

Lost Dollars, Empty Plates

The full *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* report (including statewide data is available at <http://cfpa.net/lost-dollars-empty-plates-2015>).

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County Data Tables

The following tables describe the impact of low CalFresh utilization on California's local economies. As detailed in the Methodology section, these county-specific results incorporate the Program Access Index (PAI). The PAI is designed to estimate CalFresh utilization among individuals who meet three CalFresh eligibility criteria: income below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold, no participation in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and no receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

$$\text{PAI} = \frac{(\text{CalFresh Participants}) - (\text{Disaster CalFresh Program Participants})}{(\text{Individuals with Income} < 125\% \text{ of poverty}) - (\text{FDPIR Participants}) - (\text{SSI Recipients with Income} < 125\% \text{ of poverty})}$$

USDA calculates a state-specific PAI that is one measure used to assess states' administration of SNAP. The county-specific PAI used for this *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* (LDEP) analysis was generated by CFPA using a methodology that largely follows that of USDA.ⁱ The county-specific PAI serves as the basis of the *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* county-specific analysis because it helps describe county-by-county variation in CalFresh utilization.

Please note that an adjunct set of tables, based on USDA's statewide participation rate for CalFresh, is located in Appendix A. The methodology used to generate those tables can be found in Appendix B. Key differences in the two methodologies are summarized in the table below.

ⁱ To read the detailed county PAI methodology, please visit: <http://cfpa.net/pai-2015>

Table 1

Columns B and C are derived from the 2013 PAI. For the purposes of this table, “income-eligible” individuals are those who have incomes below 125 percent of poverty, do not participate in FDPIR, and do not receive SSI if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

County	Column A Average Monthly CalFresh Participants	Column B Estimated Number of Income-Eligible Individuals	Column C Estimated Number of Income-Eligible Individuals Not Participating in CalFresh
Alameda	124,972	220,830	95,858
Alpine	157	219	62
Amador	3,279	5,031	1,752
Butte	29,969	51,492	21,523
Calaveras	4,966	6,139	1,173
Colusa	1,733	4,131	2,398
Contra Costa	68,562	141,234	72,672
Del Norte	5,120	5,559	439
El Dorado	11,744	20,078	8,334
Fresno	219,724	279,800	60,076
Glenn	3,521	6,700	3,179
Humboldt	16,198	30,186	13,989
Imperial	36,640	47,545	10,905
Inyo	2,041	2,975	934
Kern	143,608	230,422	86,814
Kings	23,354	34,361	11,007
Lake	10,310	17,620	7,310
Lassen	2,990	4,329	1,339
Los Angeles	1,134,467	2,139,107	1,004,640
Madera	26,892	40,678	13,786
Marin	9,432	24,718	15,286
Mariposa	1,867	3,166	1,300
Mendocino	13,162	19,282	6,119
Merced	55,180	76,610	21,430
Modoc	946	2,553	1,607
Mono	649	2,156	1,507
Monterey	46,992	88,821	41,829
Napa	6,821	18,699	11,878
Nevada	7,393	14,420	7,028

Table 1 (continued)

Columns B and C are derived from the 2013 PAI. For the purposes of this table, “income-eligible” individuals are those who have incomes below 125 percent of poverty, do not participate in FDPIR, and do not receive SSI if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

County	Column A Average Monthly CalFresh Participants	Column B Estimated Number of Income-Eligible Individuals	Column C Estimated Number of Income-Eligible Individuals Not Participating in CalFresh
Orange	231,008	475,050	244,041
Placer	17,805	40,053	22,248
Plumas	1,678	3,650	1,972
Riverside	277,934	452,064	174,130
Sacramento	208,715	289,556	80,842
San Benito	6,192	9,416	3,224
San Bernardino	371,925	460,894	88,969
San Diego	259,287	544,328	285,042
San Francisco	48,894	117,332	68,438
San Joaquin	112,013	148,481	36,467
San Luis Obispo	17,542	43,893	26,351
San Mateo	29,014	74,106	45,092
Santa Barbara	32,929	85,188	52,259
Santa Clara	108,645	228,656	120,011
Santa Cruz	22,980	46,335	23,355
Shasta	23,446	35,397	11,951
Sierra	303	667	364
Siskiyou	6,532	9,896	3,365
Solano	41,339	61,830	20,491
Sonoma	34,875	73,059	38,184
Stanislaus	90,792	124,728	33,937
Sutter	12,300	21,143	8,843
Tehama	9,888	15,303	5,415
Trinity	1,561	3,189	1,628
Tulare	114,901	144,508	29,607
Tuolumne	5,218	9,900	4,682
Ventura	67,619	116,296	48,677
Yolo	16,728	43,265	26,537
Yuba	12,818	17,929	5,111

