



COORDINATING SNAP & NUTRITION SUPPORTS **CASE STUDIES**



— COHORT 2 —

ILLINOIS
NORTH CAROLINA
SAN FRANCISCO
CAROLINE COUNTY, MD



Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports to Reduce Child Hunger



Caroline County, Maryland: Creating a Community Resource Navigator Network

The Caroline County Department of Social Services (CCDSS) and the Caroline County Board of Education are working together to build a comprehensive Community Resource Navigation Network for the county. Building the Navigation Network involves four key components:

- 1 Hire and train Community Resource Navigators (CRNs) who will conduct Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach and enrollment support in the community
- 2 Collaborate with a trusted community partner to provide SNAP enrollment support to the large Spanish and Haitian-Creole speaking populations in the county
- 3 Redesign the online resource directory for the county
- 4 Launch a Navigator Learning Community for all navigator positions across county agencies to increase access and breakdown barriers to services

The Caroline County Coordinating SNAP & Nutrition Supports (CSNS) team will hire CRNs with lived expertise utilizing nutrition supports and navigating food insecurity in the county. This model allows CRNs to draw on their firsthand knowledge of the barriers that exist when trying to access resources and offer peer support to people who face challenges accessing benefits. CRNs will go out into the community, meeting with individuals and families at schools, homeless shelters, food pantries, libraries, and other local events.

Objectives

- ③ Increase enrollment in SNAP and other county supports by using a human-centered approach
- ③ Reach families through a Community Navigator model
- ③ Increase awareness of, and access to, local resources by modernizing the local online resource directory

Logic Model

Purpose: Provide holistic service support by building a Resource Navigator Network to provide resources and assistance to underserved communities.



Background & Context

CCDSS and the Caroline County Board of Education served as members of the community's COVID-19 response team during the pandemic where they delivered food and other resources to underserved families. From 2021-2022, the CCDSS served almost 8,000 individuals through a range of programs that are overseen by the State of Maryland Department of Human Services.

Both the CCDSS and the Caroline County Board of Education have worked together on the Caroline Collective Impact Initiative, which exists to expand access to resources for communities disproportionately impacted by poverty. The Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center recently began offering services to the southern part of Caroline County where there is a large community of immigrants from Haiti. They also work in the northern end where many Spanish speaking immigrants from Central America have settled.

Problem Identification & Target Population

Caroline County has high rates of generational poverty and large immigrant and non-English speaking populations who face additional barriers to public benefits access. Furthermore, access to transportation and adequate and affordable housing present major barriers in rural areas like Caroline County. CRNs play a big role in this project by connecting residents to resources available in the community.

Project Implementation Plan

Caroline County plans to reach residents who are eligible for, but not enrolled in, SNAP through the Resource Navigator Network. These CRNs will travel across the community to reach individuals and families where they are.

 Plan <p>Use a network of CRNs to reach families in various ways across the county</p> <p>Update resource directory website, a public platform provided by the library which contains a valuable directory of resources for the Caroline Resource Navigator Network to use to connect families with needed resources, supports, and services</p>	 Collaborate <p>Meet customers where they are by engaging them in a continuous feedback loop of communication and providing culturally competent services to historically underserved communities</p> <p>The Resource Navigator Network will provide training for navigators and community members to deepen knowledge of available resources and facilitate peer support</p>
 Implement <p>Use grant funds to hire resource navigators with lived experience</p> <p>Scale up community-based partner, Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center, to provide culturally sensitive support with special emphasis on recent immigrants from Haiti and Central America</p> <p>Modernize community resource directory website with grant funded support</p>	 Evaluate <p>Number of people who are enrolled in SNAP, WIC, and other public and community resources through navigator services</p> <p>Number of people engaging with the updated resource directory website</p> <p>Number of people with lived expertise who serve on project leader teams and action teams</p> <p>Number of outreach events attended by CRNs</p>

Long-Term Goals

This project is supported by a local network of human service agencies, community organizations, and community members that are committed to empowering people with tools and resources to help one another and influence the design of supports meant to serve their needs. Caroline County aims to continue collaborating with members of the community beyond this CSNS project.

