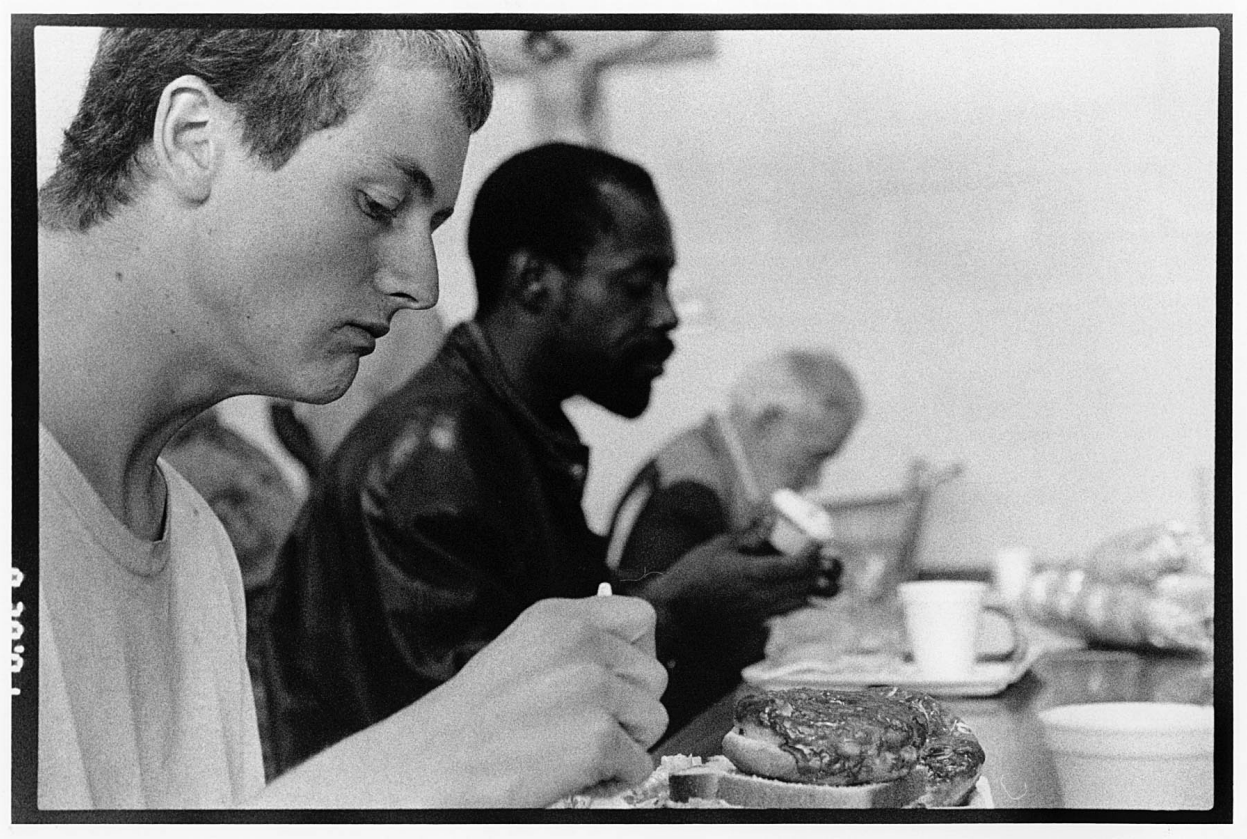

Realignment: the policy opportunity for a CalFresh pre-enrollment program

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Introduction 5

I. The need for a CalFresh pre-enrollment program 6
- Typical barriers to acquiring CalFresh 6
- How CalFresh pre-enrollment benefits individuals and counties 8

II. Policy opportunities and challenges within Realignment 9

III. Applicable California laws as models 10
- AB 720 (Skinner): Medi-Cal Pre-enrollment Program 10
- AB 2308 (Stone): Mandatory state ID card program 12

