DATE: May 12, 2020
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Robert Menicocci, Social Services Agency Director
SUBJECT: May Is CalFresh Awareness Month

RECOMMENDED ACTION
Adopt Proclamation declaring May 2020 as "CalFresh Awareness Month" in Santa Clara County. (Social Services Agency)

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION
The Social Services Agency, Department of Employment and Benefit Services, is requesting the Board of Supervisors (Board) to recognize May 2019 as “CalFresh Awareness Month” in Santa Clara County.

CHILD IMPACT
The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

SENIOR IMPACT
The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS
The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

BACKGROUND
May is the official month dedicated to CalFresh awareness. Since 2011, CalFresh Awareness Month has created awareness, dispelled myths, and helped families, individuals, students, veterans, and seniors apply for CalFresh benefits.

The CalFresh program reduces hunger and food insecurity. It is vital to good nutrition for many low-income families and individuals because it increases food budgets, allowing households to put fresh, healthy food on the table for every meal.

The CalFresh program supports other food and nutrition programs, such as the Restaurant Meals Program, the Market Match Program, and the Double Up Food Bucks Program. The Restaurant Meals Program allows recipients who are over 60 years of age, disabled, or homeless, to use their CalFresh benefits to purchase hot meals at participating restaurants.
The Market Match and Double Up Food Bucks Programs allow recipients to double their CalFresh dollars, up to $10, at participating farmers’ markets and grocery stores.

Almost 80,000 families and individuals in Santa Clara County receive CalFresh food benefits. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, CalFresh applications have increased significantly in a short period of time, more than doubling from approximately 900 applications per week in the first week of the shelter-in-place order to approximately 1,990 applications per week by mid-April 2020.

In order to ensure that Santa Clara County residents continue to have access to food as we respond to COVID-19, we are screening all applicants for CalFresh Expedited Services and implementing new administrative flexibilities that ease the burden of reporting, limit interview requirements, and streamline the signature of applications.

Due to the extensive economic impacts of COVID-19, some individuals and families may be eligible to receive CalFresh for the first time and may need more information about the application process, what information and documents to provide, and how to use benefits. Others may be familiar with CalFresh but could use more information about recent changes in response to COVID-19. As a result, we are partnering with local community-based organizations, including Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, Catholic Charities, and many others, to message to clients and the public, and share just how beneficial CalFresh benefits have been and will be to individuals and families affected by COVID-19.

**CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

May 2020 would not be recognized as CalFresh Awareness Month.

**STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Clerk of the Board is requested to notify Jason Cooper and Anita Torres of the SSA following approval.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- signed proclamation (PDF)