The project team plans to sustain the CRNs beyond the initial grant period by identifying other funding sources for the position in the long-term. The Navigator Learning Community will be established and continued by the network of agencies involved in this collective work. Continuing to breakdown cultural and linguistic barriers in communities where English is not a primary language in partnership with the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center will be an ongoing goal beyond the project period.

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Illinois: Strengthening Connections to Nutrition Benefits for Children Through Improved Technology and Data Sharing

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Greater Chicago Food Depository are working together to modernize Illinois' student data infrastructure. Their goal is to enable Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer program (Summer EBT) eligibility determinations, improve data matching to support direct certification for the National School Lunch Program, and target outreach to students and families who are income-eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Illinois plans to leverage lessons learned from administration of the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer program (Pandemic EBT) to inform the implementation of the new Summer EBT program.

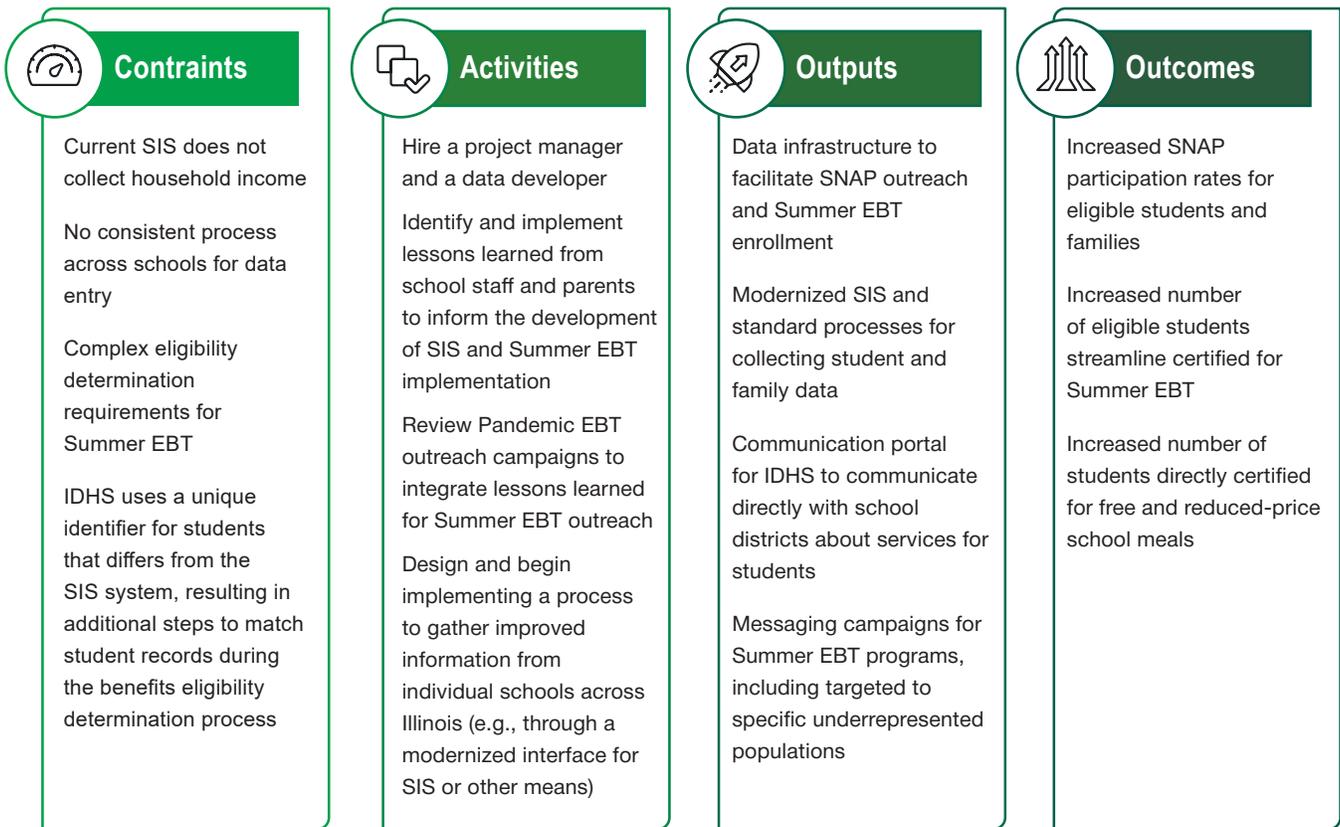
Currently, ISBE's existing Student Information System (SIS) does not collect certain key household information from schools that could potentially be shared with IDHS. This means that many children and families are missing out on benefits they are eligible for. Illinois will make improvements to SIS to streamline processes for schools to report students' household information and create an updated data sharing agreement between ISBE and IDHS that will connect families to SNAP and Summer EBT benefits.

