

5/19/20 – MFPC Meeting Notes ZOOM conference call

Attendees: Liana Orlandi (Agricultural Institute of Marin), Alexandra Danino (SF-Marín Food Bank), Andy Naja-Riese (AIM), Bonnie Nielsen (UC Cooperative Extension), Cathryn Couch, (CERES Community Project), Juliette Martinez, Julia Van Soelen Kim (UC Cooperative Extension), Heather Gilardi, Linda Jackson (Aging Action Initiative), Kelly Brown (Covia), Maggie Gori (Catholic Charities), Marchon Tatmon (SF-Marín Food Bank), Paula Freeman (Covia), Reilly Briggs (CERES Community Project), Roxana Yekta (Marin County HHS, Nutrition Wellness Program), Ryan Thayer (Marin County HHS), Sandy Turner Parry (North Bay Children's Center), Steve Schwartz (Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative), Summer Sullivan (Petaluma Bounty), Susan Lopes (Mill Valley Chamber), Wendy Tobiasson

Introductions & Announcements – Liana Orlandi

- Cathryn - AB 3118 - fund pilot for medically supported food moved out of committee and has gone to appropriations (food as a medicare supported benefit). Can forward email for letters of support. Please submit Letters of Support to the Assembly Appropriations Committee via the Position Letter Portal: <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>. Letters should be on your organizational letterhead, and be addressed to the Hon. Lorena Gonzalez, Chair, Appropriations Committee and should be submitted by noon on Tuesday, May 26. Please also send a copy to Vanessa Cedenó, Supervisor Chan's Deputy Chief of Staff at vanessa.cedeno@acgov.org.
- Wendy - Local Food and Food Waste team presented to DrawDown Marin, there's interest in some suggestions (including AIM's permanent market, drive-up farmers market concept, compost solutions, measuring and mapping food issues in Marin and linking organizations working in these areas)
- Julia - Levine Town Hall webinar (with Andy from AIM and Meg from SF-Marín Food Bank) was well attended and had great resources.

Update from Marin County HEAL Collaborative - Ryan Thayer & Roxana Yekta

- HEAL Collaborative meeting weekly to try to connect the different sectors and partners. Looking at larger picture response efforts and how they are being implemented on the ground level (such as Marin Recovers and the business sector and recovery food element). Also working on the Great Plates (restaurant meal delivery program). Looking for gaps and looking at the work through an equity lens. Working on a strategic planning process and metrics to support an equitable food access landscape supported by data. Data from: agencies collecting bulk food (tracking how many lbs of food is being delivered to see where gaps are), CalFresh data, demographic data to get an accurate picture of the county landscape. Group is meeting Tuesdays 11:30-1pm, and all are welcome to join the call.

Panel discussion: Pandemic EBT and CalFresh EBT Online - Alexandra Danino (SF Marin Food Bank), D'Angelo Paillet (Health and Human Services), Roxana Yekta (Health and Human Services), Marchon Tatmon (SF-Marín Food Bank), Andy Naja-Riese (Ag Institute of Marin) *Overview of policy advocacy opportunities and outreach, CalFresh assister network involvement, barriers, and implementation challenges to date.*

Pandemic EBT - support for families of kids eligible for free and reduced meals at grade K-12 schools in 18 different school districts - does not require an application and comes directly to families in need. Cards began to be mailed May 8th to 4,260 people - \$365 per child (a one-

time \$ award). School districts sending a letter regarding P-EBT through online system, "Peach Jar", and robocalls to everyone in the 18 school districts. Gave information in English and Spanish ahead of time of families receiving the cards in the mail. Challenge: need to dismantle concerns about Public Charge and online shopping. P-EBT can be used *for up to one year* anywhere that accepts EBT (in-person), at grocery stores, participating farmers markets (+ market match), and online at Amazon & Walmart. Award was already given to 4260 eligible kids + 3634 potential kids still exist = 7,894 total eligible in Marin. Happening through the month of MAY, need to get the word out for 3,634 potential newly eligible applicants. Application period is May 22-June 30, 2020. Not sure if this applies to children in daycare and Headstart - assume it is not, although holding subsidized spots could be a window of possibility here; could be a potential advocacy opportunity. More info at:

