



The 2018 Freshy Award Nominees

You can cast your vote online at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FreshyVote2018>

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Administrator of the Year

Jose Corchado, Social Services Program Supervisor, Fresno County Social Services Department

Jose has recognized the challenges the college student population faces in Fresno County with open arms, and has helped to increase their participation in CalFresh dramatically. In partnership with Fresno State University and many community colleges, he has maintained a transparent and collaborative space to make it easier for students to apply for benefits and get through the application and enrollment process.

Jose believes that all eligible college students should be receiving CalFresh benefits; this core belief helps him strive to make the process as seamless as possible.

Jose has been very open in sharing information about the county eligibility process and continues to come up with new strategies to help ease the process for students. From offering innovative ways of submitting verifications, to being part of a collaborative county-wide task force (that includes community partners), he is fully invested in getting CalFresh benefits into the hands of all who are eligible.

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Jim Dale, Program Manager, County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department

Jim is an energetic and determined leader at Santa Cruz County Human Services Department who has dedicated himself to improving operations to increase CalFresh accessibility and participation. Jim has focused most of his efforts on customer service—ensuring that clients have a positive experience across all functions within the agency. All the while he’s successfully built an impeccable track record by making sure staff members are meeting applicants’ needs by maintaining the highest standard of timely application processing. Jim has done a fantastic job creating a great work culture while highlighting the importance of increasing access to CalFresh for those in need.

Jen Miller, Program Manager, County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health

While working as the Director of Programs at the Food Bank of San Luis Obispo County, Jen helped bring to the community's awareness our low participation rate in the CalFresh program. She organized a group of collaborators who formed the SLO County CalFresh Alliance, with a goal of reducing hunger and improving health in SLO County by reaching an 85 percent CalFresh participation rate. The group includes local and state partners, and a County Supervisor. Some of the Alliance’s accomplishments to date include: same-day enrollment is possible at all six DSS offices, trainings for CBOs, increased county funding for CalFresh Outreach, and innovative outreach materials and

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processes. DSS, through the Alliance's involvement, is now working to integrate text and email notifications for applicants to give notice of upcoming renewals and reduce applicant churn.

Andy Naja-Riese, SNAP Branch Chief, USDA Food and Nutrition Service Western Region

Andy is nominated for his leadership and partnership with the California Department of Social Services and many state and local agencies to ensure effective administration of CalFresh.

Andy and his team have provided vision, support and guidance in multiple ways. He has provided leadership and oversight in ensuring CalFresh would effectively serve vulnerable populations, including older adults and low-income college students at risk of drop-out. He has been a champion of ensuring older adults' food needs are met by supporting California's Elderly Simplified Application Project and Standard Medical Deduction to streamline and reduce administrative burden for seniors and persons with disabilities so they can maintain their participation in CalFresh and maximize their benefits to stretch their food dollars.

As for college students, Andy has provided support to multiple California colleges in implementing AB 1747 so that income-eligible college students would have access to healthy foods to nourish their minds, complete their studies, graduate, and obtain

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gainful employment. Andy has also guided and empowered his staff to identify and implement solutions to ensure clients receive timely and accurate benefits. His support has enabled CDSS and county partners to benefit from a national learning collaborative for customer service in county-administered states. He has also worked with partners and his staff to analyze the causes of churn in California, and other states, to inform targeted interventions for reducing this costly problem. Lastly, Andy is a leader in SNAP-Ed. He and his team have supported the many SNAP-Ed agencies across the state in strengthening their activities in schools, food banks, and communities and reporting outcomes. This work has also helped to significantly increase access to nutritious California-grown foods at farmers’ markets that accept CalFresh/EBT and facilitated California’s successful operation of its Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant.

Carlos Portillo, Human Services Administrator I, Los Angeles County Department of Social Services

Mr. Portillo is an exceptional CalFresh outreach administrator, who embodies the LA DPSS departmental mission and is a huge asset to the department. Carlos is very passionate about public service and bringing awareness about the CalFresh program. He is constantly thinking of new ways to implement outreach strategies to increase the CalFresh participation rate in order to help the most vulnerable in Los Angeles County. Mr. Portillo has led, participated in, and fostered productive

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community enterprises and have been influential in the delivery and success that DPSS has achieved.