Objectives

- ③ Execute an updated data sharing agreement between ISBE and IDHS to support SNAP and Summer EBT outreach and enrollment
- ③ Modernize SIS to collect accurate household information, which will enable state agencies to determine eligibility for Summer EBT and SNAP and conduct more accurate data matching to directly certify students for school meals
- ③ Lay the foundation for streamlined certification for Summer EBT in 2025 and beyond

Logic Model

Purpose: Update data infrastructure to enable IDHS and ISBE to identify children and families eligible for SNAP and Summer EBT.



Background & Context

Illinois' CSNS project builds upon previous partnerships between IDHS, ISBE, and the Food Depository, including Pandemic EBT implementation. During the Covid-19 pandemic, IDHS and ISBE established data sharing agreements to share student information to issue Pandemic EBT benefits. Similarly, the Food Depository launched a messaging campaign to educate families on Pandemic EBT that included FAQs in six languages and radio commercials in English and Spanish. These collaborative efforts enabled Illinois to provide Pandemic EBT benefits to over one million children, and will inform the state's administration of Summer EBT.

Problem Identification & Target Population

One in eight children in Illinois live in a household that regularly faces food insecurity. During the pandemic, food insecurity rates rose disproportionately in Black and Hispanic households—from about 19% to 22% in Black households and from about 16% to 17% in Hispanic households. Through their CSNS project, Illinois aims to connect more families to SNAP and Summer EBT who may face additional challenges to accessing benefits, such as language and technology barriers. The data infrastructure improvements will broadly impact students and families, with targeted outreach campaigns in Black and Hispanic communities.

Project Implementation Plan

The Illinois CSNS project will pair improved data sharing systems with outreach campaigns to increase SNAP and Summer EBT participation among eligible children and families.



Plan

Hire a project manager/business analyst to serve as the main contact between partner agencies

Hire a data developer/analyst to map current systems and processes, identify gaps, and create pathways for interagency data sharing

Establish communication flows between ISBE, IDHS, and the Food Depository



Collaborate

Train schools on data entry processes

Funnel data from schools to ISBE at the state level and share with IDHS

Partner with schools and families to inform SIS improvements and Summer EBT processes



Implement

Execute an updated data sharing agreement between ISBE and IDHS

Modernize existing SIS

Launch a Summer EBT marketing and communications campaign



Evaluate

Number of students enrolled in Summer EBT through streamlined certification or individual applications

Number of families identified as income-eligible for SNAP

Increased efficiency and reduced errors in the direct certification process for free and reduced-price school meals

Parent and school staff input

Long-Term Goals

Through its CSNS project, Illinois strives to build a modernized system and process for sharing student and family data from schools to state agencies. This improved data sharing infrastructure will enable ISBE and IDHS to automatically enroll more kids in Summer EBT, increase direct certification for the National School Lunch Program, and provide targeted outreach to income-eligible families who are not already enrolled in SNAP. When successful, these collaborative efforts will streamline Summer EBT and SNAP eligibility determinations and result in reductions to administrative barriers for families to access public benefits and services.

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North Carolina: Meeting Families Where They Are

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (NCDHHS's) Division of Child and Family Well-Being (DCFV) is partnering with Meals4Families to increase cross-enrollment between the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also called NC Food and Nutrition Services; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and Medicaid.

Using a three-pronged approach to meet families where they are, the organizations will 1) leverage school partnerships, 2) build referral pathways to benefits application support through the health system, and 3) improve community-supported digital application processes.

1 School Partnerships

The North Carolina CSNS team is partnering with several local school districts to implement No Kid Hungry's SNAP in Schools Model. This model aims to connect eligible students to SNAP through school-based outreach.