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/EBT/Pandemic/20200508-P-EBT-Outreach-Toolkit.pdf>. **Advocacy opportunities for P-EBT:**

- **Extending P-EBT benefits through Hero's Act** (House of Representatives proposed and passed overwhelmingly, moved to Senate for a vote - claimed to be dead on arrival) If House and Senate can coordinate and get it passed, will help more than just extending P-EBT, including: offset deficits states will face (CA = \$54-58 million deficit), will establish fund for hazard pay for essential workers, help with sick leave, and more. Need to reach out to our Republican counterparts to turn the bill into a bi-partisan bill. Do so now - Senate vote in the next week. Community based orgs can submit Letters of Support, also reach out to our networks to people who may have connections to Republican legislators. More info on Hero's Act: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6800/text>.
- Could encourage Marin County to educate retailers about P-EBT program including signage letting consumers know P-EBT is accepted there, to extend the impact of P-EBT
- Get more retailers to accept EBT and lift all boats: opportunity to gain a more clear landscape of which retailers currently accept EBT, layered with demographic info of income and CalFresh application submissions and recipients, to inform a County strategy to recruit more retailers as part of recovery efforts.
- Since P-EBT is reaching so many families who may not have historically received CalFresh, this could be a way to inform folks of CalFresh resources for aid for the longhaul.
- Farmers markets (AIM San Rafael, Fairfax, and Novato markets) focus is signage so people know they can use their EBT and P-EBT benefits there, including market match; and if people don't have it, that they can apply. It is possible for a family to have both CalFresh card and P-EBT cards, and thus receive up to \$20 a day through market match. Outreach to kids of migrant farmworkers in Marin and Sonoma is important, to ensure they have the opportunity to apply for the program. Sample messaging from the state doesn't include reference to farmers markets, market match, CSAs or produce/farm stands.
- Would be nice to show support of our local farmers, many of whom are on the CalFresh program, to show the whole picture of the issue.
- Learned from additional CalFresh (D-CalFresh or D-SNAP) the registration window was too short. Can we extend the date to enroll? Through June 30th? Advocate to schools to send families a letter, a separate communication or reminder to people who aren't automatically enrolled (could be a school board decision or individual school admin decision).
- CA Dept of Education has access to a list of families on free and reduced meals - they should auto-enroll these families. Families newly unemployed won't necessarily have their kids enrolled in free and reduced meals. New unemployment applicants might not be informed of EBT and P-EBT when they apply.

- Marin Recovers website mentions signing up for CalFresh when searching for "EBT", but it might help to put info there about P-EBT as well as specific opportunities like the Market Match.
- Work local to ensure that current efforts reach as many people as possible, or work higher up to ensure greater benefits for longer, or both?

CalFresh EBT Online -

- CalFresh online EBT recently approved (previously cardholders could not place orders online), though options are limited (especially in Marin) to Walmart and Amazon Pantry.
- Attempts to troubleshoot around zip codes that it is and is not accepted - very limited.
- This is a long-awaited achievement, especially timely given Shelter in Place order. Generally this is a good thing: CalFresh also recently available to a greater number of people due to newly eligible SSI recipients, simplified application process, application assisters network, increase in maximum allotment, waiver of recertification process and "star 7s". Still needs work on its limitations.
- Challenges: No info on the front page of Amazon for SNAP users (people don't know where to go). www.amazon.com/SNAP has info, but it's not accessible from the main Amazon site, where people need to register their cards. Lots of education is needed. Amazon's 3-4 platforms are confusing. Amazon Fresh (aka fresh food, healthier options) is not available for delivery to any Marin zip code. Also, only certain items on Amazon Pantry say "SNAP eligible." Have to spend over \$35 for free delivery, otherwise have to pay for delivery with a credit card other than your EBT card. Having the option of delivery is a really important part of the issue (need to be able to get good food with the money people have on their cards). Original Pilot Information and app: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/onlinepurchasing-rfv.pdf>.
 - New York was part of the pilot program through FNS. Only used a couple retailers to start off the pilot, and Walmart and Amazon were selected because they had the ability for pin pads embedded on their websites.
 - Website needs to be certified to accept EBT, so subsidy websites of Amazon that aren't certified won't work.
 - More vendors are in the process of being certified (including Safeway). Pushing for USDA to expedite the process of adding more vendors at the federal level, but there's a lot of red tape involved. More work needs to be done. Recommend we advocate to the Western division of FNS so they see the need and can rush the process to get more vendors certified.
 - What level of government to advocate on? Local steps to get vendors ready, reach out to AccuLink so more can use the pin pads, reach out at state level to push Western FNS and USDA. Want farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs to be eligible also, can contact CDFA.

