

Assembly Bill 1377

All Kids on CalFresh

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (AD-15)

THIS BILL

This bill will direct state agencies and stakeholders to develop a statewide process that will examine data across the free/reduced price meals program, Medi-Cal, Electronic Benefit Transfer, and CalFresh in order to accelerate enrollment of children and families into the CalFresh program.

THE ISSUE

Food insecurity among households with school-aged children remains high across California. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in 2015, 16.6 percent of all households with children were classified as food insecure with 44 percent of households with incomes below the federal poverty line experiencing food insecurity.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also notes that food insecurity is associated with negative health, developmental, and educational outcomes for children. Children who grow up in food-insecure households often fall behind compared to their food-secure peers in terms of cognitive, emotional and physical development. These students are at greater risks of mental, social, emotional, and behavioral problems that can negatively impact their academic achievement. Studies indicate that food-insecure children are almost twice as likely to be in fair or poor health when compared to food-secure children. We estimate that a significant portion of these food-insecure families are receiving free and reduced-price meals at school but are not yet receiving benefits through CalFresh.

Past efforts to enroll more school meal program participants into CalFresh have had limited success. Children who are enrolled in

the free and reduced-price meal programs have not been enrolled in CalFresh even when they are eligible. Similarly, low-income families may be enrolled in Medi-Cal but not into CalFresh even if they appear likely eligible. It has been estimated that more than a half million children enrolled in the school meal program appeared to be potentially eligible for CalFresh but are not enrolled.

SOLUTION

AB 1377 will build on past efforts by requiring the relevant state departments, county human services agencies, and stakeholders to communicate and examine available data and eligibility requirements across the free/reduced meals program, Medi-Cal, Electronic Benefit Transfer program, and CalFresh in order to create a process that would accelerate enrollment of children and families into CalFresh.

The bill is intended to streamline communication between state agencies and county human services agencies to accelerate enrollment into CalFresh by using information across the programs.

By examining the information we have from our different systems, we can create a streamlined process for increased participation in these different programs and ensure that California families facing food insecurity have every available resource for which they are eligible.

SUPPORT

- County Welfare Directors Association of California (Co-Sponsor)
- California Association of Food Banks (Co-Sponsor)

- Berkeley Food Network
- California Catholic Conference
- California Grocers Association
- California Health+ Advocates
- California Immigrant Policy Center
- California Partnership
- City and County of San Francisco
- County of Ventura
- County of Santa Cruz
- Feeding San Diego
- Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
- Hunger Action Los Angeles
- Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
- Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
- National Association of Social Workers
- Redwood Empire Food Bank
- Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County
- Sonoma County Human Services Department
- Western Center on Law and Poverty
- Yolo Food Bank

CONTACT

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