2 Health Systems Referral

North Carolina's CSNS project builds upon the state's Nutrition Insecurity Cross-Enrollment (NICE) pilot, an initiative that adds SNAP and WIC eligibility identifiers to a care management dataset used by health organizations that coordinate and provide care for North Carolinians enrolled in Medicaid.

In conjunction with the NICE pilot, North Carolina is launching a SNAP and WIC outreach initiative focused on five counties, in partnership with Carolina Complete Health and Duke Health. In this initiative, the CSNS project builds a referral pathway for Duke Health outreach specialists to identify Medicaid patients who are likely eligible for SNAP and/or WIC. These patients are then referred to More In My Basket (MIMB), a program developed at North Carolina State University that helps reduce food insecurity by connecting residents to SNAP food benefits.

3 Improvements to Digital Application Support

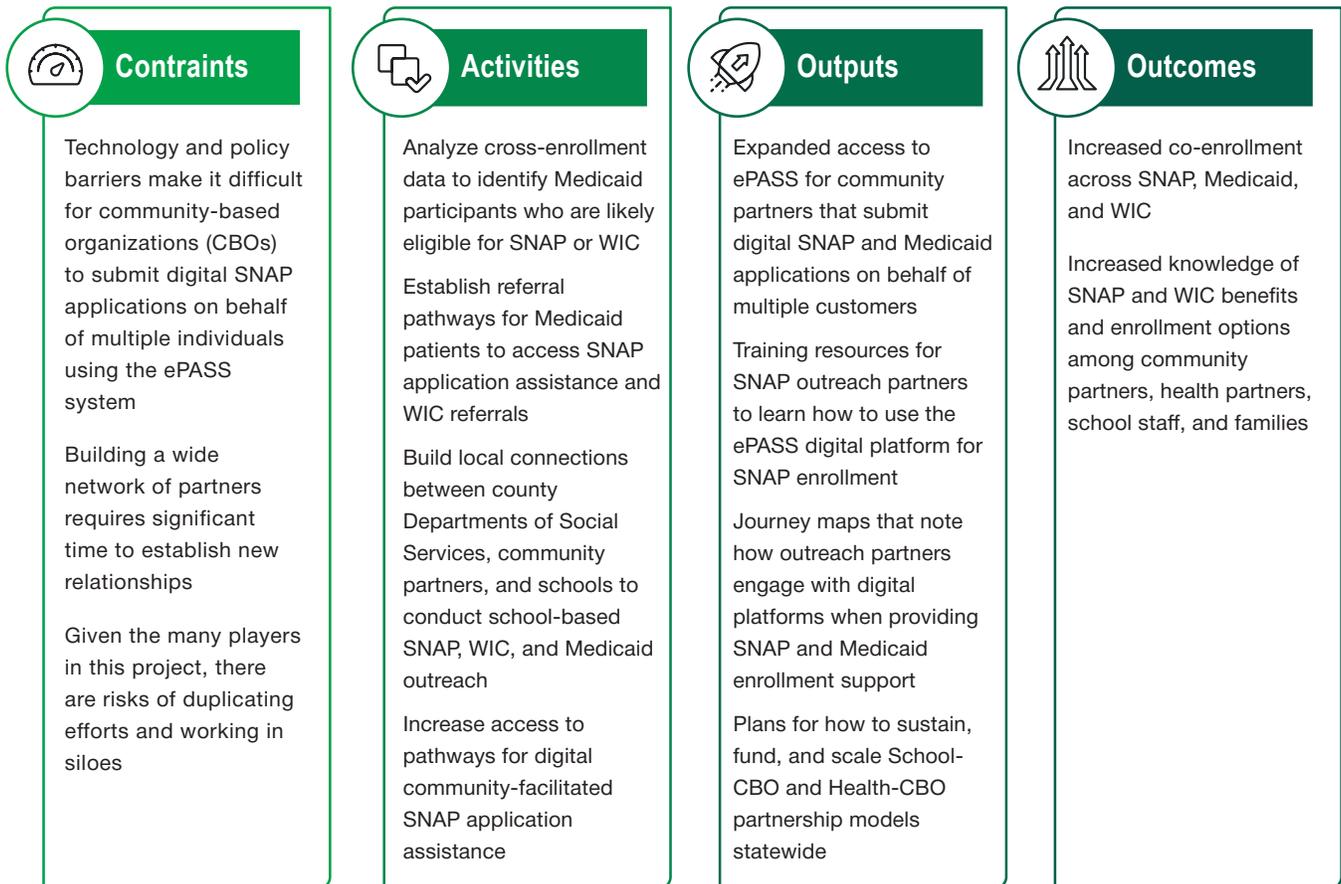
North Carolina’s digital benefits application, ePASS, provides customers with a self-service platform to apply for Medicaid and SNAP on a single website. This project brings together NC Food and Nutrition Services, State SNAP Outreach Partners, and NC FAST—the tech team behind the ePASS system—to expand pathways for community partners to assist with digital applications for SNAP and Medicaid benefits using ePASS.

