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To: California Department of Social Services

From: Christine Alvarez, CalFresh Program Analyst  
Monterey County Department of Social Services

**Proposal:** Monterey County requests the approval to implement the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program. Monterey County would benefit from incorporating the Restaurant Meals Program to make CalFresh Program benefits more accessible to the Elderly, Disabled, and/or Homeless population. Also, this would give the county an opportunity to increase CalFresh enrollment among this specific population and remove the purchasing barriers associated with not having a place to store their food or the inability to prepare their own meals. This population would have the opportunity to eat nutritious and affordable meals while enjoying the opportunity to eat at a restaurant that might have never been an option for them before. In addition, participating restaurants will see an increase in revenue by increasing the patrons they serve.

**Demographic Analysis:**

Local County data collected reflects a concentration of the Elderly, Disabled, and/or Homeless CalFresh population residing in the following zip codes: 93901, 93905, 93906, 93907, 93933, and 93955. Potential restaurants in these targeted zip codes have been identified and consist of 156 restaurants in 93901, 146 restaurants in 93905, 147 restaurants in 93906, 17 restaurants in 93907, 88 restaurants in 93933 and 122 restaurants in 93955.

**Outreach and Marketing Plan:**

Outreach efforts would initially focus on restaurant participation in the above geographic locations but would continue county-wide. In addition, staff training and outreach efforts would entail the following:

- Train staff on Restaurant Meals Program eligibility
- Recruit restaurants with healthy eating options to participate by partnering with the Monterey County
- Market the Restaurant Meals Program by but not limited to:
  - Create a marketing work plan
  - Create specific Restaurant Meals Program literature emphasizing the benefits of selecting healthier and more nutritious food
  - Distribute the literature to local business, advocates and community partners
- Other outreach options may include:
  - Host outreach presentations for local businesses and the community as a whole

Monterey County is aware of the responsibilities that are associated with incorporating the Restaurant Meals Program as outlined below:

**County Responsibilities:** In order to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP), a county must submit a written proposal to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for review and approval. The interested county must provide the following:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will be utilized with participating restaurants detailing their obligations of both the county and the restaurant
- Draft of demographic analysis (by zip code) of the location of the potentially eligible population and its relation to the potential participating restaurants
- Draft of the county's outreach plan to advertise the restaurant meals to the restaurant community and eligible recipient community
- Create county signage that would be displayed in the participating restaurants

In addition, the county holds general responsibilities that include the following:

- Certify homeless, elderly and disabled recipients of CalFresh as eligible to purchase low cost meals with CalFresh benefits in restaurants which have entered into MOU's with the county for this purpose
- Identify households eligible to participate in the program for the use of CalFresh benefits at authorized restaurants at intake, recertification or when there is a change in the household's circumstances
- Inform RMP recipients of the names and addresses of participating county restaurants by providing a list that includes other participating RMP counties
- Ensure that the RMP Indicator Code programmed into the county consortium system will only be applied to RMP-eligible Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cardholders

Monterey County is part of the CalACES Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS). At application and recertification, CalACES will automatically identify RMP eligible households and code the individual's EBT card for RMP use. If the household becomes ineligible for RMP, the system will remove the individual from the program and decode the EBT card.

**Restaurant Responsibilities:** In order to receive CalFresh acceptance and redemption, participating restaurants must abide by all rules and regulations established by the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). Participating restaurants will be notified that involvement in any illegal activity or FNS disqualification resulting from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) violations may result in permanent termination from the RMP. A restaurant interested in participating with the RMP must submit the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Application for Meal Services application. Also, restaurants must agree to provide the following:

- Low cost or discounted meals during regular business hours to eligible CalFresh recipients
- Must not charge gratuity
- Must not charge sales tax
- Must post the county's RMP signage informing the general public of its participation in the program

Monterey County strives to support the community by providing far-reaching access to healthy and nutritious food to our most vulnerable populations while maximizing CalFresh revenue and enrollment. The expansion of our county's CalFresh program to include the Restaurant Meals Program will significantly aid in this continued community support. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

**Attachments:** Draft MOU  
Customer flyer draft  
Retailer flyer draft  
Retailer signage draft  
Elderly, Disabled, and/or Homeless CalFresh population map