



April 21, 2016

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee 3
on Health and Human Services
State Capitol, Room 4164
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tony Thurmond, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
on Health and Human Services
State Capitol, Room 5150
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: 2016–17 Budget Proposal for CalFresh

Dear Senator Mitchell and Assemblymember Thurmond:

First 5 California supports the Governor's 2016–17 budget proposal that includes \$804,000 (\$261,000 General Fund) and five new positions for the Department of Social Services (DSS) with the goal of enrolling an additional 400,000 children in the CalFresh program over the next two years. To reach that goal, DSS would provide technical assistance and training to the 19 largest counties for enrolling and retaining families in the CalFresh program, coordinate with the Department of Public Health to enroll more children and families transitioning off of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, and continue efforts to improve dual enrollment between Medi-Cal and CalFresh.

First 5 California's vision is to ensure California's children receive the best possible start in life and thrive. In that regard, First 5 California addresses the important issue of child health by promoting parents' knowledge about healthy foods, nutrition, and physical activity. Childhood nutrition has a profound impact on growing children's bodies and minds, and access to healthy food is critical to young children's health and well-being.

Over 2 million children in California live in low-income families and are in danger of experiencing hunger. California is home to more children living in poverty than any other state in the country, and many California families experience a lack of food and hunger. Even a single incidence of hunger can negatively impact a child's health, development, and future academic success. Children who suffer from poverty and hunger are sick more often and are more likely to be hospitalized. Infants and toddlers who do not have enough food are at risk for developmental delays, and the stress of a family that does not have enough food can negatively impact their brain development and cognitive growth.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, approximately 81 percent of households applying for CalFresh have children. If a household is certified for CalFresh, any child under age five in the household is income-eligible for the WIC Program.

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First 5 California applauds the Administration for recognizing the importance of increasing access and participation in the CalFresh program. To the extent that it supports child health and well-being by increasing families' access to existing child nutrition programs, the Governor's proposed budget furthers the goals of First 5 California's Children's State Policy Agenda.

If you have questions regarding First 5 California¹ First 5 California's position on the budget proposal for CalFresh, please contact Erin Gabel, Deputy Director of External and Governmental Affairs, at egabel@ccfc.ca.gov or (916) 263-1093.

Sincerely,



Camille Maben
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Mark Leno, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Members of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3 on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Philip Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Members of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health and Human Services
Michelle Baass, Consultant
Andrea Margolis, Consultant
George Halvorson, Chair, First 5 California
Joyce Iseri, Vice Chair, First 5 California
Conway Collis, Commissioner, First 5 California
Muntu Davis, Commissioner, First 5 California
Shana Hazan, Commissioner, First 5 California
Lupe Jaime, Commissioner, First 5 California
Erin Pak, Commissioner, First 5 California
Jim Suennen, Ex-Officio Member Designee, First 5 California

¹ First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, which added a tax on tobacco products to fund education, health, childcare, and other services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. Its programs and resources are designed to educate teachers, parents, grandparents, and caregivers about the critical role they play during a child's first five years – with the overarching goal of helping more California kids grow up healthy and ready to succeed in school and in life.