Food Access for Immigrant Californians During COVID-19

Presented in partnership with the California Community Foundation
Welcome!

Use the chat box to ask questions during the webinar. Presenters will answer questions throughout.

Please stay muted. You will be allowed to unmute yourself during Q&A and discussion.

Webinar recording & materials will be shared afterwards.
WELCOME!

Food Access for Immigrant Californians During COVID-19

Today's Speakers
Rosie Arroyo, Senior Program Officer, CCF  
Betzabel Estudillo, Senior Advocate, CFPA  
Maricela Gutierrez, Executive Director, SIREN  
Ellah Ronen, Program Officer, CCF

Moderated by: George Manalo-LeClair, Executive Director, CFPA

Presented in partnership with the California Community Foundation
TODAY'S AGENDA

- Welcome & Introductions
- Impact of COVID-19 on Immigrant Californians
- Food and Nutrition Programs for All Californians
- Food4All Campaign
- Community Discussion
- Closing & Next Steps
We are 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.
Mission & Vision

Our mission is to lead positive systemic change that strengthens Los Angeles communities.

We envision a future where all Angelenos have the opportunity to contribute to the productivity, health, and well-being of our region. And we believe that our common fate will be determined by how successfully we improve the quality of life for all of our residents.
System Change Priorities

- EDUCATION
- HEALTH
- IMMIGRATION
- HOUSING
Mission: SIREN is a vehicle for low-income intergenerational, multiracial immigrants and refugees in California—to be their own agents for change. We do this through community education and organizing, leadership development, civic engagement, legal services, and policy advocacy.

Maricela Gutiérrez, Executive Director
Maricela_SIREN  SIREN_BayArea
Impact to Undocumented Families

- Economic pressures
- Access to Health care
- Access to protective equipment & testing
- Exclusion from stimulus & unemployment insurance
- Childcare & home schooling
- Evictions/cancel rent
- Mental Health, stress, depression, anxiety

By Jose Camacho
Impact to Undocumented Youth

- Cancel student debt
- Looming DACA decision
- Oppose proposal cuts undoc/AB540 student aid programs
- Free college tuition
- Partner & support student orgs
END CRIMINALIZATION

By Julio Salgado
COVID19 Resources for Undocumented People

- SIREN’s COVID-19 Resource Lists for Immigrants (Bay Area + Central Valley)

- State’s COVID-19 Guidance for Immigrant Californians:

- Informed Immigrant COVID-19 Resource List:
  - [https://www.informedimmigrant.com/guides/coronavirus/](https://www.informedimmigrant.com/guides/coronavirus/)

By Monica Trinidad
Ways to support Undocumented Individuals

- Donate to undocu-funds & immigrants rights orgs
- Wrap-around care and warm handoffs
- Advocate to policy makers for COVID-relief legislation to provide economic relief
- Universal healthcare, paid sick leave, paid family medical leave
STAY IN TOUCH!

- SIREN_ImmigrantRights
- SIREN_BayArea & Maricela_SIREN
- San Jose: 408-453-3003
- Fresno: 559-840-0005

- www.siren-bayarea.org
- info@siren-bayarea.org
These food resources are available to all, regardless of immigration status, and will not be considered in a public charge test:

**School Meal Services**
Free or reduced priced breakfast, lunch, after school, & summer meals.

**WIC**
Food vouchers & nutrition support for pregnant mothers, infants, & children under 5.

**Child & Adult Care Meals**
Meals served to children and adults with disabilities in day care settings.

**Pandemic EBT  COVID-19 Relief**
Grocery money for families whose children are eligible for free/reduced cost school meals.

