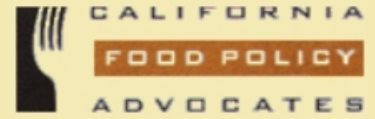


## Red Tape Reduction for Food Stamps and CalWORKs

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### » ISSUE

Advocates, administrators and applicants generally agree: red tape in California's Food Stamp Program prevents nutrition assistance from reaching families in need. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that 2 million Californians are eligible for Food Stamps but not receiving them. As a result, California passes up close to \$2 billion a year in federal food stamp benefits. With too many families in California dealing with poor nutrition, we can't afford to continue to turn away these resources. California must employ the successful simplification strategies used in other states to improve the program for our state's working poor.

### » NEED

Since the Food Stamp Program is a federal program, much of the complexity comes from federal law and regulation. However, the 2002 Farm Bill and recent actions by USDA have given states several options to simplify the program, including simplified reporting. Forty-six other states have moved to simplified reporting, which has been shown to reduce enormous paperwork burdens for recipients and administrators, reduce errors and increase participation.

Governor Schwarzenegger has himself proposed moving to simplified reporting. However, the Governor's current proposal would be confusing for recipients, would most likely increase paperwork burdens on the working poor and does not conform to federal food stamp law. California must have a semiannual reporting system that reduces administrative hassles, improves access and is readily understandable to participants.

### » REQUEST

CFPA requests the Legislature take the following action:

Action : <b>Simplify Reporting</b>	The Legislature shall require the state to move to a 6-month reporting system for food stamps and CalWORKs. This system shall follow federal food stamp law and not place undue burdens on participants between reports.
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### » HISTORY

In 2002, before the federal government allowed all states to use the six-month reporting option, California policymakers adopted a quarterly reporting system. This system remains in place, making California the only state using quarterly reporting. AB 3029 in 2006 would have established semi-annual but was held back in the Legislature, at the request of the Governor, with the expectation that outstanding issues would be resolved in 2007.

### » OUTCOMES

This action will reduce errors, improve participation and reduce administrative burdens.