Objectives

-  Reduce co-enrollment gaps between SNAP, WIC, and Medicaid by meeting families where they are
-  Improve digital infrastructure for community partners to assist with public benefits application
-  Establish a network of partners to facilitate community-supported benefits access

Logic Model

Purpose: Meet families where they are and enhance pathways for community-supported benefits application to improve co-enrollment rates across public benefits.



Background & Context

In January 2022, programs serving children and families in North Carolina were united within the DCFW. DCFW includes four sections: Food and Nutrition Services (SNAP), Community Nutrition Services (WIC, CACFP), Whole Child Health, and Early Intervention. Since forming, DCFW has prioritized making it easier for families to enroll in SNAP and WIC. In April 2022, DCFW established explicit goals to increase SNAP and WIC participation¹:

- 75% of eligible families will be enrolled in WIC
- 90% of eligible families will be enrolled in SNAP

Meals4Families is an anti-poverty and anti-hunger organization working to remove barriers that prevent families from connecting with federal benefit programs, including food and nutrition programs. Meals4Families uses a “train the trainers” model with health partners, education partners, and community partners to build their capacity to provide benefit enrollment support.

North Carolina’s CSNS initiative builds upon existing collaborations between NCDHHS and Meals4Families. Meals4Families plays a crucial role by providing expertise in food and nutrition support to the North Carolina Integrated Care for Kids (NC InCK) program. NC InCK is a NCDHHS-supported initiative that serves Medicaid-insured children in five counties.

Meals4Families also collaborated with NCDHHS on statewide Child Tax Credit outreach, including a text messaging campaign to reach individuals enrolled in SNAP and WIC. This collaboration resulted in an estimated additional \$500,000 of the total \$7.7 million in federal tax credits returned to NC families with no or low income.

Problem Identification & Target Population

Data sharing initiatives at the state level have identified significant co-enrollment gaps across SNAP, Medicaid, and WIC, highlighting a key opportunity to build effective outreach pathways that ensure families have access to all programs and supports they are eligible for.

North Carolina’s CSNS project aims to close these gaps by bringing together over 25 organizations to break down barriers including misinformation about public benefits, stigma, lack of language access, and unclear pathways for CBOs to provide digital SNAP application assistance. These collective efforts will broadly impact students and patients, with a targeted focus on reaching students experiencing homelessness, immigrants, mixed-status families, as well as Black and Latino communities.



¹ North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, State Action Plan for Nutrition Security. (2023-2024). Retrieved March 15, 2024.

Project Implementation Plan

North Carolina will collaborate across schools, health systems, and human services agencies to connect children and families to SNAP, WIC, and Medicaid.



Plan

Coordinate workflows for health and school partners who will facilitate outreach

Train community partner staff to guide families through digital benefits application processes



Collaborate

Establish partnerships between schools, community partners, and county DSS offices

Establish outreach protocols to support health partnership referrals for SNAP application support

Convene state SNAP outreach partners and Medicaid enrollment support partners to identify barriers and solutions to providing digital application assistance through ePASS



Implement

Refer Medicaid patients to More In My Basket for SNAP application assistance

Tailor the SNAP in Schools model to North Carolina's unique context

Test workflow for community partners to provide SNAP application assistance using North Carolina's ePASS system



Evaluate

SNAP applications and WIC referrals submitted from health systems referral and outreach

SNAP applications and WIC referrals submitted through school partnerships

Attitudes and awareness of SNAP among staff, teachers, administrators, and families

Value of benefits to students and families resulting from enrollment support provided by the Buncombe County Schools Family Resource Center

Long-Term Goals

By increasing SNAP enrollment within school communities, North Carolina can increase the number of students who can be directly certified for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (NSLP/SBP), as well as increase the portion of students who are streamline certified for Summer EBT. Increased enrollment numbers in the NSLP/SBP for eligible families can also help school districts with disproportionate poverty rates meet the threshold for the Community Eligibility Provision, which would allow all students within the district to receive free and reduced-price school meals without an application.

