

# Evidence to Action | 2020

## What we understand, we can change.



We envision California as a place of  
**well-being &  
opportunity for all.**

We commit to advocating  
**evidence-based policy**  
in pursuit of that vision.

We ground our work in  
**truth & facts**  
that illuminate problems, inform  
solutions, and measure impact.



## Opportunity

Everyone deserves food, dignity, and meaningful opportunities to thrive. Let's ask and answer the questions that will help pave the best path forward. We can shape policies that prevent food insecurity, alleviate poverty, and eliminate inequities that harm our fellow Californians.

## Call to Action

Please join us in bringing this work to life. We rely on the partnership of funders, researchers, and Californians with lived experiences of hunger and poverty, among many others, to pursue the facts, perspectives, and understanding necessary to spark change that improves the lives of Californians experiencing need.

## Recognizing True Levels of Need & Moving Toward Shared Prosperity

Given the cost of living throughout California, eligibility thresholds for the federal nutrition programs are not sufficient to identify all who are struggling to make ends meet. We need to better understand the health and food security consequences for individuals and families who fall into the gap.

Because many Californians cannot access the basic programs that serve as bridges out of poverty and hunger, we undermine movement toward upward mobility, economic security, and shared prosperity for all. Let's work to better understand

- How state and federal leaders can best serve individuals and families who are not eligible for existing public programs but are struggling against hunger and poverty all the same.
- How public programs can address true levels of need in our state and better support economic security and prosperity for all.

## Food for All: California Immigrants

In 2019, the federal administration finalized changes to immigration rules regarding public charge.

CFPA was privileged to partner with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the UC Berkeley Labor Center on an [analysis](#) to describe the effects that the proposed changes would have on low-income Californians & the economy at large.



The findings of that work indicate a “chilling effect” of misinformation, confusion, and fear about enrolling in public programs could impact up to 2.2 million Californians in immigrant families and result in billions of dollars being lost from the state economy.<sup>1</sup> There is a pressing need to better understand

- The ongoing effects of public charge and other immigration policies, at the local, state, and federal level, on the health and well-being of immigrant Californians.
- How CA can best protect the basic needs of our immigrant friends, families, and neighbors.

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## The Dignity of Food & Work

In December 2019, the federal administration finalized a rule (effective April 2020) that will severely limit access to CalFresh among able-bodied adults without dependents.

Under the unsubstantiated premise of incentivizing employment, able-bodied adults without dependents are limited to three months of CalFresh benefits within a 36-month window unless they can find and maintain work for 20 hours or more per week or meet an allowable exemption. The new rule applies these time limits even in areas where sufficient jobs are not available.

With nearly 475,000 Californians threatened by these federal changes,<sup>2</sup> we need to better understand

- Labor conditions for low-wage workers, including hours worked per week, variation in month-to-month earnings, and volatility of work schedules.
- How these factors manifest across gender, race/ethnicity, immigration status, and other demographic markers.
- How to best mitigate the harm that results from the existing CalFresh time limits and additional harm that may result from a change in administrative rules.

## Fulfilling the Promise of Policy Change: CalFresh & SSI

For decades, low-income Californians who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – older adults and individuals who are disabled – have been unable to receive basic nutrition assistance. Following a long-sought, hard-fought policy change, hundreds of thousands of SSI recipients became newly eligible for CalFresh in June 2019.<sup>3</sup> We must uphold the promise and potential of this policy change by ensuring eligible individuals are enrolled in CalFresh. We need to understand

- The extent to which the State and counties successfully enroll eligible SSI recipients in CalFresh.
- Key system and process changes necessary to better serve SSI recipients through CalFresh.
- The economic effects of enrolling – or failing to enroll – SSI recipients in CalFresh, including implications for food insecurity and healthcare costs

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## Food & Shelter

More than 80 percent of low-income households in California are without affordable housing.<sup>4</sup> High housing costs leave many without enough resources to cover other basic needs like food, medicine, and childcare. While the State pursues long-term solutions to the housing crisis, more immediate solutions are needed to help individuals and families make ends meet.

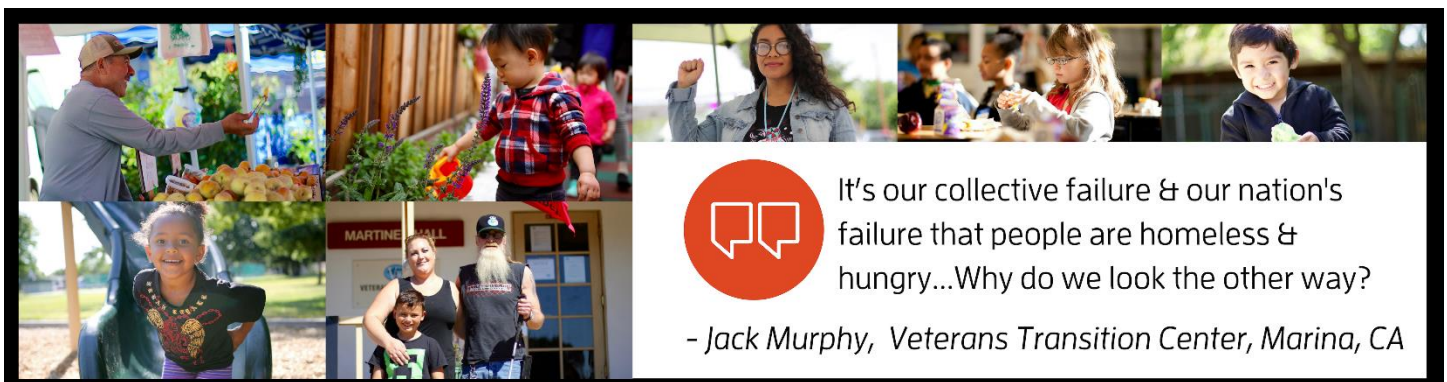
With millions of California households affected by food insecurity,<sup>5</sup> we need to better understand

- The relationship between food security and housing security.
- How nutrition programs should best respond to housing costs and true levels of need across our state.

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## Please Join Us!

To share input, ask questions, or otherwise partner on research for change, please contact Tia Shimada at [tia@cfpa.net](mailto:tia@cfpa.net) or 510.407.2868.



## References

<sup>1</sup> Ponce NA, Lucia L, Shimada T. December 2018. *Proposed changes to immigration rules could cost California jobs, harm public health*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, UC Berkeley Labor Center & California Food Policy Advocates. Available at:

<http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/Documents/PDF/2018/publiccharge-factsheet-dec2018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Social Services. *STAT 47 - Non-Assistance CalFresh Work Registrants, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD), and Employment and Training (E&T) Program Quarterly Statistical Report* for calendar year 2016. Available at:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Research-and-Data/CalFresh-Data-Tables/STAT-47>

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Social Services. *Expanding CalFresh to SSI/SSP Recipients Beginning June 1, 2019*. Available at: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFresh/Supplemental-Security-Income>

<sup>4</sup> Kimberlin, Sara. California Budget and Policy Center. *Californians in All Parts of the State Pay More Than They Can Afford for Housing*. September 2017.

Note: the US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines "affordable housing" as housing that costs no more than 30 percent of a household's income. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Office of Policy Development and Research.

[https://www.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary\\_a.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary_a.html)

<sup>5</sup> California Food Policy Advocates, *Struggling to Make Ends Meet: Food Insecurity in CA*. Available at: <https://cfpa.net/GeneralNutrition/CFPAPublications/FoodInsecurity-Factsheet-2019.pdf>