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Proclamation Recognizing May 2021 as CalFresh Awareness and Action Month in the City and County of San Francisco

WHEREAS, this is a Resolution declaring May 2021 as CalFresh Awareness and Action Month in the City and County of San Francisco, and urging all community members to support efforts to increase awareness of, and participation in, the CalFresh program; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity in San Francisco has risen to historic proportions during the Pandemic, CalFresh has played a critical role in filling the gap; and

WHEREAS, from January 2019 to April 2021, the number of San Francisco households receiving CalFresh more than doubled, surging from 30,750 to 64,345 households; this is due both to the expansion of CalFresh eligibility starting in 2019 to allow persons on SSI to receive CalFresh, and due to the surge in applications during the early months of the COVID Pandemic. During that same period, calls from the public to our call center jumped from an average of 9,938 calls per month for active cases to 19,817 calls. Additionally, the number of calls regarding new CalFresh applications surged. Total calls regarding CalFresh grew by 99% in two years; and

WHEREAS, all households during the Public Health Emergency receive the maximum allotment for their household size. For example, households of one that received \$16 in February 2020 are now receiving \$234 monthly. This supplemental allotment is approved monthly by the State; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco has expanded the ways that applicants can apply for benefits, making it easier for those who are homebound or avoiding in-person interaction with the public. Through the telephonic signature waiver, the public can apply for CalFresh on the phone without having to come to our office in person or applying online; and

WHEREAS, during the Health Emergency, the federal government has allowed states to waive the requirement that clients participate in an interview as part of the CalFresh application process. In the past, a complete



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application could be denied for missing a required interview; that is not currently the case; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of many students who are struggling with food insecurity, the federal government instituted a waiver during the Pandemic easing the access of students to SNAP. As such, the nation has expanded student eligibility to include more who qualify via work study or using expected family contribution as an income indicator; and

WHEREAS, during the Pandemic, California has received a federal waiver to allow qualified vendors to accept payment via EBT; this is allowing clients to safely buy groceries online, without leaving their homes; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of staff continue to administer the CalFresh program remotely, answering phones and processing cases, despite the challenges of remote work, new business process requirements, technological challenges, and household disruptions; and

WHEREAS, our CalFresh lobbies remain open, primarily for those without access to a phone or internet; and

WHEREAS, in response to the homeless crisis during the Pandemic, the San Francisco Human Services Agency (“SFHSA”) has engaged in in-person CalFresh outreach to homeless persons temporarily staying in Shelter in Place hotels. From September 15, 2020 to April 16, 2021, four SFBN eligibility workers have been door knocking at the hotels, interviewing clients and assisting them in submitting applications. So far, they have submitted 1,107 CalFresh applications. Additionally, they have submitted 713 Medi-Cal and 572 CAAP applications. This is one of the most integrated outreach efforts ever embarked upon by the Division of Economic Support & Self Sufficiency (ESSS) Programs; and

WHEREAS, SFHSA continued its contract with 211 San Diego to expand CalFresh access and increase food security. When staff from the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program go to clients’ homes and identify them as candidates for CalFresh, they are now referring them to our contractor 211 San Diego. 211 San Diego then does phone outreach and assists the client in submitting CalFresh applications; and

WHEREAS, our key partner the San Francisco Marin Food Bank has launched an in-reach phone campaign through which they are reaching out to up to 40,000 households that use food pantries in the City to assist with CalFresh applications by phone; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco continues to promote Code for America’s www.GetCalFresh.org platform as a fast, secure way for people to apply and submit forms and documents online; and

WHEREAS, SNAP programs throughout the nation are currently waiving all work requirements due to the public health emergency and high unemployment; and

WHEREAS, Market Match allows a CalFresh household to extend the value of its benefits; farmers markets will double the value of purchases made using CalFresh EBT. This

promotes healthy food options, supports farmers and extends the clients' CalFresh budget;
and

WHEREAS, San Francisco continues to offer a Restaurant Meals Program, allowing homeless, seniors and the federally disabled to use their CalFresh allotment to pay for meals in designated restaurants. This increases the access to hot meals for those without easy access to kitchens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Human Services Commission proclaims May 2021 to be CalFresh Awareness and Action Month, and urge all community members to support efforts to increase awareness of and participation in the CalFresh program.

Scott Kahn
President, Human Services Commission

Date