposed by the Assembly, but are still a step in the right direction. The child poverty adjustment will increase the maximum CalWORKs grant for a family of three in a high-cost county from 39 percent of the federal poverty line to an estimated 41 percent of the poverty line in 2013-14. While cash grants for most families will remain below the "deep poverty" cut-off of 50 percent, this adjustment lays the groundwork for incremental increases in future years. In addition, the increase in the vehicle asset limit addresses the fact that many CalWORKs participants need a reliable car in order to get to and from work.

### **Budget Agreement Funds Additional Child Care and Preschool Slots, Backfills Federal Sequestration Cuts**

California's subsidized child care and preschool programs help prepare children for school and provide affordable supervision so that low-income parents can find jobs and stay employed. State policymakers have cut annual funding for these programs by more than \$900 million since 2007-08, resulting in the elimination of more than 110,000 child care and preschool slots. Policymakers in recent years also significantly lowered the income eligibility limit for child care and cut payments to license-exempt child care providers.

Although the budget as passed by the Legislature provided \$30 million for new slots in the state preschool program, the Governor used his line-item veto authority to reduce this amount to \$25 million. In addition, \$10 million in unspent child care funds from the 2012-13 fiscal year will be used to provide new slots for General Child Care, the Alternative Payment Program, and Migrant Child Care in 2013-14. The budget agreement also makes up for federal sequestration cuts to child care by allocating an estimated \$15.9 million from the General Fund to backfill federal funding reductions.

### **Budget Does Not Restore State Cost-of-Living Adjustment for SSI/SSP, Reflects IHSS Legal Settlement With 8 Percent Reduction in Authorized Hours of Care**

Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) grants help nearly 1.3 million low-income seniors and people with disabilities to afford food and other basic necessities. Monthly grants for couples and for individuals were reduced to federal minimums in 2009 and 2011, respectively. The maximum SSI/SSP grant for individuals dropped below the federal poverty line in 2009 – and remains 10 percent below poverty. The Assembly's version of the budget would have reinstated the annual state cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for SSI/SSP grants, which was eliminated in 2009. However, the 2013-14 budget agreement does not adopt this change.

Many seniors and people with disabilities in California also rely on the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program, which helps more than 400,000 low-income individuals remain safely in their own homes, preventing the need for more costly out-of-home care. The 2013-14 budget agreement reflects a March 2013 legal settlement among IHSS beneficiaries, labor organizations, and the state that averted a permanent 20 percent reduction in authorized hours. Under this settlement, a smaller across-the-board cut of 8 percent will be applied to the total hours of care each IHSS consumer is authorized to receive. Beginning in 2014-15, the reduction will scale back to 7 percent. Some or all authorized hours could be restored to recipients as early as 2015 if the state secures additional federal funding.

## Budget Agreement Phases Out California’s Enterprise Zone Program, Creates a New Package of Economic Development Incentives

The budget agreement phases out the state’s controversial Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program in its current form and replaces it with changes to the state’s tax system that establish a new package of economic development incentives. Specifically, the budget agreement:

- **Retains current EZ designations but modifies them to more effectively target the most economically distressed areas of the state.** Current EZ designations will remain intact for the 40 existing EZs, plus two recently expired zones – Antelope Valley and Watsonville – but incentives will also be available for use in census tracts throughout the state that rank in the top 25 percent in both unemployment and poverty rate. Further, census tracts with low unemployment and low poverty rates will be removed from the existing EZs, ensuring that the hiring tax credit truly is targeted to businesses located in the state’s most economically distressed areas. Lastly, the seven existing Local Area Military Base Recovery Areas (LAMBRAs) will be preserved and eligible for incentives, as well.
- **Alters key elements of the EZ hiring credit to create and retain jobs for disadvantaged individuals.** The budget agreement also makes major changes to the hiring tax credit to improve performance. These changes include:
  - Requiring businesses to create new *jobs* – not just make new *hires* – as a condition of claiming hiring credits.
  - Discontinuing retroactive vouchering, whereby credits are awarded for hires made in past years.
  - Maintaining the credit for a particular employee at a constant level over a five-year period, instead of having the credit decrease over time. This change removes the incentive and reward for employers that “churn” their workforces.
  - Ensuring that companies that take the hiring credit pay employees a living wage. Specifically, the budget agreement increases the amount of qualified wages from *up to* 150 percent of minimum wage – currently \$12 per hour – to *between* 150 percent and 350 percent of minimum wage. This currently is between \$12 and \$28 per hour. The credit is only available for qualified wages paid to employees who work an average of at least 35 hours per week. In five pilot areas that would be designated by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), qualified wages will be set between \$10 an hour and 350 percent of minimum wage to reflect working conditions in areas with average wages less than the statewide average.
  - Targeting the hiring tax credit to five categories of individuals, which is much narrower than the 10 groups included in current eligibility requirements. The targeted groups will include individuals who have been previously unemployed for six months, recipients of the Earned Income Tax Credit, recipients of CalWORKs or General Assistance, unemployed veterans, and ex-offenders.
- **Creates a manufacturing equipment sales and use tax (SUT) exemption.** The SUT exemption will eliminate the California portion of sales and use tax for basic manufacturing and research and development (R&D) purchases for use within manufacturing and biotech industries. This exemption will be available *statewide* – rather than just within certain geographic areas. The maximum amount of purchases eligible for the SUT exemption statewide is not to exceed \$200 million annually.

