



New Report: Fresh Ideas for CalFresh Details Reasons Why Angelenos Who Qualify for Public Assistance Don't Apply

*Fresh Ideas for CalFresh Report Uncovers Challenges Faced by Food Insecure Angelenos;
Provides Community-Informed Solutions for Government Officials to Improve Access*

Los Angeles, California - March 22, 2022 - The Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) released its [“Fresh Ideas for CalFresh” report](#), a nearly three-year project (2019-2022) documenting the experiences of over 400 food insecure Angelenos across the county navigating public benefit programs like CalFresh. **In fact, there are over 600,000 Los Angeles County residents who are eligible for CalFresh, but are not enrolled.** Not having access to food impacts the health and well-being of families. The report finds the top reasons preventing Angelenos from applying to CalFresh include: misinformation, linguistic barriers, complex application process, lack of psychological safety, and not having access to quality grocery stores.

From project leaders to funders, this report is the first of its kind conducted and shaped by those with lived CalFresh experiences. “Community voice is power,” said Natasha Moise, Program Officer at First 5 LA. “What better way to inform policies and programs than from those who are directly impacted?” Given that one in three Los Angeles County households experienced food insecurity during the pandemic, this report informs how safety net programs can be improved and optimized for those who need them.

“CalFresh can be a lifeline for many,” said Christine Tran, Executive Director of LAFPC. “I grew up in a CalFresh household. My refugee parents worked very hard in sweatshops and on construction sites, yet their low-wage jobs were not enough to make ends meet. Programs like CalFresh eased the burden on my parents to not have to choose between feeding ourselves, affording gas, and paying rent.”

The project highlights the importance of listening deeply to communities and reframing CalFresh culture. One Angeleno in the report said, “I feel like the message [about CalFresh is that it’s] ‘for poor people’ and ‘leeches.’” This is a popular assumption that requires us to shift our collective thinking as a society. The report also uplifts lesser known facts like CalFresh is an economic stimulus. If all eligible Angelenos participated in CalFresh at 100%, Los Angeles County would receive federal funding that would annually circulate an additional \$833 million in the local economy, paying for jobs while putting food on the table.

In response to the concerns brought up by food insecure Angelenos, the report convened systems of care stakeholders that included government entities, community-serving nonprofits, and other food justice advocates to workshop the following key recommendations:

- Ensure psychological safety throughout the CalFresh experience.
- Develop a skilled workforce to better serve Hard-to-Reach populations.
- Reduce administrative and emotional burdens on CalFresh participants and program administrators.
- Invest in CalFresh vendors and the local food supply chain.

Download the report: www.goodfoodla.org/calfresh

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About the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC). We work to ensure food is healthy, affordable, fair and sustainable for all. We are the largest Food Policy Council in the United States. LAFPC believes Good Food for All is possible and that all communities deserve access to good food, grown in a way that respects people and the planet. LAFPC works to create a local food system free from hunger, rooted in equity and access, supportive of farmers and food workers, and guided by principles of environmental stewardship and regeneration. We catalyze, coordinate and connect people across the Los Angeles region, including government, business and community groups working on food.