IV. Case studies: SNAP pre-enrollment in other states 13
- Florida 13
- Montana 14
- New York 14
- South Dakota 15
- Vermont 15
- California's unique circumstances and strengths 16

V. Policy recommendations for implementing CalFresh pre-enrollment 16
- Step 1: Convene key stakeholders in a working group to design program 16
- Step 2: Create a MOU with CDCR for pre-enrolling in state prisons 17
- Step 3: Notify and recruit interested counties for pre-enrolling in county jails 18
- Step 4: Apply for a federal waiver 18
- Step 5: Educate counties on best practices 19
- Conclusion 19

References 20

Appendix A: Federal Waivers 22

Appendix B: Medi-Cal pre-enrollment survey and responses 37

Appendix C: Interviewee list 51

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Executive Summary

California's prison overcrowding resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court intervening and upholding a lower court's mandate for an immediate policy solution. The response from Governor Jerry Brown and the California State Legislature was to pass Assembly Bill (AB) 109 to release a large number of individuals immediately, realign state prison populations to be housed in local county jails and redirect whole classes of convictions to be managed at the local level. Now, at all levels of government, the conversation is turning to how policies can help reduce recidivism and re-integrate formerly incarcerated individuals into society. Emerging as a key strategy to achieve these goals is the establishment of pre-enrollment programs for social assistance to ease the rocky transition period from institutionalization back into community. In this report, I look specifically at one key California safety-net program for which pre-enrollment hasn't been established: CalFresh.

CalFresh is California's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the state's first line of defense against hunger for people with low or no incomes. CalFresh benefits are federally funded, with federal, state and county governments sharing the administrative costs. The maximum monthly allotment in FY 2016 is $194 for a single person and eligibility for CalFresh may also entitle a person to participation in the CalFresh Employment and Training Program. These benefits are distributed electronically through an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card for recipients determined eligible by a county Human Services Agency. The rules are established in federal and state statute and guidance, but counties have some flexibility in how they administer those rules. However, a CalFresh pre-enrollment program would require the state to first seek a federal waiver before counties could instate it.

In this report, I ask if and how a CalFresh pre-enrollment program could be implemented in California, based on reviewing existing legislation as well as current models in other states. As a part of my work, I interviewed various stakeholders within California to ascertain what impact this program could have.

My report arrives at the following conclusions:

- A CalFresh pre-enrollment program for the re-entering population is feasible and needed due to the special barriers that formerly incarcerated people face in completing the application process that otherwise delays them from receiving benefits.
- The groundwork for this pre-enrollment program, in terms of inter-agency collaboration, has already been laid through innovative legislation, such as AB 720 (Skinner), a Medi-Cal pre-enrollment program and AB 2308 (Stone), a mandatory ID program.
- Giving counties the option to implement their own processes for CalFresh pre-enrollment allows for county individuation and innovation within California's decentralized administration of the program.

Along with these key findings, I also provide a roadmap for how this can be accomplished:

1. Begin round-table discussions key stakeholders in the appropriate administrative departments on how to foster the state-to-county collaboration necessary to make this program effective *prior* to applying for a federal waiver.
2. Create the requisite memoranda of understanding with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to pre-enroll in state prisons. Their Transitional Case Management Program already has protocols established with counties for Medi-Cal pre-enrollment that could easily be transferred to CalFresh pre-enrollment.
3. Identify and recruit interested counties who would want to pre-enroll in county jails, making this an optional and voluntary program similar to how AB 720 legislated Medi-Cal pre-enrollment in county jails to be discretionary.
4. Apply for the federal waiver to authorize California to use its own pre-enrollment program.
5. Educate counties through webinars and other appropriate venues about best practices learned from other states and highlighting models being pursued within the state.