- **Establishes a business incentive fund to retain and attract businesses to California.** The budget agreement establishes a new fund that will be administered by GO-Biz for the purpose of negotiating business tax credits in exchange for investments and employment expansion in California. The budget agreement also creates the California Competes Tax Credit Committee – consisting of representatives from the Treasurer’s Office, Department of Finance, and GO-Biz, and an appointee from both the Senate and Assembly – which will provide final approval for GO-Biz’s allocation of tax incentives. The fund will be limited to \$30 million in 2013-14 increasing to \$200 million annually in 2015-16 through 2018-19.

The budget agreement includes a number of provisions intended to ensure that the new economic development package is effective, transparent, and available to small businesses. First, the hiring tax credit, the SUT exemption, and the GO-Biz fund require annual evaluations to ensure that program administrators, policymakers, and the public are able to track program usage, and they each contain provisions that require businesses to return money to the state if certain terms are not met. Second, the budget agreement creates clear benchmarks to ensure that small businesses – defined as having less than \$2 million in gross receipts in the previous year – benefit from the economic package. Specifically, 25 percent of the hiring tax credit will be reserved for small businesses, and industry restrictions on the hiring tax credit will be lifted for small businesses, as well. In addition, 25 percent of the funds allocated to the GO-Biz will also be reserved for small businesses. Lastly, the budget agreement includes sunset dates for the programs, a provision that does not exist within the existing EZ Program.







**Now We Can Say  
YES**

For information and locations call:

408-758-3800

**Changes in 2014 for Californians with NO Health Insurance**

Annual Income		Coverage Options	Cost
 Individual Up to \$15,856	 Family of Four Up to \$32,499	 Eligible for Medi-Cal. Low-income Californians, who are U.S. citizens, as well as most legal immigrants, can enroll in Medi-Cal.	 Small co-payments for selected services. A provider may not refuse care if a patient cannot pay for the cost of a visit.
Up to \$45,960 Up to \$45,961 and above	Up to \$94,200 \$94,201 and above	Eligible to buy subsidized private coverage through a new health insurance exchange market. Participating insurers must offer a package of "essential" benefits that covers at least 60% of average health expense. Required to buy private coverage. Consumers in this income category are ineligible for subsidy.	The portion of a premium that an individual or family will have to pay will not exceed a specified percentage of income. Yearly limits on out-of-pocket costs also apply. Subject to market rates. Individuals who remain uninsured will be liable for penalties up to 2.5% of their income unless they qualify for certain exemptions.

# What You Need To Know

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) also known as Health Care Reform (HCR)

## Facts About Health Care Reform

- ◆ New and simple rules will make more people eligible for free or subsidized health care
- ◆ The service categories covered by HCR are:
  - Ambulatory patient services
  - Emergency services
  - Hospitalization
  - Maternity and newborn care
  - Mental health and substance use disorder services, including behavioral health treatment
  - Prescription drugs
  - Rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices
  - Laboratory services
  - Preventative and wellness services and chronic disease management
  - Pediatric services, including dental and vision care

## Do I Qualify?

- ◆ You can qualify if you are a citizen or legal resident
- ◆ You may qualify if you are between ages 21 and 64
- ◆ Childless Adults
- ◆ You may qualify if you are a former Foster Youth and under age 26
- ◆ You qualify for subsidized coverage depending on your income
- ◆ You qualify even if you have an existing medical condition

## What Will It Cost?

- ◆ Costs will be based on your income and the health plan you choose

## How Do I Apply?\*

- ◆ You can apply online [www.mybenefitscalwin.org](http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org)
- ◆ You can call us at 408-758-3800
- ◆ You can apply in person

