

For Release on January 6, 2015

Contact: George Manalo-LeClair at george@cfpa.net or 510-433-1122 ext. 103



NEW SURVEY OF LOW-INCOME CALIFORNIANS FINDS FAVORABLE VIEWS OF CALFRESH AND PUBLIC EFFORTS TO SUPPORT HEALTHY EATING

Oakland, CA -- A survey released today by California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) finds low-income households in California hold favorable views of CalFresh and existing public efforts to support healthy eating. CalFresh, known federally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provides households with monthly benefits to purchase groceries from supermarkets and other food stores.

The survey, conducted by PerryUndem Research/Communication for CFPA, is also the first of its kind to solicit input from CalFresh participants about oft-debated purchasing rules for CalFresh. Six hundred and seventeen households across California completed the survey-- including 406 that participate in CalFresh and 211 that are likely income-eligible for benefits but not currently participating. The survey was conducted over five weeks during spring 2014.

According to the survey:

- CalFresh has a solid standing among participants and eligible households with nearly 7 in 10 (68%) feeling positively about the program.
- Almost half (45%) of all respondents think CalFresh helps participants eat healthfully. Another 43% of respondents are neutral on this point.
- Seventy percent of CalFresh participants and eligible households say they have heard of community, state, or nationwide efforts to reduce access to sugary drinks, such as “removing soda from vending machines at schools, putting a tax on sugary drinks, limiting the sale of extra-large sugary drinks, or putting a warning label on sodas.”
- Nearly 7 in 10 surveyed households (68%) support “efforts to reduce access to sugary drinks so fewer people drink them.”
- More than 80 percent of respondents (81%) report that sugary drinks are bad for one’s health. Almost 90 percent of surveyed parents (87%) believe it’s important to limit how many sweetened beverages their children consume.
- Nearly 2 in 3 CalFresh participants and eligible households (65%) support making unflavored milk, 100% juice, and plain water the only drinks that can be purchased with CalFresh benefits if these new rules occur alongside an increase in monthly benefits.

CalFresh serves over four million children, adults, and seniors in California. CalFresh benefits help prevent hunger and food insecurity and keep vulnerable households from falling further into poverty.

For Release on January 6, 2015

Contact: George Manalo-LeClair at george@cfpa.net or 510-433-1122 ext. 103



“Across the country, disjointed policy debates about SNAP purchases have continued for years. Until now, a critical voice was missing from these debates: that of SNAP clients,” said George Manalo-LeClair, executive director of CFPA. “We must keep this conversation moving forward. We need to test proposed changes to CalFresh to understand what those changes will mean for the millions of Californians who are trying to lead healthy, productive lives and struggling to make ends meet.”

“This survey shows that CalFresh recipients know sugary junk drinks are making their children and communities sick,” said Daniel Zingale, Senior Vice President at the California Endowment, a philanthropic health foundation. “CalFresh should examine how to give families what they want—support for healthy choices that avoid unhealthy junk drinks.” The California Endowment provided philanthropic support for this survey.

###

California Food Policy Advocates is a statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to improving the health and well being of low income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food.