Introduction

Since the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the ruling in *Brown v. Plata* to end prison overcrowding, California has enacted numerous policies that has fundamentally altered California's state prison system and elevated the role of local county governments in re-entry efforts for people being released back into the community after serving their time. Through Assembly Bill (AB) 109, known as Realignment, increased responsibility was handed to counties to manage a larger portion of the criminal justice system. There have been several initiatives to streamline and innovate social assistance programs to better serve this high-risk, high-need population, including pre-enrollment programs. In my report, I will examine how and whether California could implement a CalFresh pre-enrollment program in state prisons and county jails.

CalFresh is California's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Anyone who meets the eligibility requirements is entitled to these federally funded benefits. The cost of administering the program is split between the federal, state and county government. For a single individual, they can receive up to the maximum monthly amount of $194 and also participate in the CalFresh Employment and Training program which offers reimbursements for allowable job-training or work preparedness activities for people who are CalFresh recipients. County Human Service Agencies distributes these benefits through an electronic benefits card (EBT). California's CalFresh program is county administered, making it one of five states that have a decentralized administration of SNAP. This allows counties to have some flexibility in how they implement rules established by the USDA and state statutes. However, in order for counties to do a CalFresh pre-enrollment program, the state of California would need to apply to the USDA for a waiver.

Since few individuals leaving prison or jail have a job awaiting them immediately upon release, they would qualify for CalFresh due to their lack of income. The vast majority (80%) of incarcerated individuals are low-income (Eisen, 2014). However, despite their eligibility, formerly incarcerated individuals face particular barriers in acquiring CalFresh in the current application process that can cause them to be delayed, often for weeks, in receiving benefits at a critical time in their post-release. National studies have found that the rates that people re-offend are the highest in the first weeks and months after release (Solomon et al., 2008). This holds true in California as well, where the majority of individuals released from prison who recidivate will do so within the first six months post-release (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2015). A CalFresh pre-enrollment program would eliminate these burdens and delays while providing immediate support to formerly incarcerated individuals during this crucial transition period.

In section one, I will examine the specific barriers people re-entering society face in applying for CalFresh and the benefits that a pre-enrollment program offers to both these individuals and county government. Section two describes how Realignment impacts the implementation of a CalFresh pre-enrollment program. In section three, I describe two recently enacted Californian pre-release programs as possible templates for how a CalFresh pre-enrollment program could be set up while section four shows existing SNAP pre-enrollment programs operating in other states. Section five concludes this report with recommendations that a CalFresh pre-enrollment program be implemented with a roadmap for how to do so.

I. The need for a CalFresh pre-enrollment program

Typical barriers to acquiring CalFresh

Every year, the USDA ranks states on how many eligible households they enroll and retain their participation in food stamps. Historically, California has had such poor participation rates that it has been at the bottom of the rankings. According to USDA's latest estimates from 2013, California's participation rate came in at 47th, which is a slight improvement from previous years when it was second to last in the country (Cunnyngham, 2016). Part of the reason California's rate is so low is that there are several barriers to acquiring CalFresh for all applicants that pose even more challenges to people re-entering society to overcome. I will highlight these barriers in the following subsections as well as how a pre-enrollment program would remove them.

Expedited Services

Many people leaving prison or jail would appear to be eligible for expedited services, where their application is required by law to be processed in 3 days, because they have no income or resources (although the $200 in gate money some people receive when leaving prison would automatically disqualify them from expedited services). For those who are eligible, the argument could be made that being eligible for expedited services removes the need for pre-enrollment prior to release as they can receive these benefits in a relatively short period of time once they are out.

However, this argument has several flaws. First, it ignores the fact that humans need to eat and that three days of no food is unhealthy and inhumane. Even if a person lived in communities where there are soup kitchens, most soup kitchens only serve one meal a day and rarely serve seven days a week. Second, it fails to take into account that formerly incarcerated people face many additional hurdles to getting the card even if it is expedited. For instance, if they do not have an address where it is to be mailed, then they will need to have a phone that can be called to notify when their card has been processed and is waiting to be picked up. Otherwise, they will have to return periodically to the office, and without the resources to do so. Considering that many people leaving prison are trying to secure jobs and housing as well as meet the requirements of supervised release, this may make it hard for them to make several trips to their local county office. Another complication is transportation and whether they face travel restrictions in general.