# Timelines

Health Care Reform takes effect January 1, 2014

## October 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

- ◆ Pre-enrollment period for health care insurance plans that will be effective January 1, 2014
- ◆ You can apply via online, mail, telephone or in person

## January 1, 2014 - March 31, 2014

- ◆ Plan selection and enrollment continues until March 31, 2014
- ◆ Your health care insurance plan benefits may start as early as January 1, 2014

## April 1, 2013 and Beyond

- ◆ You will be required to enroll in a health care insurance plan by March 31, 2014 - or you will pay a penalty

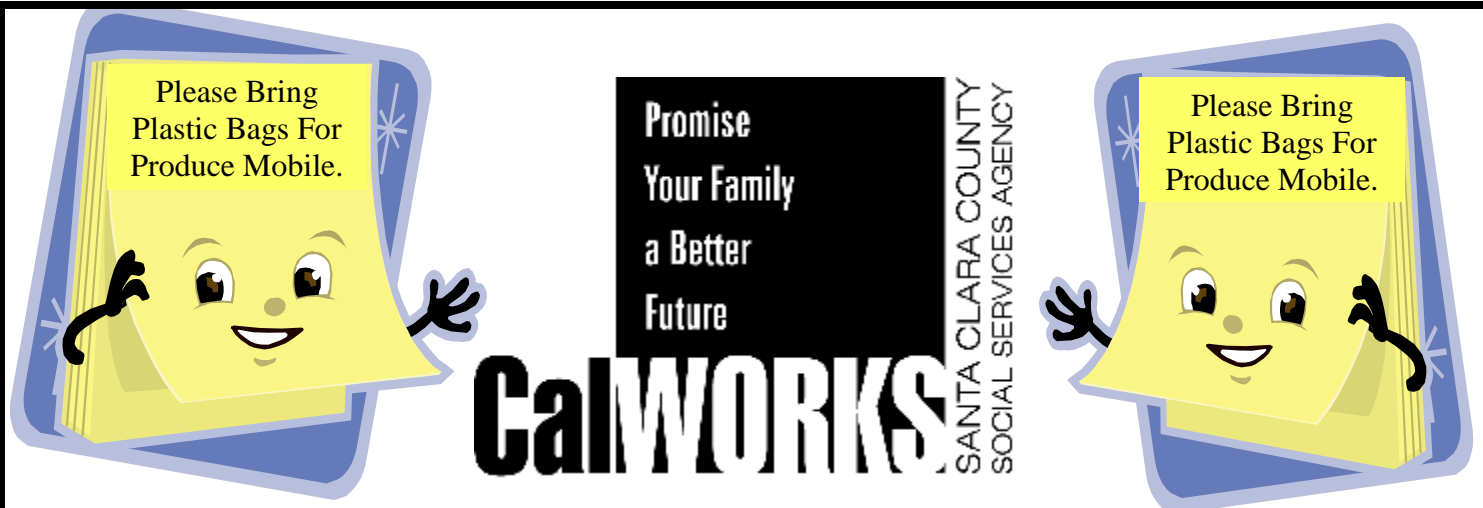
**2014** – Penalty is \$95 per adult and \$47.50 per child (up to \$285 for a family) or 1% of family income, whichever is greater

**2015** – Penalty is \$325 per adult and \$162.50 per child (up to \$975 for a family) or 2.0% of family income, whichever is greater

**2016 and Beyond** – Penalty is \$695 per adult and \$347.50 per child (up to \$2,085 for a family) or 2.5% of family income, whichever is greater

- ◆ If you have a life-changing event such as the loss of a job, reduction in pay, death of a spouse or birth of a child, you are eligible for special enrollment within 60 days of the event.
- ◆ The next open-enrollment period begins October 2014 for coverage in 2015

*\*If you currently receive Cash Aid, SSI, Foster Care or Adoption Assistance: you have a qualified health insurance plan and do not have to apply*



## CalWORKS Advisory 2014 Meeting Calendar

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
January 8	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
February 5	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
March 5	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
April 2	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
May 7	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
June 4	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
July	<b>* NO MEETING THIS MONTH *</b>	
August 6	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
September 3	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
October 1	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
November 4	11:30 – 1:30	Social Services Agency 1879 Senter Road–Orientation Room
December	<b>➔ NO MEETING THIS MONTH – CLIENT ACHIEVMENT AWARDS</b>	

For future meeting location contact Anita A. Casillas @ 408-755-7732  
or email: [Anita.Casillas@ssa.sccgov.org](mailto:Anita.Casillas@ssa.sccgov.org)



