CDSS PARTNER CONVENING:

A FRESH LOOK AT THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM
Sacramento State Downtown Campus, Training Rooms
June 25, 2019 |10:00am – 3:00pm | Sacramento, CA

Meeting Summary

Background

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) held a day-long partner convening in Sacramento, California to gather feedback on what is working and what needs improving in the food distribution program and to solicit input on an advisory group structure and focus areas. The convening was well attended with representatives from food banks all over the state of California.

Brian Kaiser, CalFresh and Nutrition Programs Bureau Chief, gave a brief update on CDSS's "Fresh Look" vision for the program and shared feedback gathered during a food distribution program listening session held May 7, 2019, as part of the California Association of Food Banks annual conference (see PowerPoint for details).

Stakeholders discussed the following questions in small groups.
- What does success look like for a California's statewide emergency food distribution program?
- What are key considerations and issues that need addressing through this evaluation process?
- What are the priority elements of program design that the advisory group should address?
- What does an ideal membership structure look like for the advisory group?

Small groups (5-6 individuals) brainstormed suggestions for where CDSS should focus its efforts moving forward. These suggestions overlapped and built on the prior feedback received which was meant to prime stakeholders for the more detailed prioritization that occurred later in the day.

Discussion Highlights

What does success look like for California's statewide emergency food distribution program?

- Multiple storage facilities throughout the state
- Expediting and improving the food distribution system
    - How can we maximize trucking and distribution?
- Ability to order mid-cycle or make adjustments (instead of just placing food orders once per year would like the option to place food orders more often)
- Increase dry and cold storage space at the local level
- Flexibility in food use
    - Administrative and/or unrestricted funding
    - Serving more people and being more resilient during disaster
    - Teamwork between county and state entities

- o CSFP Program availability statewide
- Minimize administrative burden on food banks
    - o More automation of reporting
- Investment in rural and remote networks
- More healthy, desirable and diverse food (protein & produce)
    - o Prepared food
- One stop resource website/page for training and program material like the CSFP google drive
- Realistic income levels for eligibility beyond 150% FPL (people being squeezed out currently)
- More dollars coming from state and county
- More accurate and consistent data
    - o Standardization of measuring the feeding gap throughout the state
    - o Common methodology
- Food access in every county
- Distribution is equitable
- No need for fundraising to support the administrative costs not covered by the allocation
- Multiple food deliveries to rural areas
- Far Northern California mixing center/regional hub similar to Foodlink
- Remote transportation solutions
- More infrastructure support
- Communication and Partnerships across borders (state and federal, between counties)
- Customizable solutions for serving people
- Increased administrative funding
- Broaden scope to reach more people for CSFP
- Sometimes food that is received is not sufficiently matched to the community where it is sent
- Reducing barriers to receive food
- More equitable access

What are key considerations and issues that need to be addressed through this evaluation process?

Each small group was asked to create lists of items that they would start, stop or continue. Items listed below represent consensus suggestions from each group not necessarily consensus of all partner entities present.

Stop
- Assuming that we can meet the needs of each site.
- Using CDMS update or replace.
- Doing what we have always done.
- Making everything complicated, too many different programs
- Multiple data platforms - develop a client-based system.
- Overburden of regulations, training posters, bureaucracy, and paperwork.
- So many canned foods.
- The centralized distribution model.
- Using 150% poverty line.
- Using the food banks as storage facilities.

- Wasting money.
- Stop yes and no questions (on the EFA-7)
- Inflexible schedules (food delivery)
- No more food drives.
- Disaster areas should not be poverty based (like the EFA-7 form when not presidentially declared disaster)

Continue
- Infrastructure capacity grants.
- "Donate Don't Dump" or comparable program (especially for rural remotes).
- Growing the programs (e.g., expand CSFP to more communities).
- Sharing best practices and learning from each other/ partner convenings.
- Paying administrative costs.
- The culture of TEFAP.
- Protect immigrants' information.

Start
- A data platform for tracking (improved CDMS system).
- Assessing rural areas' needs.
- Advocacy at the federal level.
- Having more healthy options.
- Having Wi-Fi in rural remotes.
- Paying sub- partner administrative costs.
- Third party evaluation of the food distribution model.
- Using a different method for ordering.
- Better structure for USDA inspections – inconsistent policies on when inspections are needed for different commodities
- Dialogue for intentional partnerships and redefining what it means to be a TEFAP partner.
- Effective spending plan.
- Easier to navigate website.
- More appropriate disaster foods (e.g., pop-tops and ready to eat meals).
- Use infrastructure money to build multi-county hubs.
- Offering partner resources like webinars for training.
- Make partner EFAP Manual consistent.
- Grant writing support
- Regional distribution centers
- Better description on materials for ordering purposes
- Electronic signature solution statewide.
- More flexibility on trade mitigation.
- More flexibility or modified MOU to cross county lines for when disasters occur
- Improved alternate pick-up form
- A statewide directory for buying/leveraging CalFood purchases
- Improve current food ordering system.
- Improve technology infrastructure.
- Increase opportunities to collaborate more.
- Increase transparency around "Donate Don't Dump" program.
- Minimizing regulations especially around fresh food that has a shorter shelf life.

Other comments:
After the report-out concluded, there was a discussion about modernization being a threat to privacy, specifically around electronic signature requirements. Stakeholders made the recommendation that privacy and the needs of those being served be considered in all aspects of modernization efforts.

What are the priority elements of program design that the advisory group should address?
The small groups discussed and came to consensus on the top five priorities for the advisory group to address. The priorities were then compiled and ranked. The number of votes represents the number of groups that listed the item as one of their top five.

Priority Elements (to be addressed by the advisory group)	Votes
Logistics (hubs, storage, delivery)	6
Operational Assessment by third party	5
Allocation of Resources (methodology, rural remotes)	3
The following categories all received two votes • Communication/Collaboration across program and county lines • Guidelines/Fact Sheet (Fed & State) • Improve Foodlink • Increased Flexibility (Disaster Relief) • More Resources (Grants, Funding) • Technology (CDMS) improvement/replacement	2
The following categories all received one vote • Customer Service • Reconsider 150% threshold • Reimbursement rate • Streamlining documents	1

What does an ideal membership structure look like for the advisory group?

Following a similar process, the small groups discussed and came to consensus around a structure for an advisory group. The structures were then presented and discussed. Below is a tallying of the suggested structures broken down by key components/criteria: representation, size, and application/selection process. Other suggestions are listed below the rankings.

Representation criteria	Votes
North Area/South/Central/Bay Area	6
Urban/Rural	5
CAFB Association Representative	5
State Representative on group	4
Feeding America Food Bank/Non-Feeding America	3
Agencies with both TEFAP and CSFP	2
Diverse	2
Foodlink representative	1
Industry experts	1
Gender balanced	1
Strong in policy	1
Strong in logistics	1
Experience with client perspective	1
Time commitment	1
Representation from direct and indirect ship agencies (CEFL and Direct)	1
Size of Group	**Votes**
Ten	2
Eleven	2
Thirteen	2
Eighteen	1
Application Process	**Votes**
Nomination only (Not self)	2
Simple Application	1
Formal Application	1
Voted by the entire membership	1
CDSS & CSFB create selection Committee	1
Self Nomination	1
Other comments	
Have Subcommittees	
3 year term	
3 year term (1st year staggered)	

Meeting Attendees

Full Name	Organization
Andrew Cheyne	California Association of Food Banks
Anne Holcomb	Food for People
Barbara Abbott	SF-Marin Food Bank
Brandon Romano	Community Action Partnership, San Bernardino County
Brendan Miele	Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo County
Brian Kaiser	CDSS
Cherie Jamason	Food Bank of Northern Nevada
Christina Kidd	San Joaquin County
David Goodman	Redwood Empire Food Bank
Gil Sisneros	CDSS
Hana Mendoza	Alameda County Community Food Bank
Heather Solus	Great Northern Services
Jamie Orona	CAPK Food Bank
Jenny Yeager	FBNN
Jeremiah Rhine	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Juan Dominguez	Clearlake Gleaners
Juan Martinez	Kings Community Action Organization
Karen Strach	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Loretta Ray	Clearlake Gleaners
Maria Ayala	Central California Food Bank
Marie-Josie Wells	Great Northern Services
Mark A. Lowry	CAP OC/OC Food Bank
Monica White	FOOD Share, Inc.

Nicole McNeely	The Food Bank of Nevada County
Ronald Phillips	Rural Human Services
Rosie Cerna	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
Sara Griffen	Imperial Valley Food Bank
Shurla Lovejoy	Dignity Health Connected Living
Staci Wadley	Dignity Health Connected Living
Steve Linkhart	California Association of Food Banks
Terry Garner	California Association of Food Banks
Terry Ross	Clearlake Gleaners
Tim Hawkins	CAA Butte County/North State Food Bank
Tim Parker	Food Bank Coalition of SLO County
Tobias Stockler	Interfaith Council of Amador
Tom Dearmore	CAA Butte /NSFB
Trey Weatherby	Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo County
Tucker Sproull	Food Bank of El Dorado County