

12/7/06 Tools for Food Stamp Advocates

Why are we here to talk about increasing use of food stamps?

Food Stamps- Federal Nutrition Entitlement Program

The average benefit per month is \$97

Eligibility based on resources, income, and household size

CA ranked last in eligible people using food stamps

CFPA

Alameda- 85,000 eligible not using

Bay Area – 350,1000 eligible but not using

This is federal money that is coming into the local economy

In terms of lost dollars- \$99 million in Alameda county, \$34.8 million in the Bay Area

Each \$1 in food stamps creates \$1.84 of economic benefits

There are consequences of under participation- hunger, and economic loss

Barriers- People do not think that they are eligible. There is a stigma of it being a welfare program. Getting into the office to sign up.

Building Food Security in San Francisco County \*power point slides passed out

- Food Stamps in a day
- Project Connect
- Restaurant Meals

Who receives food stamps?

CAAP- county adult assistance program- general relief program

Children- underrepresented

Homeless

St. Anthony's Meal- and outreach to people to see who is eligible to food stamps, so bring the office to them. Target homeless people. Increase trust. Advertising food stamps on monthly menu. Bilingual staff. Key- bringing program to the community. Results- 50 to 60 applications, 80% approved.

Denial reasons- SSI, citizenship, excess monthly income, fail to provide verification

Project Homeless Connect- lots of volunteers and city employees participate. Bring the services to where they are needed.

List of services at site.

905 applications

The bay area- there are not boarders between communities- people are moving around, SF, to Berkeley

Restaurant Meal Program

Win-win- ex The Victory Café in SF- bottom line increased, good for business, community, and those who don't have access to being able to prepare food.

#### Service Counter B

Customer Service. Eligibility workers help them replace EBT cards, so they don't need to leave messages or wait.

#### Homeless Initiatives

Send workers to large shelters to help people get on to food stamps

Example organizations- Northeast Medical Services- help them apply for medical benefits, and trained them in food stamp application so they file out both applications.

#### Food Security Task Force

Access and participation booth- multidisciplinary team to advise and prepare a strategic plan to increase participation in the federally funded program. This is important because usually programs that address those with low resources are typically cut when there have been budget constraints.

Task force helped form ideas about how to revolutionize food stamps in SF- 3 legged stool. 1) Faith and community based organizations, 2) web, 3) phone

Goal shift from case worker case model to a customer service model

The incentives for the faith based organizations are to decrease the number (that has been increasing) that receive emergency/ hot meals at their sites.

Are there ways to provide food stamps to a school where most students are receiving reduced price meals?

Allison- From the Alameda County Food Bank\* handout

Dissemination of information, partnering with schools, WIC, planned parenthood, Headstart.

Began by doing focus groups with eligible but not using food stamps.

Barrier- fear and mistrust in immigrant community. You can apply on behalf of your child.

New barrier- sponsored VISA, have to disclose the name of their sponsor. BUT the children are not subject to this sponsorship barrier and thus are eligible.

There are resources for clients in Alameda County.

1-800 number for emergency food aid also can be used for food stamps.

Food bank is doing pre-screening and application assistance. Give them a sheet "Next steps to apply for food stamps"

Individual one on one model is successful. Taking on a role of a case worker as a mediator. Act as a train the trainers resource too. Work with 150 community partners training and keeping them up to date on changes.

Embrace your county. That partnership is very important. Eligibility Workers have a tough job.

Receive Nutrition Network funding- given on a match basis, leveraging private funds against a matched funds. This maximizes resources.

#### Group Activity

Barrier- expensive housing cost, lots of family's living together, if don't prepare meals together, can be eligible

-immigrants- scared to come into the office

Physically can't come into the office- face to face waiver that would allow the interview by phone.

PSA media, DVDs, vs flyers that may not be read.

Oakland public library plays DVD over and over and over.

Barrier- communicate information to client- the stigma of food stamps, not being aware of being eligible. Language and how we talk and recruit. Educating Eligibility workers and community outreach workers how to talk about it.

Barrier- Office hours- people can't get away from their jobs to go to the office. Online and off site applications to go to. Can waive the face to face interview if you are working.

Can't keep doing what you have been doing!