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July 15, 2013

Sheryl L. Spiller
Director, Department of Public Social Services
County of Los Angeles
12860 Crossroads Parkway South
City of Industry, CA 91746

Re: Meeting request to discuss recommendations to Improve CalFresh participation

Dear Director Spiller,

I am writing on behalf of member of the Nutrition for Los Angeles Families (NFLAF) coalition. Members of the NFLAF would like to request a meeting to discuss the attached recommendations to increase CalFresh participation across Los Angeles County.

NFLAF is a coalition of health, child care, and nutrition advocates and providers dedicated to improving CalFresh participation in Los Angeles County and closing the CalFresh utilization gap.

In recent years, there has been tremendous progress in serving families in need, yet there are nearly one million CalFresh eligible individuals in Los Angeles that are not receiving benefits. CalFresh plays a significant role in preventing hunger and food insecurity, as well as providing families with critical safety-net resources. We must work toward ensuring that the greatest number of eligible families receives benefits. The NFLAF coalition is seeking your partnership to identify shared solutions to this common goal and provide Angelenos with the nearly \$1 billion in CalFresh benefits that are lost each year due to underutilization.

Strategies implemented by DPSS to boost participation and increase awareness about the program are robust and currently underway. Accompanied with recent policy changes, caseloads are likely to continue growing. Nonetheless it is our belief that additional action can be taken to complement current strategies and ensure that the participation gap between eligible participants and non-participants is further reduced.

Our recommendations for change are built directly on what DPSS is doing well. In addition, the recommendations we offer emerge from significant dialogue with external stakeholders, visits to other counties and states, and a review of data and best practice from around the nation.

We've highlight below three categories of opportunities to address CalFresh underutilization. The attached recommendations go into further detail for each category.

CFPA 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.

In-reach. Many Californians who are eligible for, but not participating in CalFresh may be receiving other public benefits, such as WIC, Medi-Cal, social security and subsidized child care. In-reach is a tool to better inform, connect, and enroll households using other public benefit programs into CalFresh. There is extraordinary value in formalizing new collaborations and strengthening existing partnerships to conduct in-reach.

In reach opportunities may be particularly strong in the world of child care where about 300,000 children attend care at about 10,000 sites daily. According to UCLA's Center for Health Policy Research, the youngest children are at greatest risk for food insecurity (and childhood obesity), so the value of increasing CalFresh enrollment among this population is exponentially powerful.

Consistency. With many district offices and dozens of programs to administer, the 13,000 DPSS staff face a formidable task: implementing benefit determinations for nearly two million county residents in an environment of ever-changing laws, regulations and funding. Operating consistently and delivering high-quality service in this environment is a goal identified in DPSS' current strategic plan.

While there is no magic fix to achieve total consistency in a system of this size and complexity, it is worth using the cadre of experienced CalFresh partners to seize the opportunities of greater predictability and improved service. This is essential for DPSS, as the volume of applicants and number of participants increase.

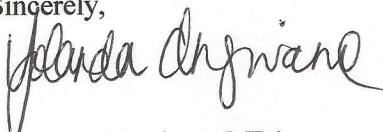
Modernization. The redesign of LEADER and Business Process Re-engineering are two timely vehicles that should trigger DPSS to initiate a new process to hear from its closest partners and client representatives. These local voices, client experiences, observations, and ideas should be incorporated into these exciting modernization efforts.

We are convinced that stronger in-reach, improved consistency, and seizing the opportunity of modernization will result in many benefits to DPSS, as well as CalFresh applicants and participants. Households will be better prepared and supported through the application process. Retention will improve and churning will be reduced. Lastly, but not least, increased and sustained enrollment will directly contribute to achieving DPSS' mission to "enrich lives through effective, caring service".

Attachment A – Recommendations and list of sign on partners

I look forward to working together to reach the next one million CalFresh participants in LA County. I can be reached at 213.482.8200 ext 202 or by email at yolanda@cfpa.net.

Sincerely,



Yolanda Anguiano, MPA
Nutritional Policy Advocate