Mr. Portillo manages a very robust outreach program which includes leading the charge to provide support to over 70 CalFresh partnering agencies that help raise CalFresh awareness within the community and assist clients with applying for CalFresh benefits. He has taken it upon himself to develop communication materials, which he uses to promote the CalFresh program to agencies whose primary focus is reaching out to underrepresented groups such as former foster youth, students, and immigrants.

Carlos has also demonstrated his leadership skills by helping the LA DPSS implement a CalFresh Application Assister Program with many of our partners. He has done this by training each agency that is interested and holding training sessions for the staff. He has also initiated and developed partnerships between DPSS and various community colleges, helping to spread the word of new eligibility requirements for college students and the fact that many of them may be eligible to participate in CalFresh.

Carlos has also been a key player in promoting the CalFresh Awareness Month Campaign, which is held every May. This campaign involves many agencies coming together and promoting public awareness of the CalFresh program.

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Mr. Portillo’s efforts, dedication, and hard work have all contributed towards increasing the CalFresh participation rate in Los Angeles County and in leading the Department to achieve its goals.

Kevin Stamper, Intake Program Manager/ICT Coordinator, San Joaquin County Human Services Agency

Kevin has been working tirelessly within the San Joaquin County Human Services Agency, with local partners, the Hunger Task Force for San Joaquin County, and with the State of California implementing innovative ways to support clients and staff, to increase CalFresh participation, and to strengthen county processes.

Kevin takes part in different work groups at the state level to find ways to increase access to CalFresh. Locally, he is very active in the the San Joaquin County Hunger Task Force; Kevin always keeps the taskforce members up to date on new CalFresh rules and regulations. In addition, Kevin is open to work together with community-based organizations doing CalFresh outreach to address concerns and answer questions.

The specific impact of his work has been to improve county processes for a more streamlined and stronger system for CalFresh participation. Kevin has made the process more seamless for clients and has been a local CalFresh expert and champion.

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As the head of the CalFresh corrective action committee, he has worked with policy and training staff to reduce error. As a result, Human Services Agency of San Joaquin is able to schedule appointments with in hours or next day appointments. Kevin’s commitment to increase CalFresh participation since he started his work is reflected in the participation rate which has steadily increased from San Joaquin County ranking 17th in 2010 to now ranking 7th among all counties.

Nolan Sullivan, Director, Yolo County HHSA

Nolan is focused on helping college students enroll for CalFresh benefits and working to better understand their experience. He’s vocal about the barriers that students may face when trying to understand their eligibility.

Nolan united the community-based organization and UC community under one goal— increase student’s access to healthy food. Nolan’s work has been instrumental to increasing CalFresh enrollment of students at UC Davis.

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Grassroots Mobilizer of the Year

Patty Figueroa, Outreach Team, Alameda County Community Food Bank

Patty's team launched a partnership with UC Berkeley and GetCalFresh to focus on student enrollment in CalFresh benefits. They set an ambitious goal of helping more than 10,000 students apply for benefits.

In addition to regular outreach activities, Alameda County Community Food Bank hosted a CalFresh “super clinic” once a month to introduce approximately 50 students at a time to the program.

Diana Jensen, Senior Analyst, SF-Marin Food Bank

Over the last three years as Senior Data Analyst for the SF-Marin Food Bank, and member of the Alliance to Transform CalFresh, Diana has used CDSS’s CalFresh data to inform priorities and strategies for increasing enrollment in CalFresh statewide. She has created tools like the county CalFresh data dashboards which have helped county advocates and mobilizers to have informed conversations with their county’s health and human services staff about trends they are seeing. Her data analysis has also illuminated Statewide issues which stand in the way of full CalFresh participation, like recertification churn, average days to approval, and dual-enrollment with Medi-Cal.

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Most recently, Diana published a report titled “Medi-Cal Aid Codes: Methodology for Identifying Dual Enrollment Opportunities Between Medi-Cal and CalFresh,” which provides a detailed look into trends between Medi-Cal enrollment and CalFresh enrollment. She developed a comprehensive list of Medi-Cal aid codes which are most likely to correlate with CalFresh enrollment, which gives counties an opportunity to tailor and target in-reach strategies within specific Medi-Cal populations.