Additionally, the documentation that applicants need to provide also factors into how fast they can get an EBT card. While many verification requirements are waived for expedited services, not all are. The following section goes into more depth about common obstacles in the verification process and how they specifically impact people leaving prison.

> "Without the CalFresh, my transition would have been hard. I had it for 6 months. Getting it wasn't easy. A pre-enrollment program would have helped because when you don't have it, you spend a week or two trying to get your benefits and all this extra cash to go [back and forth] to the office to give them paperwork. It's a lot of paperwork you have to fill out. I didn't have all mine. I had to send for my birth certificate."
>
> A. Smith, formerly incarcerated

Documentation and verification

In the application process, individuals must provide at the very least the following information for county workers to determine their eligibility: proof of citizenship; proof of income; proof of residency; social security number; proof of disability (if applicable), and receipts of other kinds of expenses, such as Medi-Cal bills, childcare and/or child support.

Of all the documentation, the one form of verification required for expedited processing is identity. While counties are not supposed to require a driver's license or other form of government identification, they often do, and this is often a significant barrier for people that comprise the re-entry population. For an expedited services application, they can accept a self-signed affidavit as a holdover until an individual acquires one of the above documents and provides it the county within the next 45 days. If the individual does not provide it, then the county must terminate their case and cut off their benefits.

For the other forms of documentation, an individual can get some waived or sign an affidavit instead; however, not providing the requisite verification is the most common reason applications are denied benefits even when they are eligible. It is for this reason that many counties have established outreach partnership with local community organizations, most notably Food Banks, to guide applicants through the process to avoid this typical hang-up.

How this affects people leaving prison:

The verification process poses even greater challenges to people leaving prison, as often they exit with very little self-identification and may not have any personal possessions, including important documents, easily retrievable or even remaining from their life before incarceration. Depending on the length of time people are in prison, whatever state-issued ID they may have could be expired by the time they get out. For this reason, in 2014 Assemblymember Stone passed, and Governor Brown signed, AB 2308 to give people leaving prison a state-issued ID through working with DMV. Despite it being mandated, it is not well utilized, the reasons for which will be more fully explored in section three.

> I couldn't get CalFresh for several months. I didn't have an ID or social security card. I'm lucky that I had other people supporting me, but I know many people who don't have that support. I had been serving life. Now I'm employed and helping others avoid the criminal justice system.
>
> Malachi Scott

While expedited services for an emergency application will waive some documentation requirements, people leaving prison will still need to provide proof of identity and citizenship. If they cannot get verification within a certain time period, then they can lose their benefits. If a person re-entering their community does not qualify for expedited services, then they do not get many of these documentation requirements waived. If they are rejoining relatives who already have CalFresh for their household, then they can be added to that existing case, but they would still need to provide some portion of

documentation for county workers to determine how much more CalFresh benefits to add to that household's EBT Card. In all of these situations, any delay of providing verification releases a county's mandate to process the application in 30-days and gives them the ability to deny the case.

How CalFresh pre-enrollment benefits individuals and counties

Pre-enrollment removes barriers for formerly incarcerated individuals

Pre-Enrollment can save people leaving prison from experiencing these common barriers, while also saving the county the hassle and cost of processing needlessly denied applications. Within state prisons, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has requisite identification filed for incarcerated individuals. They also typically know where individuals will be released, including their specific living address, as this is important information for their probation/parole officers. They can provide this information to their counterparts at the county Human Services Agencies, which would also meet many of the verification requirements. Within county jails, they also have the same relevant information to share.

