



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: January 27, 2009

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: HEALTHY OPPORTUNITIES DURING AN UNHEALTHY ECONOMY
(DISTRICTS: ALL)

SUMMARY:

Overview

While we have made many changes to improve access to food stamps in recent years, these difficult economic times require that we do even more. Many people who have paid taxes and worked hard now need a stop-gap measure to ensure that the basic needs of their families are met. One necessity that is fundamental is access to healthy food.

In the County's role as the administrator of food assistance programs, we have the opportunity to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of distributing this vital resource. Doing more with less is part of the county business model, and during times of economic crisis this becomes even more crucial.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR ROBERTS AND SUPERVISOR HORN

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to report back in 90 days with the following:

- a.) program and policy recommendations to simplify the food stamp program eligibility process while maintaining program integrity and identify potential legislative roadblocks to these proposed recommendations and
- b.) potential funding and program opportunities in the Federal Farm Bill that would establish an incentive program for food stamp recipients to purchase fruits and vegetables with an emphasis on buying locally grown produce at farmers' markets, and provide information on the County's possible role in these programs.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact related to this action.

Business Impact Statement

N/A

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Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

The food challenges that San Diego families are facing are evidenced by recent reports from the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) citing a considerable spike in applications for food assistance at our Family Resource Centers. Acknowledging the County's investment over the past few years to improve access to programs, such as food stamps, through business process re-engineering and better collaboration with community stakeholders, we hope that today's recommendations will further build on these successes.

Recently, the HHSA facilitated a comprehensive re-engineering of the eligibility operations of self-sufficiency programs. By incorporating efficiencies in the eligibility process, such as document imaging and a customer contact center, it is expected that the number of visits that clients have to make to our Family Resources Centers will be reduced. All of this has been achieved while placing a high priority on maintaining and improving program integrity. Over the past decade, our Board has implemented several practices that have served as fraud protection, such as face-to-face interviews, but are now outdated due to the new sophisticated California Welfare Information Network, commonly referred to as CalWIN. This computer database is an automated eligibility system used by frontline county staff to determine eligibility for a range of programs and to manage caseloads.

Now that the HHSA has begun implementing improvements to the operational side, we are asking the Board to consider policy changes that will further assist the HHSA in processing the tidal wave of applicants that have resulted from the recent economic downturn. As the number of families needing assistance increases, so do wait times and case loads. One such policy that should be examined is possibly changing the re-determination period from a quarterly to a biannual basis. By making this change, the work load of eligibility workers would be lightened and therefore could result in cost savings for the County.

Often the price of healthy foods is higher than that of high fat, processed foods. In an effort to address this barrier and stimulate the local economy, we are asking for your support to research and monitor potential funding and program opportunities in the Federal Farm Bill that would establish a program for food stamp recipients to purchase fresh produce, with an emphasis on produce that is locally grown, at farmers' markets, and provide information on the County's possible role in these efforts. This effort would be a win-win for the region; bringing in federal dollars to our local farmers while providing our families with access to healthy foods.

We urge your support of our recommendations to both conduct a review of policies that are time consuming, as well as research the potential to utilize federal dollars to establish an incentive program that will support local farmers and increase access to healthy foods for food stamp recipients.

Linkage to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan

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N/A

Respectfully submitted,

RON ROBERTS
Supervisor, Fourth District

BILL HORN
Supervisor, Fifth District

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(DISTRICT: ALL)

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s): N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: : District 4 and District 5

CONTACT PERSON(S):

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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET
(continued)

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

[Click **here** and type action(s), or type N/A if not applicable]

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

[Click **here** and type applicable policies, or type N/A if not applicable]

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

[Click **here** and type required statement(s), or type N/A if not applicable]

CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):

[Click **here** and type numbers, or type N/A if not applicable]

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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT: [Click here and type]

PROGRAM: [Click here and type]

PROPOSAL: [Click here and type]

	FUTURE YEARS ESTIMATED BUDGET OF PROPOSAL IF ADOPTED				
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
	Budgeted Amount For Proposal	Proposed Change in Budgeted Amount	Proposed Revised Current Year Budget (a+b)	1st Subsequent Year	2nd Subsequent Year
Direct Cost					
Revenue/Other Offset					
NET GENERAL FUND COST					
Staff Years					

Sources of Revenue/Other Offset for Proposed Change and Subsequent Years:

Space-Related Impacts: Will this proposal result in any additional space requirements? Yes N/A

Support/Other Departmental Impacts: Yes N/A

Remarks: Yes N/A