

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes

February 19, 2012

[HHS campus](#)

3240 Kerner Blvd., San Rafael, CA 94901

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting scheduled for:

Tuesday, March 19th, from 3:00-5:00 p.m. @ TBD

Handouts:

MFPC Meeting Agenda, Governance document, CA Food Policy Council Principles, CA Agriculture magazine, CalFresh brochures in English and Spanish, Cal Fresh posters

Action Items:

Introduction and Welcome:

Chair Janet Brown welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Janet reviewed the Wordle and what it signifies. She recapped how through discussions at our last meeting, we decided to focus initially on two major threads: Access and Production. This first meeting will begin the focus and deeper learning about Access. Janet reviewed that the Steering Committee and a group of people who are presenting today met ahead of this meeting to plan today's presentation and meeting content.

CA Food Policy Council Principles:

Chair Janet Brown provided a brief summary of the how the CA Food Policy Council principles were developed and what the MFPC agreeing to them means for our group. The council reached consensus to ratify the principles.

Council governance:

The council reached consensus and agreed to adopt the governance document, understanding that they may be changed and further developed at a future date. For now, the governance document adopted will guide the groups discussion and decision making.

CalFresh Focus Issue:

Chair Janet Brown introduced the topic area by noting that according to CA Food Policy Advocates, we are ranked among the lowest of all CA counties for our enrollment rate compared to eligibility for CalFresh in Marin County.

Council Member Marty Graff presented an overview of the CalFresh Program and enrollment statistics in Marin. Marin ranks 54 out of 58 counties for Cal Fresh enrollment rates. There are

more than 5000 cases which represent more than 9000 people enrolled. He also shared that Cal Fresh Enrollment, not outreach, is the mandate of their office. They are a bit under capacity to do what they do currently and they have other programs that they operate in their office as well. Included in Marty's presentation were two promotional video pieces. One in English and one in Spanish that help to demystify enrollment and make approaching the application process for CalFresh more comfortable and understandable. Marty handed out a 3-year CalFresh Outreach and Enrollment Plan that his office has developed to focus their efforts. There is now requirement to implement by the State, in other words no follow up or monitoring by the State.

Marin's Cal Fresh Office has the goal to enroll 2000 more eligible people (approx 15,000 eligible in Marin), as well as to train more volunteers and leaders in the community to assist with outreach. Key strategies for increasing enrollment are the following: 1) reduce drop off by reaching out to already enrolled people ahead of the end of their allocated timeframe 2) target seniors and Spanish speaking community. Marty expressed interest in doing an enroll in one day event. Eg. CalFresh in a Day in SF.

Marty explained that enrollment process typically takes 30 days from start to finish. The average case load is 400 cases per worker in his office. There is also an expedited process that can take 3 days. To qualify, one needs to complete an application, have a valid ID, verify income, and to be interviewed (in person or by phone).

Council Member Terrie Green asked which states have been successful in increasing their enrollment. Council Member Sheila Knopf replied that the SF/Marin Food Bank has some information about efforts in Oregon that are going well and will share this information with the MFPC. Discussion occurred about hiring people from the communities where outreach is needed to help with the outreach efforts.

Alexandra Danino and Victoria Vasquez were both unexpectedly absent and therefore did not present as previously planned.

Council Member Rebecca Smith presented about meetings that are coming up that will engage key leaders and organizations in discussions to address the need for CalFresh enrollment support. She indicated that there may be opportunity through the Nutrition Wellness Program's NEOP funding for a peer-to-peer CalFresh promotion that is paired with practical classes on related topics, like how to shop on a budget. Rebecca also talked about the need for application assisters. Marty mentioned that some enrollment could be done through the food pantries.

Rebecca reviewed the

Heal Implementation team mini-grant opportunity and asked for the group's agreement to have a set of recommendations come from the upcoming CalFresh discussions as to what those funds, which have been designated for the MFPC efforts, could be used for. The ideas could then be brought back to the council for approval. There was general agreement.

Council Member Leah Smith gave a summary of Market Match efforts in Marin County in 2011-12. She also reviewed the history of AIM accepting and promoting EBT in Marin and how CalFresh use at the farmers market has substantially increased over time, especially with the introduction of Market Match. She reviewed the purpose of the program: To improve access to healthy fruits and vegetables for Marin's most vulnerable, specifically people enrolled in CalFresh, as well as to support local farmers and the local economy. This is a systemic approach to change.

Leah made a policy recommendation as to how to move forward on addressing the CalFresh enrollment gap in Marin County. Recommendation: Establish May as Cal Fresh Awareness Month in Marin (like LA County model), work with the BOS and H&HS and partner organizations to pass a resolution and to promote and do events during CalFresh Awareness Month.

Discussion occurred about this idea and there was general agreement that this was a good path to pursue and there was interest to discuss the details of planning for this. There were some concerns about the capacity in Marty's office to process lots of new applicants, however they like the idea and we could start off small and grow. Council Member Liza Cross also liked the idea and is willing to work with the group on the resolution.

The meeting wrapped up just after 5 pm and Chair checked in with the group about leaving it to the SC to plan for the next meeting. The meeting concluded.

Next Meeting:

- Set for Tuesday, March 19th, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm
- Steering Committee will meet to plan for next meeting