Table 2

These data incorporate the 2013 PAI as a measure of CalFresh utilization among low-income individuals. The table describes economic effects that would result if all income-eligible individuals participated in CalFresh. “Income-eligible” individuals are defined as those who have incomes below 125 percent of poverty, do not participate in FDPIR, and do not receive SSI if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

County	Column A Estimated Additional Benefits Received if Participation Reached 100% of Income- Eligible Individuals (Annual Federal Benefits)	Column B Estimated Annual Increase in Economic Activity
Alameda	\$113,136,530	\$202,514,389
Alpine	\$81,661	\$146,173
Amador	\$2,123,481	\$3,801,032
Butte	\$24,532,620	\$43,913,390
Calaveras	\$1,421,865	\$2,545,138
Colusa	\$2,302,194	\$4,120,926
Contra Costa	\$82,306,665	\$147,328,931
Del Norte	\$505,676	\$905,160
El Dorado	\$10,557,145	\$18,897,290
Fresno	\$58,674,971	\$105,028,197
Glenn	\$3,009,601	\$5,387,186
Humboldt	\$17,471,980	\$31,274,844
Imperial	\$10,122,522	\$18,119,314
Inyo	\$1,090,402	\$1,951,819
Kern	\$83,937,143	\$150,247,485
Kings	\$10,905,545	\$19,520,926
Lake	\$8,563,433	\$15,328,544
Lassen	\$1,498,078	\$2,681,560
Los Angeles	\$1,145,373,677	\$2,050,218,883
Madera	\$12,758,565	\$22,837,832
Marin	\$21,561,849	\$38,595,709
Mariposa	\$1,509,653	\$2,702,279
Mendocino	\$7,584,249	\$13,575,806
Merced	\$20,733,849	\$37,113,590
Modoc	\$1,672,754	\$2,994,230
Mono	\$2,092,490	\$3,745,557
Monterey	\$42,909,299	\$76,807,645
Napa	\$13,287,494	\$23,784,615
Nevada	\$8,624,739	\$15,438,284

Table 2 (continued)

These data incorporate the 2013 PAI as a measure of CalFresh utilization among low-income individuals. The table describes economic effects that would result if all income-eligible individuals participated in CalFresh. “Income-eligible” individuals are defined as those who have incomes below 125 percent of poverty, do not participate in FDPIR, and do not receive SSI if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

County	Column A Estimated Additional Benefits Received if Participation Reached 100% of Income- Eligible Individuals (Annual Federal Benefits)	Column B Estimated Annual Increase in Economic Activity
Orange	\$261,265,355	\$467,664,986
Placer	\$24,935,015	\$44,633,677
Plumas	\$2,207,425	\$3,951,290
Riverside	\$170,242,416	\$304,733,924
Sacramento	\$85,584,281	\$153,195,863
San Benito	\$3,249,614	\$5,816,809
San Bernardino	\$89,291,164	\$159,831,184
San Diego	\$313,297,119	\$560,801,843
San Francisco	\$103,887,303	\$185,958,273
San Joaquin	\$35,540,481	\$63,617,461
San Luis Obispo	\$31,804,486	\$56,930,029
San Mateo	\$52,586,219	\$94,129,332
Santa Barbara	\$54,453,669	\$97,472,067
Santa Clara	\$133,436,088	\$238,850,598
Santa Cruz	\$28,006,269	\$50,131,221
Shasta	\$14,047,480	\$25,144,990
Sierra	\$446,255	\$798,796
Siskiyou	\$3,535,440	\$6,328,437
Solano	\$24,131,799	\$43,195,920
Sonoma	\$49,085,382	\$87,862,834
Stanislaus	\$36,269,210	\$64,921,886
Sutter	\$8,712,291	\$15,595,000
Tehama	\$5,541,299	\$9,918,925
Trinity	\$1,924,269	\$3,444,441
Tulare	\$28,140,720	\$50,371,889
Tuolumne	\$5,977,265	\$10,699,304
Ventura	\$54,831,270	\$98,147,972
Yolo	\$29,350,588	\$52,537,553
Yuba	\$5,337,723	\$9,554,525

Table 3

These data incorporate the 2013 PAI as a measure of CalFresh utilization among low-income individuals. The table describes economic effects that would result if all income-eligible individuals participated in CalFresh. “Income-eligible” individuals are defined as those who have incomes below 125 percent of poverty, do not participate in FDPIR, and do not receive SSI if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