Pre-enrollment allows counties to proactively manage caseloads

Pre-enrollment also puts less of a strain on county resources because they will not have to juggle more expedited applications if they are instead allowed to process them weeks in advance. As expedited applications have a much more strict timeline upon which counties are evaluated, having the option to process applications ahead of time would help to improve their performance standards, which the USDA monitors. Furthermore, delays in processing applications costs county Human Services Agencies not only in terms of additional staff time to follow proper notification standards, but it also increases the likelihood of hunger among a group of individuals who are particularly vulnerable. While the county Human Services Agencies would still be required by law to conduct an eligibility interview with applicants awaiting their release, in all cases, this could be accomplished over the phone or in-person at the correctional facilities.

Pre-enrollment offers another tool for reducing recidivism

With federally funded benefits, a CalFresh pre-enrollment program is one of the few resources the state and counties can offer upon release to all eligible individuals during their first few months, which are the most critical period for recidivism. A Congressional Research Services report did a survey of recidivism programs across the country and found that services that began within the correctional institutions and continued afterwards provided a continuity of care that could help to lower recidivism (James, 2015). A study on reoffending patterns among women found that state-sponsored support programs, especially services related to job training, health, education and housing that address short-term economic needs, reduce the odds of recidivism by 83% (Holtfreter et al., 2004). Research has found that re-entry programs only have to decrease recidivism rates by 2 percentage points to be cost-effective when comparing them with the cost of processing an individual through the criminal justice system and the cost to the victims (Roman & Chalfin, 2006).

In this light, a CalFresh pre-enrollment program could be an incredibly cost-effective investment

for reducing recidivism. Consider the following: a single CalFresh application typically costs $155 to process in terms of labor.[1] However, the federal government reimburses 50% of these administrative costs, with the state and county sharing the remaining $77.5 at 35% and 15% respectively (Senate Appropriations Committee, 2014). In contrast, the annual cost of prisons in California is calculated to be approximately $47,000 per inmate, which equates to a cost of almost $130 per day (California Legislative Analyst's Office, n.d.; Henrichson & Delaney, 2012). A comparison of eight California counties' corrections budgets found that in 2012, the average cost per average daily jail population (excluding jail health costs) to be around $50,000, a rate of $137 per day (Stevenson et al., 2013).[2] Enrolling someone into CalFresh costs nearly the same as one day spent back in jail or prison. With access to CalFresh, participants also can utilize the CalFresh Employment and Training program, which can be an additional source of support for formerly incarcerated individuals.

The need for and benefits of a CalFresh pre-enrollment program cannot be understated. While far from a representative sampling, I interviewed seven people who had been released from state prison over the past 11 years to get the perspective of formerly incarcerated individuals on the value of such a program. All of them strongly endorsed it. The question of how to implement CalFresh pre-enrollment will take up the remainder of this paper. The next section examines how Realignment impacts the design of a potential CalFresh pre-enrollment program.

II. Policy opportunities and challenges within Realignment

Realignment drastically changed California's criminal justice system, becoming the impetus for policy changes at all levels of government. Prior to Realignment, California had the highest recidivism rate in the country at 66% (Pew Center on the States, 2011), which also contributed to its prison overcrowding. By shifting the responsibility to county governments to house individuals with low-level offenses (non-serious, nonviolent and non-sexual felonies and misdemeanors) and to also supervise them upon release through county probation departments, Governor Brown argued that more local control would force counties, which would now share more of the cost burdens, to change the ways in which they made their local decisions. Under Realignment, state parole violators would instead be sent to county jail. In addition, the passage of Proposition 47, which reclassified certain felonies as misdemeanors, also significantly altered California's criminal justice system through even further lowering both state prison and county jail populations.