**Older Adult Nutrition**
Free congregate or home-delivered meals for adults age 60+.

**Food Distribution**
Free food from pantries and other community-based resource providers.
PANDEMIC RELIEF PROGRAM

Pandemic-EBT - Available Now!
P-EBT cards can be used like debit cards to buy food at most grocery stores and farmer's markets, and to purchase groceries online at Amazon & Walmart.

| May 12 to May 22 | P-EBT cards will be automatically sent to some families with eligible children. |
| May 22 to June 30 | Families who do not receive a P-EBT card by 5/22 will need to apply online at ca.p-ebt.org before June 30. |

It is important to know:
- P-EBT complements - not replaces - pandemic grab & go school meals.
- P-EBT is NOT CalFresh.
- Available to ALL eligible families, regardless of immigration status.
- P-EBT will not be considered in a public charge test.
FOOD RESOURCES FOR LOW-INCOME CALIFORNIANS

SAFE & OPEN TO SOME

CalFresh
Food assistance for Californians with net income at or below 130% federal poverty level.

CalFresh benefit distributed monthly via EBT card and can be used to buy food at grocery stores and some farmers markets.

A household can get CalFresh if at least one person:
- Has Citizenship
- Has a Green Card
- Has refugee status, asylum, or parolee status
- Has, or is applying for, a U-Visa or T-Visa
- Is an applicant for VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) relief
- Is a Cuban or Haitian entrant

An Individual does not qualify for CalFresh if:
- They are here on a student, work, or tourist visa
- They are here under DACA
- They are here under TPS (unless you meet other qualifying factors)
- They are undocumented

Mixed Status Households
Undocumented parents can get CalFresh for their citizen children without it harming their immigration goals (no public charge). Mixed status families receive prorated benefits for eligible household members.

Average benefit = $5 a day per person
LPR returning to U.S. after 6 months+ out of the country.

If applying via family-based visa petition or other non-exempt pathway:
- Some people granted parole, withholding of removal, and a small subset of Cuban/Haitian entrants.
- Some members of the Hmong and Lao communities.
IMAGINE A CALIFORNIA

Where immigration status is not a barrier to getting food assistance.
FOOD FOR ALL STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUP

Purpose: Convene advocate stakeholders to identify how the State and local entities can improve current programs and coordinate linkages to community services to strengthen California’s food assistance safety net, and work to remove barriers that exclude immigrant Californians.

What barriers do immigrant Californians face in accessing CA’s nutrition safety net?

- Confusing and burdensome application & reporting requirements
- Fear of immigration consequences
- Poor language access
- Lack of cultural competence
- Privacy concerns
- Stigma and misconceptions
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Mitigate Chilling Effect of Anti-Immigrant Policy

Multilevel resistance against harmful federal policy changes. Coordinated strategic communications to dispel myths and fears related to nutrition assistance programs.

Reduce Barriers to Enrollment & Retention

Promote comprehensive actions to expand program access for immigrants by improving language access; cultural responsiveness; and ease of access into nutrition programs.

Privacy Protections and Data Sharing

Be explicit about how client data is used--develop messaging that details privacy rights and protections and assess opportunities for data sharing between benefit-issuing agencies.
Address Legal Exclusion of Immigrants

CalFresh & CFAP are the only nutrition programs that legally exclude some immigrants.

**Policy Opportunity:**
explore options to extend eligibility for state-funded food assistance to all immigrants, regardless of status.
Want to stay up to date on policies that impact food access in California? **Sign up for our Action Alerts!**

cfpa.net/subscribe

@CAFoodPolicy

**Questions / Suggestions?**

Betzabel Estudillo, Senior Advocate

betzabel@cfpa.net
Food Security in LA County

Before the pandemic, an estimated **29% of LA County households** experienced food insecurity, with Latinos making up approximately **two-thirds** of the food insecure population.

