

State Budget Request: Double the 'Fresh' in CalFresh



Opportunity

CalFresh helps over 4 million Californians put food on the table each year. Despite the reach of CalFresh, the federal benefit levels limit the ability to purchase healthy foods. **Supplemental nutrition incentive programs provide matching dollars tied to the purchase of California-grown vegetables and fruit.** These programs operate locally across the state to make purchasing California-grown fruits and vegetables more affordable for low-income Californians.



For these efforts to reach their full potential for people, farms, and the economy, we must integrate California fruit and vegetable benefits into the CalFresh EBT card, which is widely accepted by food retailers statewide. **We can advance our state systems to support food security, health and agriculture.**

Budget Action

Allocate \$9 million in General Funds for the California Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot, which would:

- ➔ Enable the CalFresh EBT system to allow CalFresh shoppers to receive a bonus matching benefit for eligible purchases of California-grown fruits and vegetables.
- ➔ Allow for seven community-based pilots to evaluate the efficacy of the EBT system to:
 - ✓ Accrue and disburse supplemental CalFresh benefits that incentivize the purchase of California-grown fruits and vegetables through a dollar-for-dollar match; and
 - ✓ Assess ease of use for CalFresh clients, administrators, retailers and farmers' markets.

Why This Matters



Over the past decade, initiatives in California and other states that provide supplemental nutrition incentive benefits to CalFresh/SNAP recipients have shown that **when low-income families have more money for fruits and vegetables, they buy and eat more fruits and vegetables.** For these programs to be more effective and widely available, California needs a system that is **simple to use, efficient to administer through CalFresh, and easily incorporated into existing retail operations.**

Fight Hunger & Support California Agriculture: Make Healthy Food More Affordable