County	Column A Annual Lost State Sales Tax (General Fund)	Column B Annual Lost State Sales Tax (non- General Fund)	Column C Annual Lost Local/County Tax
Alameda	\$2,004,638	\$1,304,606	\$1,527,343
Alpine	\$1,447	\$942	\$367
Amador	\$37,625	\$24,486	\$14,334
Butte	\$434,687	\$282,892	\$110,397
Calaveras	\$25,194	\$16,396	\$6,398
Colusa	\$40,792	\$26,547	\$10,360
Contra Costa	\$1,458,371	\$949,099	\$740,760
Del Norte	\$8,960	\$5,831	\$2,844
El Dorado	\$187,059	\$121,737	\$47,507
Fresno	\$1,039,647	\$676,596	\$455,464
Glenn	\$53,326	\$34,704	\$13,543
Humboldt	\$309,582	\$201,474	\$117,936
Imperial	\$179,358	\$116,725	\$68,327
Inyo	\$19,321	\$12,574	\$7,360
Kern	\$1,487,261	\$967,900	\$377,717
Kings	\$193,233	\$125,755	\$49,075
Lake	\$151,733	\$98,747	\$38,535
Lassen	\$26,544	\$17,275	\$6,741
Los Angeles	\$20,294,590	\$13,207,590	\$12,885,454
Madera	\$226,066	\$147,122	\$86,120
Marin	\$382,049	\$248,635	\$194,057
Mariposa	\$26,749	\$17,408	\$10,190
Mendocino	\$134,383	\$87,456	\$38,395
Merced	\$367,378	\$239,087	\$93,302
Modoc	\$29,639	\$19,289	\$7,527
Mono	\$37,076	\$24,129	\$9,416
Monterey	\$760,299	\$494,798	\$217,228
Napa	\$235,438	\$153,221	\$89,691
Nevada	\$152,820	\$99,454	\$43,663
Orange	\$4,629,296	\$3,012,716	\$1,763,541

Table 3 (continued)

These data incorporate the 2013 PAI as a measure of CalFresh utilization among low-income individuals. The table describes economic effects that would result if all income-eligible individuals participated in CalFresh. “Income-eligible” individuals are defined as those who have incomes below 125 percent of poverty, do not participate in FDPIR, and do not receive SSI if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

County	Column A Annual Lost State Sales Tax (General Fund)	Column B Annual Lost State Sales Tax (non- General Fund)	Column C Annual Lost Local/County Tax
Placer	\$441,817	\$287,532	\$112,208
Plumas	\$39,113	\$25,454	\$9,933
Riverside	\$3,016,483	\$1,963,108	\$1,149,136
Sacramento	\$1,516,446	\$986,894	\$577,694
San Benito	\$57,579	\$37,472	\$14,623
San Bernardino	\$1,582,128	\$1,029,639	\$602,715
San Diego	\$5,551,233	\$3,612,707	\$2,114,756
San Francisco	\$1,840,753	\$1,197,950	\$1,051,859
San Joaquin	\$629,733	\$409,826	\$239,898
San Luis Obispo	\$563,536	\$366,745	\$143,120
San Mateo	\$931,762	\$606,385	\$591,595
Santa Barbara	\$964,851	\$627,919	\$367,562
Santa Clara	\$2,364,321	\$1,538,685	\$1,351,040
Santa Cruz	\$496,236	\$322,947	\$220,549
Shasta	\$248,904	\$161,985	\$63,214
Sierra	\$7,907	\$5,146	\$2,008
Siskiyou	\$62,644	\$40,768	\$15,909
Solano	\$427,585	\$278,270	\$122,167
Sonoma	\$869,732	\$566,016	\$386,547
Stanislaus	\$642,645	\$418,229	\$183,613
Sutter	\$154,371	\$100,464	\$39,205
Tehama	\$98,185	\$63,898	\$24,936
Trinity	\$34,096	\$22,189	\$8,659
Tulare	\$498,618	\$324,498	\$189,950
Tuolumne	\$105,910	\$68,925	\$26,898
Ventura	\$971,542	\$632,273	\$246,741
Yolo	\$520,056	\$338,449	\$132,078
Yuba	\$94,578	\$61,551	\$24,020

Methodology

The following is a description of the data sources and calculations used to complete the *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* analysis. This methodology is organized according to the data tables above.

Table 1

Column A: Average Monthly CalFresh Participation

Monthly CalFresh participation data were obtained from the California Department of Social Services' DFA 256¹ reports for January-December 2013. Monthly participation was averaged across the calendar year to account for any seasonal differences in CalFresh participation.