P.O. Box 28621 ♦ San Jose ♦ CA 95159-8621

Chair: Naomi Pease  
 Vice-Chair: Reza Odabae  
 Treasurer: Zoya Lazer  
 Secretary: Marija Kevesevic

**Refugee & Immigrant Forum**  
**P.O. Box 28621**  
**San Jose, CA 95159-8621**

**2013 MEMBERS**

African Community Health Institute

American Red Cross

Asian Americans for Community Involvement

Asian Law Alliance

Catholic Charities

Campbell Adult & Community Education

Gardner Family Care Corporation

International Rescue Committee

Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley

PARS Equality Center

Refugee Transitions

Santa Clara County Office of Human Relations

Santa Clara County Social Services Agency

Santa Clara VTA

Upwardly Global

Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System

Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation, Inc.

**and Individuals**

Jamila Ghanm  
 Karita Hammer  
 Sabby Kaur  
 Reza Odabae  
 Nhu-Hanh Tonnu  
 Khanh T. Vu

Date	Agency, Address & Contact Information
January 18 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
February 19 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
March 19 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
April 16 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
May 21 <sup>st</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
June 18 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
July 16 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
August 20 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
September 17 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
October 15 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
November 19 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:
December 17 <sup>th</sup> 2014	Agency: <b>TBD</b> Street Address: City, Zip Contact:

Dates and times are To Be Determined. Please contact Nhu-Hanh Tonnu for meeting locations and time. 408-755-7744



# Safety Net Meeting 2014 Calendar



## SAFETY NET MEETING INFORMATION

The Safety Net Committee is co-chaired by Santa Clara County Social Services Agency and Second Harvest Food Bank. It is comprised of Community Based Organizations (CBO's) that come together in partnership to educate, access, strategize, develop and implement service recommendations to strengthen food and other services provided to those in need throughout Santa Clara County.

Safety Net meetings are held at the Second Harvest Food bank on the **4<sup>th</sup> Thursday** of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This is a brown bag lunch meeting.

For more information about Safety Net Meetings and/or to request that discussion items be placed on the agenda, please contact Norma at: (408) 755-7736 or [Norma.Bejarano@ssa.sccgov.org](mailto:Norma.Bejarano@ssa.sccgov.org).

<p><b>Location</b></p> <p>Second Harvest Food Bank 750 Curtner Avenue San Jose, CA 95125 (Upstairs, Going Room)</p>
<p><b>Time</b></p> <p>11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</p>

Meeting Dates
January 23
February 27
March 27
April 24
May 22
June 26
July 24
August 28
September 25
October 23
November (No Meeting)
December (TBD)



## There is a lot of confusion about CalFresh. The TRUTH about CalFresh . . .

### What is CalFresh?

- ✓ CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps) is for people with limited income, to pay for food at most stores. Benefits come on an EBT card that works like a debit card.
- ✓ CalFresh is a **nutrition program**, funded by the USDA, which also funds free lunches at schools and WIC. CalFresh is **not** the same as CalWORKs or welfare.
- ✓ You will not have to pay any money back unless you are overpaid.
- ✓ You do not need to report CalFresh on your tax return.

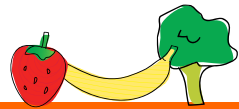
### Who can get CalFresh?

- ✓ You **can** get CalFresh even if you get money from a job, disability, unemployment, Social Security, CalWORKs, General Assistance or retirement.
- ✓ People who get SSI are not eligible for CalFresh. **However, their family members may be eligible.**
- ✓ CalFresh will not harm your ability to become a legal resident or citizen.
- ✓ People who do not have children can get CalFresh.
- ✓ Many college students can get CalFresh if they meet student requirements.



[Learn More on the Back](#)

*A lawyer from Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County (650-558-0915) who is an expert in benefits rights has reviewed these statements and agrees that they are all true.*



## What else should you know about CalFresh?

- ✓ To qualify, **at least one household member** must be a legal resident or citizen, even if that person is a child.
- ✓ Sponsored immigrants can be eligible.
- ✓ You can own your home and car, and have savings and still be eligible.
- ✓ Getting CalFresh will **not** hurt your children:
  - Your children will **not** have to serve in the military
  - They will **not** have to pay it back
  - They will **not** be taken away from you

**Even if you have applied for CalFresh before and were denied, you should try again. New laws have passed to make it easier.**

**Fingerprinting is no longer required to get CalFresh.**

**For more information on CalFresh, call Second Harvest's Food Connection hotline at 1-800-984-3663.**

*Funded by USDA SNAP, known in California as CalFresh.  
California Department of Public Health*





SANTA CLARA COUNTY  
SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY