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May is CalFresh Awareness Month

SD Hunger Coalition Hosts CalFresh Challenge

San Diego, May 1, 2019 – **May is CalFresh Awareness Month**, dedicated to raising awareness of this vital federal program that is the cornerstone of our food system and a model for successful public assistance. CalFresh is the California name for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) run by the USDA and formerly known as Food Stamps. **In San Diego County, over the last year more than 396 thousand residents (12%) have relied on CalFresh to have enough to eat.** According to statistics provided by the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, **the average time spent on CalFresh is two years.**

Throughout the month of May, San Diego Hunger Coalition and its hunger relief partners will highlight different aspects of food insecurity and CalFresh usage in the region:

- **Seniors** – In San Diego, 1 in 11 older adults experience food insecurity. Changes to SSI/SSP in June may help.
- **College Hunger** – A federal study shows that 1 in 3 community college students are food insecure. In San Diego, universities and colleges are taking this seriously and enrolled more than 15,000 students in CalFresh in 2018.
- **Health** – Studies show a direct correlation between food insecurity and childhood obesity and diabetes.
- **San Diego Communities** – Households of color are disproportionately affected by food insecurity and 50% of all food insecure adults in San Diego are living with a disability.

According to San Diego Hunger Coalition research, conducted on behalf of Hunger Free San Diego, 1 in 7 San Diegans don't always have enough to eat. 91% of all food assistance in the region is provided by federal programming and 57% of that comes from CalFresh (SNAP). **Even a 20% cut to CalFresh (SNAP) would require the collective efforts of private charitable food assistance to double their output.**

Private charity does not have the capacity nor the means to make up for a loss in federal programming. With funding for CalFresh (SNAP) uncertain under the current administration, with proposed cuts to the program in the most recent version of the 2020 federal budget, **it is crucial that we foster understanding and awareness of this very important and irreplaceable tool in the fight against hunger.**

A part of CalFresh Awareness Month **the San Diego Hunger Coalition is hosting its annual CalFresh Challenge, happening this year from May 13-17.** During the challenge, **San Diego residents are invited to eat for 1, 3, or 5 days on the average CalFresh budget of \$4.07/day.** Participants are encouraged to document their experience on social media and share it with San Diego Hunger Coalition.

"The CalFresh Challenge gives people the opportunity to raise awareness of this vital program," says Anahid Brakke, Executive Director of the San Diego Hunger Coalition, *"It encourages people to experience what life can be like for many of our neighbors who rely on food stamps as they struggle to avoid hunger."*

All San Diegans are invited to take the 2019 #CalFreshChallenge on May 13-17. **People may sign up and get more information at www.sdhunger.org/cfc.**

San Diego Hunger Coalition is available for interviews, information, and to facilitate connections with any of our over 100 local hunger relief partners. Please contact Joe Shumate, Communications Officer at 619.501.7917 ext. 106 or joseph@sdhunger.org.