Columns B and C: Estimated Number of Income-Eligible Participants and Income-Eligible Non-Participants

CFPA's 2013 Program Access Index (PAI) analysis was used to identify the "estimated number of income-eligible individuals" and "estimated number of income-eligible non-participants." The PAI is a county-level estimate of CalFresh utilization among low-income individuals. The individuals deemed "income-eligible" in the PAI meet at least three CalFresh eligibility criteria: income below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold, no participation in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and no receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) if income is below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold.ⁱⁱ These individuals may or may not be fully eligible to receive CalFresh benefits.

CFPA's PAI methodology is detailed in the *Program Access Index: Measuring CalFresh Utilization by County* report.² The formula used to calculate a county's PAI is:

$$\text{PAI} = \frac{(\text{CalFresh Participants}) - (\text{Disaster CalFresh Program Participants})}{(\text{Individuals with Income} < 125\% \text{ of poverty}) - (\text{FDPIR Participants}) - (\text{SSI Recipients with Income} < 125\% \text{ of poverty})}$$

ⁱⁱ Due to limitations in data available from the US Census Bureau (American Community Survey), the income-eligible population is defined as those living below 125 percent of the federal poverty threshold, though CalFresh participants can have incomes up to 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Individuals participating in FDPIR and individuals receiving SSI are ineligible to receive CalFresh benefits.

In iterations of the *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* report published prior to 2009, the USDA-generated statewide participation rate for CalFresh was applied to all counties to estimate the number of eligible non-participants. However, CalFresh participation can vary widely at the county level. Therefore, the statewide participation rate may not reflect the reality of CalFresh participation in many counties. Unfortunately, USDA does not calculate county-level participation rates. The PAI serves as the basis of the county-level *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* analysis because, unlike the statewide participation rate, it helps describe county-by-county variation.

Table 2

Column A: Additional Federal Benefits Received Through CalFresh

To calculate the value of additional federal benefits that would be received through CalFresh if participation reached 100 percent of eligible individuals, it is necessary to estimate the average monthly CalFresh benefit for eligible individuals. The average benefit that current non-participants *would* receive may be significantly different than the average benefit that current participants *do* receive. To account for the potential discrepancy, this analysis uses a national estimate of the average monthly CalFresh/SNAP benefits for *eligible* households in the 2013 fiscal year. “Eligible households” may or may not actually participate in CalFresh/SNAP. The estimate (\$195)ⁱⁱⁱ, which was calculated by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., is lower than the USDA’s calculation of the actual, national average household benefit (\$257) received by CalFresh/SNAP participants for the fiscal year 2014.³

Note: previous iterations of the *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* analysis used a California-specific estimate of average monthly CalFresh benefits for *eligible* households. That state-specific estimate was not available for the 2013 fiscal year. The national estimate was used in its stead.

The average monthly benefit for eligible individuals was estimated from the average monthly benefit for eligible households using the following calculation:

$$\text{Estimated Household Benefit for Eligible Households} \div \text{Average Household Size} = \text{Estimated Monthly Benefit for Eligible Individuals}$$

Average household size is a county-specific statistic calculated with data from the 2013 CDSS DFA 256 reports⁴ using the following calculation:

$$\text{Total Individuals Receiving Federal Benefits from January through December}$$

ⁱⁱⁱ This estimate was calculated using the 2013 Baseline of the 2009 MATH SIPP+ model and provided directly to CFPA from Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

\div Total Number of Households Receiving Federal Benefits or Federal and State Benefits from January through December = Average Household Size

The value of “additional federal benefits received annually through CalFresh” if CalFresh reached 100 percent of income-eligible individuals was estimated with the following calculation:

Income-Eligible Individuals Not Receiving CalFresh Benefits x Average Monthly Benefit for Eligible Individuals x 12 = Additional Federal Benefits Received Annually through CalFresh with 100% Participation Among Income-Eligible Individuals

Column B: Resulting Increase in Economic Activity

According to USDA, every federal dollar spent on SNAP expenditures generates \$1.79 in economic activity.⁵ Applying this multiplier, the “resulting increase in annual economic activity” generated from the receipt of additional CalFresh benefits was estimated with the following formula:

Additional Federal Benefits Received Annually through CalFresh x \$1.79
= Increase in Economic Activity with 100% CalFresh Participation of Income- Eligible Individuals

The estimate of economic stimulus generated by SNAP expenditures is based on a national analysis that examined the impact of SNAP on Gross Domestic Product (a nationwide measure of economic activity). The estimate is applied at the state and local levels for this *Lost Dollars, Empty Plates* analysis because no state- or county-specific estimates are currently available.