**Since the onset of COVID-19:**

- The LA Regional Food Bank has seen a demand increase of **80%**
- Community & Senior Centers Emergency Food Distribution Program run by LA County WDACS has a **500%** increase in demand
- Elder Nutrition Program run by LA County WDACS has seen a **50%** increase in service requests
- Calfresh has seen a **179%** increase in applications submitted
Highly Vulnerable Populations

- Seniors
- People with disabilities
- Undocumented immigrants
- Students, foster youth
- Immunocompromised, diagnosed/symptomatic with COVID-19
- Low-income, newly food insecure (unemployed/furloughed)
Food Security Initiatives

The County of Los Angeles established the Food Security Task Force in collaboration with the City, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector to better expand and coordinate feeding initiatives across the county.

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<td>Great Plates</td>
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<td>Childcare center food programs</td>
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<td>Critical Delivery Service</td>
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<td>Mobile Unit Distributions range from 800-7,500</td>
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Key Statewide Initiatives

• **Great Plates: Home Meals for Seniors**
  - Within an hour of the Governor's announcement of the Restaurants Deliver program, 211 received 600 calls from restaurants eager to participate.
  - The program will provide 3 meals per day to older adults while stimulating the local economy.
  - The County launched the program May 9 and it is expected to run through June 10, 2020.
  - The County program will cover all jurisdictions not running parallel programs, including unincorporated areas.
  - City of LA is running its own parallel program.

• **Project Roomkey**
  - Project Roomkey is a collaborative effort by the State, County and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to secure hotel and motel rooms for vulnerable people experiencing homelessness.
Opportunities for Intervention

• **LA Regional Food Bank**
  - The Food Bank is currently serving upwards of 500K people each month, an 80% increase from this time last year.
  - Due to its existing partnerships and infrastructure, the Food Bank can leverage its bulk-purchasing power to buy high-volume food at wholesale prices and distribute the food to its 600 agency partners.

• **Home Food Delivery Services**
  - The expansion of food delivery services is critical due to the nature of COVID-19. Supporting home-delivery to homebound populations such as seniors, the disabled, and immunocompromised is essential in combatting food insecurity for these populations.

• **School District Food Distribution**
  - As the official school year comes to an end, schools will soon no longer be able to distribute school meals at the same level of distribution.
  - Helping school districts prepare to serve summer meals while reinforcing partnerships with local food banks and pantries to supplement meals will be essential.

• **Education and Outreach Efforts to Increase Public Benefit Enrollment**
  - A growing number of people are becoming newly eligible for public assistance programs such as Calfresh, WIC, and others. This funding comes directly from the federal government and is critical in ensuring we access all public funding available while simultaneously relieving some of the burden from our public agencies and CBO partners.
Need for Coordination
Thank You

Ellah Ronen
eronen@calfund.org
COMMUNITY DISCUSSION
HOW IS COVID-19 IMPACTING YOUR COMMUNITY?

**Program Access**
(CalFresh, WIC, School Meals, etc.)

- Are COVID-19 program flexibilities (e.g. virtual WIC visits) helping more people gain access?
- What specific challenges impact older adult's access to nutrition programs (like CalFresh)?
- Are there other immigrant populations with unique challenges?

**Public Perceptions**

- Hearing concerns about public charge?
- Has COVID-19 affected people's level of trust in government?
- Where do people in your community go for trusted help to access food?
WHAT CHANGE DO YOU WANT TO SEE?

In an ideal world, what would need to change so that immigrants have the resources they need to stay nourished?

- What is working well?
- What kind of assistance do people want? *free food, money for food, etc.*
- Who has the power to make these changes?
JOIN THE CCF TASK FORCE
Next meeting July 22nd
Contact German Macias
gmacias@calfund.org

SIGN UP FOR OUR ALERTS
mail icon cfpa.net/subscribe

CFPA + L.A. TRUST FACEBOOK LIVE
Nutrition Resources for Immigrants
Friday 5/29
Like us @CAFoodPolicy

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Spread the word about P-EBT advocates resource coming soon!

Support SB 882 cfpa.net/SB882

SB 882 (Wiener)
CalFresh: Simpler for Seniors

IN SENATE APPROPRIATIONS