

Item 8

(Information Item)

Update on SNAP and CalFresh access policy for college students

SUMMARY:

This item provides an update on the outreach being done around the California Student Aid Commission's (Commission) "Access to Nutrition Equals College Success: Making CalFresh Work for Students" workgroup report and related policy developments. The report, first released at the March 10, 2022, Commission meeting, was the culmination of a year-long examination and workgroup review of issues that impede student access to CalFresh benefits.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information item; no action is required.

BACKGROUND:

The Commission released the workgroup report on student access to food programs in March 2022, and the response from state and federal policymakers has been overwhelmingly positive.

Over the last nine months, Commission staff have undertaken a comprehensive outreach campaign around the report findings and recommendations, including the presentation to legislative Budget Committees, staff briefings, meetings with state and federal policymakers, webinars, and several conferences. This report continues to resonate with policymakers, education leaders, and other community partners in the California and the nation, who have encountered similar issues in how college students access the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California.

The receptivity to the report findings and recommendations has helped spur or support policy proposals, including several that were adopted through the 2022-23 State Budget or legislation. Additionally, during the outreach efforts around the report, the Biden Administration announced that they would be hosting the first White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health to take place in more than 50 years. As part of its conference held in September, the White House released a report (see attachment) outlining several policy goals around addressing food insecurity, including recommendations around college student access to SNAP that align closely with recommendations including in the Commissions' report.

California Student Aid Commission Legislative, Audit and Budget Committee

Staff anticipate continued interest in many of the state recommendations. At the federal level, Commission staff continue to advocate for policies to improve college student access to SNAP, including the drafting and submission of a memo based on a data sharing partnership between Compton College and Los Angeles County to facilitate student access and enrollment into CalFresh.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):

Alex Zucco, State and Federal Policy Manager
Policy and Public Affairs Division

Jake Brymner, Deputy Director
Policy and Public Affairs Division

ATTACHMENT(S):

Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health
Opt-In Box on the FAFSA to Help Students Access Other Public Benefits