Table 3

Columns A and B: Additional State Sales Tax Revenue

The California Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) reports that CalFresh benefits positively impact the state economy by freeing up household dollars for food and non-food purchases, 45 percent of which will constitute taxable purchases:⁶

Research shows that low-income individuals generally are not able to save money because their resources are spent on meeting their daily needs, such as shelter, food, and transportation. Therefore, for every dollar in food coupons that a low-income family receives, an additional dollar is available for the consumption of food or other items. Research done at the University of California and elsewhere indicates that individuals with income low enough to

be eligible for food stamps would, on average, spend about 45 percent of their income on goods for which they would pay sales tax. The state General Fund receives about 5 cents for every dollar that is spent on a taxable good. Local governments and special funds receive the remainder of the sales tax revenue (generally about 2.25 percent). Because additional food coupons would result in low-income families spending more of their other resources on taxable goods, the receipt of federal food coupons helps to generate revenue for the state and for local governments.

Updating the LAO premise to reflect current sales tax rates and uses, the state general fund receives nearly four percent (\$0.039375) of every dollar spent on taxable goods.⁷ Over two percent (\$0.025625) of each dollar spent on taxable goods is slated for non-general fund expenses that are under state jurisdiction.⁸ Applying the LAO premise, the following calculations were used to estimate additional state sales tax revenue that would be generated if CalFresh participation included 100 percent of income-eligible individuals:

Additional Federal Benefits Received Annually through CalFresh x 45% x
\$0.039375 Sales Tax = Additional State Sales Tax Revenue Generated
Annually for the General Fund

Additional Federal Benefits Received Annually through CalFresh x 45% x
\$0.025625 Sales Tax = Additional State Sales Tax Revenue Generated
Annually for Non-General Fund Expenditures under State Jurisdiction

Column C: Additional Sales Tax Revenue for Counties

Because California counties/cities receive one percent of state sales tax (\$0.01 of every dollar spent on taxable goods),⁹ the LAO premise can be applied to estimate the impact of CalFresh benefits on county budgets. To fully account for the impact of CalFresh benefits on local economies, county-specific sales tax rates must be included in any calculations. The following formula was used to estimate the “additional sales tax revenue for counties” that would be generated annually if CalFresh reached 100 percent of income-eligible individuals:

$$[(\text{County sales tax rate} - \text{state sales tax rate}) + .01] \times (\text{Additional Federal Benefits Received Annually through CalFresh} \times 45\%) = \text{Additional Sales Tax Revenue Generated Annually for the County}$$

County sales tax rates were taken from the California State Board of Equalization website.¹⁰ These rates do not include and city- or district-specific taxes within each county.

References

- ¹ California Department of Social Services, *DFA 256 - Food Stamp Program Participation and Benefit Issuance Report*, January-December 2013. Accessed July 8, 2015. Available at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/research/PG352.htm>
- ² Jared Call, Bruce Kariya and Tia Shimada, California Food Policy Advocates, *Program Access Index: Measuring CalFresh Utilization by County*. June 2015. Available at: <http://cfpa.net/pai-2015>
- ³ United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, *SNAP Average Monthly Benefit per Household (FY 2013)*, February 2014. Accessed July 8, 2015. Available at: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/19SNAPavg\\$HH.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/19SNAPavg$HH.htm)
- ⁴ California Department of Social Services, *DFA 256 - Food Stamp Program Participation and Benefit Issuance Report*, January-December 2013. Accessed July 8, 2015. Available at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/research/PG352.htm>
- ⁵ Kenneth Hanson, United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, Economic Research Report Number 103, *The Food Assistance National Input-Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP*, October 2010. Available at: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR103/ERR103.pdf>
- ⁶ Legislative Analyst's Office, *Analysis of the 2004-05 Budget Bill- Food Stamps Program*, February 2004. Available at: http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2004/health_ss/hss_20_foodstamps_anl04.htm
- ⁷ California State Board of Equalization, *California Sales and Use Tax Rates by County and City: Tax Rates as of July 1, 2015*. Accessed July 9, 2015. Available at: <https://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/boe95.pdf>
- ⁸ California State Board of Equalization, *Detailed Description of the Sales & Use Tax Rate*. Accessed July 8, 2015. Available at: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/news/sp111500att.htm>
- ⁹ California State Board of Equalization, *California Sales and Use Tax Rates by County and City: Tax Rates as of July 1, 2015*. Accessed July 9, 2015. Available at: <https://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/boe95.pdf>
- ¹⁰ California State Board of Equalization, *California Sales and Use Tax Rates by County and City: Tax Rates as of July 1, 2015*. Accessed July 9, 2015. Available at: <https://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/boe95.pdf>