In the long-term, North Carolina aims to build a state-wide network of public benefits advocates and supporters who can connect families to multiple benefit programs through technology, streamlined partner workflows, and a shared goal of expanding equitable access to benefits. They aim to meet families where they are, while reducing the co-enrollment gap across Medicaid, SNAP, and WIC.

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San Francisco, California: Meeting Communities Where They Are—Transforming CalFresh and Nutrition Outreach

San Francisco's Coordinating SNAP & Nutrition Supports (CSNS) project builds upon a series of community listening sessions, focus groups, and interviews about food insecurity where residents loudly and clearly identified a community need: ease the geographic barriers and bureaucratic processes that hinder access to CalFresh and other vital benefits. Through CSNS, the San Francisco Human Services Agency (SFHSA) and San Francisco Marin Food Bank (SFMFB) are collaborating to pilot a mobile office that will serve neighborhoods within San Francisco County where food insecurity is prevalent and CalFresh participation is low. The mobile office will serve as a one-stop shop where residents seeking public benefits can apply for CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and other services in one visit.

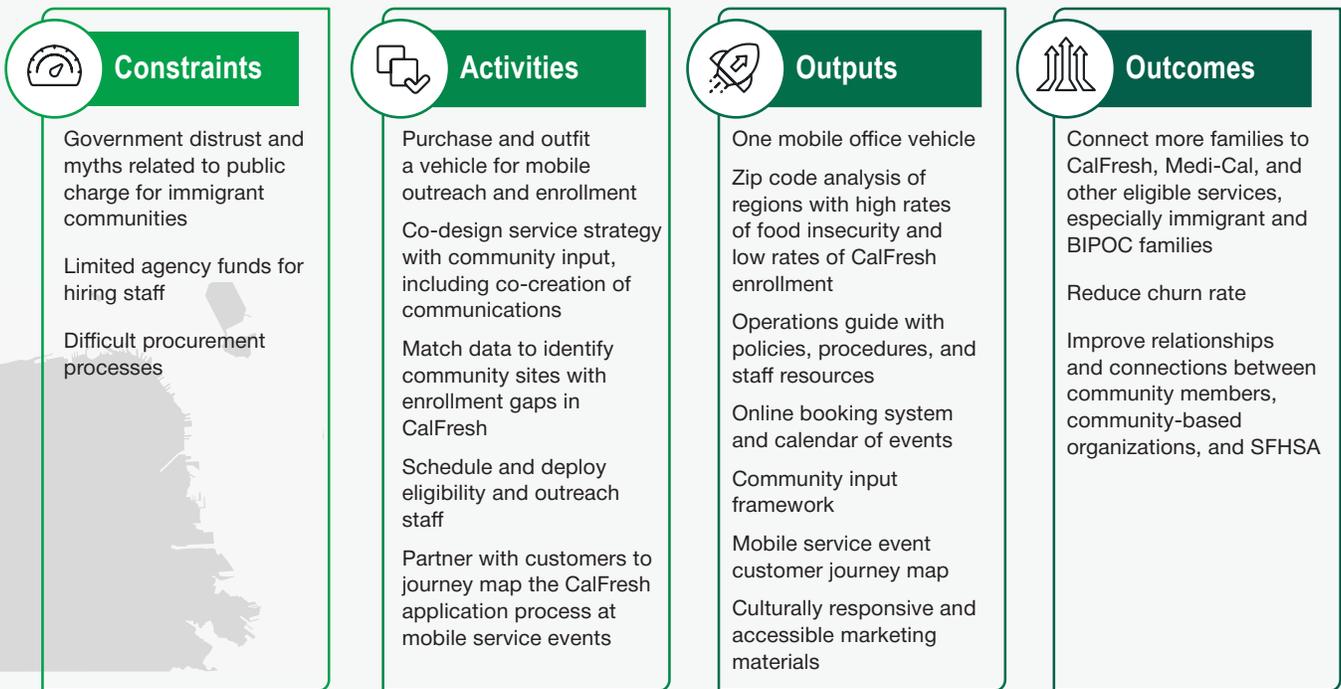
The San Francisco CSNS team plans to collaborate with the community to shape mobile office operations. Residents will be included in decision-making regarding mobile office service hours, accessible locations, community events, and more, all with the aim of advancing community-driven program design.