Diana doesn’t just create data for data’s sake – her commitment to developing user-friendly and informative tools through programs like Tableau is what makes her work so valuable to CalFresh mobilizers, outreach staff, advocates, and administrators alike. Her deep dive into the world of CalFresh data has made her one of our state’s experts in this field, and she continues to work towards developing tools to make data more accessible and useful for everyone who cares about CalFresh.

They Le, Coordinator, Second Harvest Food Bank

They has worked to increase clients’ access to wellness pantries so that people with specific medical conditions requirement special diets have healthier, appropriate food choices. Her work has enabled medical providers to better recognize the need for healthy food and how CalFresh can help people afford a

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healthy diet. She has been successful in her aggressive approach to better serve the needs of clients.

Sarah Palmer & Shanti Prasad, Hunger Action Day Co-Chairs, California Hunger Action Coalition

Sarah & Shanti organized the largest Hunger Action Day state capitol advocacy day in recent memory, helping local organizers bring some 500 clients and advocates from across California to Sacramento to build power and push for policy changes to improve CalFresh and the forces of poverty that drive the hunger crisis in our state.

The California Hunger Action Coalition experienced several CalFresh-related policy victories in 2017, both in the budget and legislation signed into law. Highlights included: the CalFresh drinking water supplemental benefit, AB 607 (Gloria) to improve Disaster CalFresh and AB 563 (Arambula) to enhance CalFresh Employment & Training programs.

Shanti & Sarah are both equally skilled at grassroots mobilization and community building as well as the grassroots work done among policy professionals, a rare and powerful combination that serves to create effective policy by informing proposals with on-the-ground, lived experience.

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Outreach Leader of the Year

Evan Baumann, CalFresh Outreach Specialist, Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

Evan works tirelessly to assist families with CalFresh, SSI and Medi-Cal applications in addition to partnering with three college campuses (UC Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara City College and Allan Hancock College) to enroll eligible students. His work has led to greatly increased participation in CalFresh countywide.

Evan has also worked to train student workers to conduct CalFresh outreach on campus and successfully applied for funding to expand the program.

Stephanie Bianco, Associate Director, CSU Chico Center for Health Communities

Stephanie and her team have increased access to and participation in CalFresh by bringing systemic CalFresh outreach efforts to half of the students of the CSU system, approximately 200,000 young people. This includes rigorous follow-up protocols, which have also helped participants maintain benefits.

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California has more than 3 million higher education students, many of whom often do not get the food assistance and resources they need to survive, much less thrive in college. The CSU Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) has generated much needed attention to the issue of food security in higher education in our state, and also created momentum for innovative new approaches to CalFresh outreach.

The CSU CalFresh outreach project is a landmark effort that has opened the door to CalFresh for young people who often fall between the cracks of the nutrition safety net. Stephanie and the CHC team have created a movement in higher education and food security that is rapidly emerging as standard practice, with national-level attention being brought to California’s efforts, especially those in higher education.

Jasmine Gonzalez, Public Benefits Enroller, United Farm Workers Foundation

Jasmine did an amazing job connecting with our families and ensuring that families who qualified for benefits did were successfully enrolled. Jasmine was also one of our representatives that assisted with disaster CalFresh in Santa Rosa. Jasmine volunteers with the food bank every week assisting families with various needs.

Our community trusts Jasmine, clients come in to renew and ask for help with other resources. She always assists families with a friendly smile. At the UFW Foundation we incorporate public benefits at all of our events to ensure that families know, understand, and are not afraid to apply for public benefits like CalFresh.

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Ismael Lopez, Outreach & Enrollment Liaison, County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

Ismael Lopez continues to work tirelessly to increase CalFresh awareness in the communities of San Diego County. Most recently, he has championed numerous efforts to increase access via MediCal and CalFresh through an in-reach texting campaign. This campaign evaluates all Medi-Cal applicants in San Diego County and encourages clients to apply to CalFresh through a mobile-friendly application. He has also developed innovative outreach activities to increase enrollment numbers across student populations by working collaboratively across various educational institutions. These activities have included facilitating in person outreach events and creating thoughtful and innovative student marketing materials.