Thus, the role of county government in the criminal justice system has radically changed in the past few years. Pre-Realignment, jails were typically used to hold individuals either who could not pay their bail bonds and were awaiting trial or for temporary holding until they were placed at a state facility. Now, 36% of the individuals in county jails are serving out sentences, including those who have violated the terms of their state parole (Board of State and Community Corrections, 2016). Additionally, Realignment shifted the after-prison supervision of about

[1] I calculated this using aggregate data given in the 2014 Senate Appropriations Committee's Fiscal Summary of Senator Hancock's SB 1029, a suspended bill that would have removed the lifetime drug felony ban for CalFresh. In its analysis, it assumed an associative administrative cost of $2.1 million for its estimation of 13,500 new cases.

[2] The counties studied were Alameda, Fresno, L.A., Sacramento, San Diego, S.F., San Mateo, and Santa Clara.

50,000 people from state parole agents to county probation departments (Misczynski, 2012), halving the state parole population as a result. With this increased responsibility of housing and supervision, counties are now facing demands for more robust infrastructure for re-entry services as a result.

We have, in effect, two different populations to provide pre-enrollment: individuals returning home from longer sentences served in state prisons and individuals being released from county jails at various stages in the criminal justice process. Typically, California has been releasing roughly 50,000 individuals a year from state prisons. At the county jail level now, they house on average 72,000 people daily, but release individuals at a much more rapid rate. For sentenced individuals in county jail, their average length of stay is 63 days; while for non-sentenced individuals, their average jail time is 14 days (Board of State and Community Corrections, 2016). In structuring a CalFresh pre-enrollment program, both the state and counties will need to engage in interagency cooperation while also addressing challenges unique to their institutions. In the upcoming two sections, I will look at existing pre-release programs, both within California and in other states, as models for how a CalFresh pre-enrollment program could be structured.

III. Applicable California laws as models

Two laws that were recently passed in California's State Legislature specifically authorize pre-release services to people re-entering society around their basic needs of health insurance and identification. I collected information about both laws in terms of their structure and utilization as templates for a possible CalFresh pre-enrollment program.

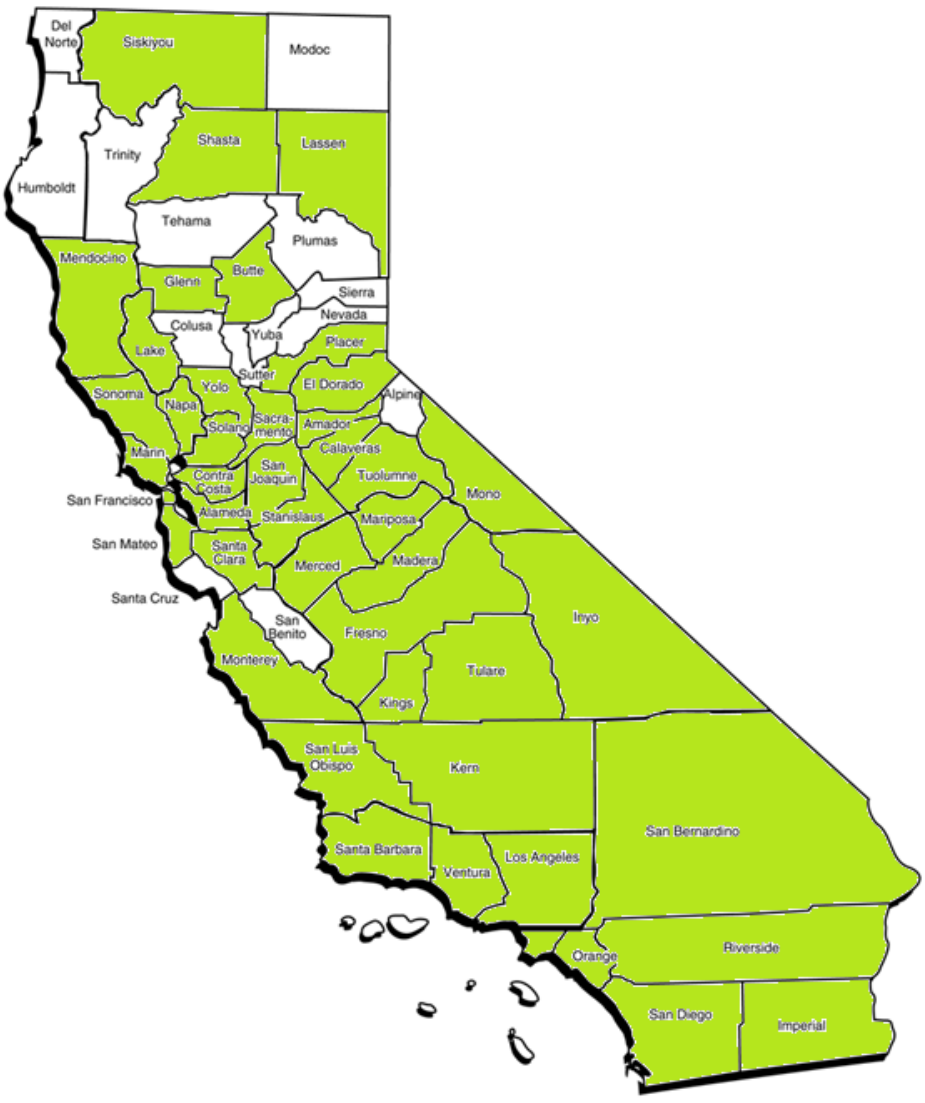
AB 720 (Skinner): Medi-Cal Pre-enrollment Program