Advocacy opportunities for CalFresh EBT online:

- FNS form that interested retailers need to complete to apply - logistical challenges, will likely be complicated to get more vendors involved. Only so much Western FNS can do - a letter is worth a shot but might not get anywhere. Should do advocacy at the state level, and encourage local retailers to apply.
- Retailer requirements form: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-requirements-provide-online-purchasing>.
- Link to application process to be sent out by Marchon.
- Online EBT Purchases Advocacy Questions and Policy Priorities per CAFB- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1amG8lbB2yljqOVY6gv-U9K4hVZn8_kJT/view.
- WCLP on CalFresh and Online Shopping: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/94143890839747088>.

Online EBT Purchases Advocacy Questions and Policy Priorities per CAFB:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1amG8IbB2yljqOVY6gv-U9K4hVZn8_kJT/view.

CalFresh and Online Shopping Webinar, June 2nd, 2020 CAFB with Jessica Bartholow from WCLP: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/94143890839747088>.

DRAI (Disaster Relief for Immigrants) - another state-program for undocumented people who were not eligible for CARES Act Stimulus. It's \$500 per person. Goes live today or tomorrow.

Policy Updates - Steve Schwartz

- SB 882 (Wiener): “[CalFresh—Simpler For Seniors](#)“ (Marchon Tatmon)
 - Going through its first hearing at the state capital right now, moving quickly. Thank you for the letters received (MFPC has already submitted Letters of Support). Weiner’s colleagues are feeling good about the bill, things are looking good. More info:
http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB3118.
- Update on “[Restaurants Deliver: Home Meals for Seniors](#)” (Roxy Yekta)
 - Currently working with social services and whistlestop on the program (launched yesterday, running 2 weeks, potential to extend through June 10). 1000 applied, about 500 recipients eligible, with spots for 500 more (whistlestop is handling the intakes) = higher level of interest than other aid, not eligible if receiving other assistance, under 65, and other factors. Currently working with restaurants on coordinating. *Stay tuned for more - potential topic for June meeting, especially if program is extended.
- AB 2043 (Rivas): [Agricultural Employers and Employees: COVID-19 response](#) (Steve Schwartz)
 - Farmworkers should be eligible for healthcare and similar benefits has been reduced, but still will be some OSHA protections.
- AB 1022 (Wicks): California Anti-Hunger Response and Employment Training Act of 2019
- AB 3256 (E. Garcia): Climate Resilient Bond
- Update on Farm to Elders proposal (Steve Schwartz)
 - Trying for a budget request for this. If we want to spend some money on a lobbyist in Sacramento, we can (with money from MCF grant), Julia, Reba & Steve are working on this, looking to create a white-pager on the issue.
- Update on Policy Platform (Julia Van Soelen Kim)
- Legislator is looking at bringing back a Sugar Sweetened Beverage legislation
- Federal bill HR 6774 (McGovern): presented to Congress on pilot program of CERES work
- Farm to School info coming up in the next couple of weeks - contact Steve if interested.
- ACTION ITEMS for MFPC:
 - SB 882: already taken actions, no known needed now
 - Great Plates: stay tuned for advocacy opportunities for this in the future, potential content for June MFPC meeting. Will share flyer in meeting minutes.
 - AB 2043, AB 1022, and AB 3256: all prioritized by CA FFN - Steve and Liana will keep MFPC updated on these as MFPC has already expressed interest in

supporting them. Chance to sign on to letters coming up soon, look for live links in meeting notes.

- Farm to Elders: contact Steve if interested in working on this proposal
- HR 6774: Reilly will confirm with Cathryn if there is advocacy needed

Closing – Liana Orlandi

- Richard Levins reading
- Coronavirus underscores how important a resilient local food system is

Virtual meeting closed at 5:05 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 16 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.