Thania Lopez, CalFresh Outreach Manager, Imperial Valley Food Bank

Thania is a brilliant manager and an awesome person to work with. She is focused on figuring out new strategies to promote the CalFresh program, and always goes above and beyond to do so. She takes initiative even when she is out in public at local community and school event. She is a very driven person who partners with other agencies to better serve the community. Recently, she incorporated three new sites in three different cities at the Clinicas De Salud Del Pueblo. The rapport that she has with

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her clients is amazing. She also connected with local rehabilitation centers, and enabled the CalFresh department to assist clients with the CalFresh application process. Thania’s coworkers learn a lot on a daily basis from her and the dedication she puts into her position.

The impact of Thania’s work resonates throughout the community. Agencies, partners, and clients all praise her work; she does not just focus on achieving our goal, she goes the extra mile when needed. Her work and community influence will only continue to grow, and make a bigger impact on our local community.

Guadalupe Lugo, Client Benefits Advocate- Project Coordinator, CommuniCare Health Centers

Guadalupe has taken the initiative and single-handedly done outreach at multiple locations across the County to increase participation from those who participate the least; students, seniors, and the homeless.

She is focused on outreach at the select locations to target specific populations who are most in need and who underutilize CalFresh. She has also created effective flyers to increase knowledge and update those unaware of the benefits of CalFresh. Her work has led to increased access to CalFresh, increased CalFresh participation among seniors and the unhoused community, and helped CalFresh participants maintain access to their benefits.

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Heidi McHugh, Community Education and Outreach Coordinator, Food for People

Anyone who works with Heidi is able to witness her tenacity on a daily basis and how she injects it into her CalFresh outreach. I think it's safe to use the word "obsessed" in describing Heidi's desire to find the most efficient, direct, and easiest to navigate tools for helping the people of our rural county get through the door to applying for and maintaining CalFresh.

Heidi worked closely with Humboldt County DHHS staff to pilot “CalFresh in a Day” in Humboldt County, through which households at the food bank can complete the entire process on-site (receive application assistance, immediate transmission of app and documentation, and phone interview from food bank). When needed, this helps increase access for those with rural transportation challenges or uniquely vulnerable circumstances. Heidi's heart is so big that she makes home visits to help frail and homebound clients apply for CalFresh, and she of course follows the process all the way to the end.

Heidi thoroughly prepares households for what it takes to maintain benefits. In addition, she leads an Outreach team that utilizes a case management system for calling clients a few days after providing application assistance, to be sure they've completed or scheduled their eligibility interview, then again to verify whether they've received

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benefits or need further assistance, and yet again to see whether assistance is needed for completing Semi-Annual Reports or recertification. Heidi works with County staff to clear up any questions on recent applications submitted, to keep the eligibility process moving quickly for all.

For more than six years, Heidi has brought passion and excellence to her field. She is known both for her thorough and compassionate work with clients and her drive for elevating the field of CalFresh Outreach itself, especially as it applies to remote, rural communities. She puts as much energy into doing high-quality, on-the-ground CalFresh Outreach work with food bank households as she does on the big picture of continually improving access to CalFresh, improving processes, maintaining excellent working relationships with County staff, bringing new tools and projects to the community, and training our community partners to engage in CalFresh Outreach with excellence.

Karen Sanchez McBride, CalFresh Outreach Coordinator, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

Karen is an unbelievably dedicated CalFresh outreach worker who goes above and beyond to spread the word about CalFresh, support clients through the application process, and advocate fiercely for them if there are any issues with their case.

Countless more community members have received CalFresh benefits because of Karen's tireless dedication and unending compassion.

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Karen brings CalFresh flyers to events she attends outside of work and talks the program up in her free time. If clients can't get to the Food Bank but want help filling out their application in person, Karen goes to meet them at a more convenient public location.

Karen also started a new partnership with our advocacy department to conduct listening sessions at partner agencies, build a story bank of client stories, and identify community advocates through her outreach work. She goes so far above and beyond what is expected of her. It is truly humbling and inspiring to work with her!

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Elected Official or Capitol Staffer of the Year

N/A

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