Assemblymember Nancy Skinner authored AB 720, which was the bill passed and signed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2013 that gives counties the option of designing their own Medi-Cal pre-enrollment program for people leaving prison. It also allows county jails to put people in a pending status if they had an active case before incarceration, so that they could easily be re-instated once they were released. As AB 720 is not a mandate, the California Department of Health Care Services does not enforce these new implementations options. AB 720 specifically spelled out that the Sheriff's Department would not be the designated entity to assist with submitting an application, unless they agreed to do so. It also allows a community-based organization to be the designated entity with the Sheriff's office having the ability to veto it.

The costs of implementing AB 720, according to the Senate Appropriations Committee analysis, were undetermined, but estimated to be potentially in the low hundreds of millions. The bill determined that the Affordable Care Act could absorb some of these costs due to its expanded coverage funding as well as existing funding. At the same time, the state would still absorb Medi-Cal expenses from the increased enrollment of formerly incarcerated individuals and counties would have to pay for any increased staffing it would require. In its analysis, they estimated that if a pre-release program were to be created and 25% of all eligible inmates applied, that total additional Medi-Cal costs would be about $150 million per year (Senate Rules Committee, 2013).

Since its passage three years ago, counties have had time to implement a program. As a part of my research, I investigated how many out of the 58 counties in the state actually were implementing a program. I sent a short 5-question survey to all county Human Services Agency Directors inquiring about their participation (see Appendix B for the survey as well as individual county responses). A total of 42 counties said they had pre-enrollment programs. I also learned of the participation of an additional five counties through reading two reports published by the Californians for Safety and Justice on this same issue, increasing the participation rate to 81% of all counties.

My survey found that counties, both rural and urban, have created their own pre-enrollment procedures. To the right is a map showing confirmed participating counties. This distribution of participation matters because counties' Medi-Cal caseloads are often similar in numbers to their CalFresh caseloads; in fact, CalFresh caseloads tend to be higher. There are ten counties in the state that account for 70% of total CalFresh cases.[3] Unsurprisingly, they are also the counties with the largest populations of Californian residents. This survey had all 10 counties respond indicating they participate in Medi-Cal pre-enrollment. Combined with the remaining participating counties, my survey shows that these 47 counties process more than 98% of all CalFresh applications in the state.