Objectives

-  Reduce geographic barriers to accessing CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and other public benefits by meeting people where they are
-  Streamline complex bureaucratic processes to facilitate one-day processing of CalFresh applications and enrollment
-  Partner with people with lived expertise to drive service delivery and enhance accessibility

Logic Model

Purpose: Reach under-enrolled populations in the county by providing mobile service delivery.



Background & Context

For over 25 years, SFHSA and SFMFB have been working together to end hunger and poverty in San Francisco and Marin counties. SFHSA connects roughly one-quarter of San Francisco’s population to more than 60 essential services every year. Notably, SFHSA serves 42% of the county’s children, with a significant majority—over 80%—of its customers belonging to Black, Indigenous, and other Communities of Color.

SFHSA and SFMFB’s long-standing partnership has included efforts to expand and align public benefits promotion, build a benefits application assistance network, provide food assistance programs, and operate pop-up pantries—some spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic. The San Francisco CSNS project builds upon their established relationship and leverages the current momentum of their work.

Problem Identification & Target Population

Despite the major progress SFHSA and SFMFB have made in their collaborative efforts over the years, geographic barriers, fear of government interaction among non-citizens, and lengthy bureaucratic processes persist. To address these challenges, the San Francisco CSNS team is prioritizing the needs of immigrants, geographically isolated BIPOC communities, and families with low incomes. While there are intersectional experiences across these demographic groups, each community experiences unique barriers to public benefits and services that this project attempts to address.

Immigrants make up over a third of the San Francisco population but are underrepresented on CalFresh due to government distrust and myths about how CalFresh affects immigration status. To help remedy this, the CSNS team will leverage culturally responsive and accessible marketing materials and community partnerships to help dispel public charge myths and promote benefits awareness. They will also hold mobile vehicle service events in neighborhoods with large populations of immigrant families.

The south and southeast region of San Francisco lacks reliable access to public transportation and is home to over half of the city’s Black and Brown population of families, who face the city’s highest rates of poverty. SFHSA doesn’t currently have offices in these county regions, making accessing benefits assistance extremely difficult. The project team will match SFHSA and SFMFB participant data to prioritize locations with high engagement in Food Bank services yet low CalFresh enrollment. Additionally, they will extend services to a new, pandemic-catalyzed grassroots network of food pantry providers to reach families in geographically isolated neighborhoods.

Project Implementation Plan

SFHSA and the SFMFB will work together to plan and implement mobile service delivery as well as uplift learnings and best practices throughout the project period.

 <p>Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire and onboard a project manager, project coordinator, project associate, and accounting clerk Develop community engagement and communications strategy 	 <p>Collaborate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with eligibility workers, outreach specialists, planning, communications, IT, and facilities/fleet management to identify and prioritize mobile office design elements Collaborate with community members and partners to plan mobile service events
 <p>Implement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch mobile unit and host mobile service events Collect and integrate community input Distribute marketing materials and promote mobile service events Track enrollment rates during mobile service events 	 <p>Evaluate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement framework documenting successes and challenges Mobile event engagement Customer experience with mobile services CalFresh enrollment and renewal counts

Long-Term Goals

San Francisco aims to increase enrollment among eligible children and families by eliminating barriers to CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and other services. This project prioritizes those who disproportionately experience food and financial insecurity, including immigrant communities and people of color. To accomplish this, the county will implement a mobile office, co-designed with community members and partners, to bring services directly to the community, tailor to their unique needs, and foster stronger connections throughout the county.

The San Francisco team intends to track demographic data, including race, ethnicity, and immigration status to analyze their project’s impact using an equity lens. The team will also explore various strategies to partner with people with lived expertise to identify ongoing opportunities to build internal capacity for community-driven program design.

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