Additionally, the survey responses themselves show how the law, as it is written, has provided counties with full flexibility and control over their own programs. This is reflected

[3] They are (in order of size): L.A., San Bernardino, San Diego, Riverside, Orange, Sacramento, Fresno, Alameda, Kern and Santa Clara.

in the diversity of pre-enrollment programs they've designed (see Appendix B for all county responses on their Medi-Cal pre-enrollment program descriptions). Here is one example:

> We do outreach for pre-enrollment for Medi-Cal in the jail 45 days prior to their release only with giving them an application for CalFresh that they can submit upon release. We go to the Day Reporting Center and offer support for those who have already been released in accessing additional assistance. We also go to the state prison and the federal prison and do educational outreach for both Medi-Cal/ACA and other assistance that they may be eligible to when they are released.
>
> Lassen County

While I was unable to evaluate the reach of AB 720 through inquiring about enrollment numbers, my survey has established AB 720 has been successful in that, despite being optional, counties have taken the initiative to implement Medi-Cal pre-enrollment procedures for county jails.

AB 2308 (Stone): Mandatory state ID card program

Assemblymember Stone authored AB 2308, which passed in 2014 and mandated the CDCR to work with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to issue ID cards to eligible individuals leaving state prison. This was to address the very real need of many formerly incarcerated individuals who had no identifying documents or whose personal documents were expired, thereby limiting their ability to re-integrate into society. Whether it is opening up a bank account, applying for a job or getting public assistance, an ID card was critical to their re-entry.

The program was initially instituted at 13 of CDCR's re-entry hubs, a set of prisons the CDCR specifically designated for preparing individuals for re-integration, as a part of a November 2013 agreement before the passage of AB 2308. At the time, the interagency agreement allowed for up to 12,000 ID cards annually with a maximum of 1,000 cards processed each month. Individuals could acquire an ID for a reduced fee of $8 and senior ID cards were free. With Governor Brown signing AB 2308 in September 2014, the Cal-ID program became mandatory for all inmates who met the following criteria:

- Be within 120-210 days of release;
- Have no active felony hold, warrant or detainer that may result in returning to prison;
- Not have an active ICE hold, which would result in deportation;
- Provide a valid Social Security number;
- Have been issued an ID card from DMV in the previous 10 years; and
- Provide a physical address, including zipcode.

Between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, more than 4,800 applications were sent to the DMV for processing. The DMV approved approximately 4,200 applications and sent these cards to their

respective correctional facilities to be given to individuals prior to their release. The average eligibility rate for a Cal-ID card during this period was 88%. However, in terms of reach within state prison, out of the 40,375 individuals released that year, the ID program only touched 12% of the population. I was unable to obtain data to see if the mandatory expansion significantly increased these numbers.

As a part of implementing AB 2308, CDCR entered into a new contract on July 1, 2015, to expand the program to all 35 CDCR institutions. In the fiscal analysis of the bill, it was estimated an additional 21 CDCR staff would need to be hired to provide this program at the remaining 22 institutions as well as 5 additional positions at the DMV, resulting in ongoing additional cost of $2.2 million to the State's General Fund to sustain this program (Senate Appropriations Committee, 2014). They also estimated an additional cost of $1.8 million depending on how "broadly" the program was administered to incarcerated individuals. Having this ID would certainly help formerly incarcerated individuals get past one major hurdle in acquiring CalFresh, that is verifying their identity, but it would not necessarily speed up the process in it of itself.

IV. Case studies: SNAP pre-enrollment in other states

As a part of my research, I investigated whether other states were operating their own pre-enrollment program for food stamps. According to the USDA's own waiver database, there are only four states currently operating a SNAP pre-enrollment program. I was also able to identify one state that did a pilot program before discontinuing it. The following sections highlight the information I gleaned from interviews with state officials in their equivalent department to the California Department of Social Services. In Appendix A, I have included their waivers submitted to USDA.

Florida

Florida initiated a pilot SNAP pre-enrollment program with a specific correctional facility for a 9-month period between April 2012 and January 2013. It involved the coordination of two different departments: the Economic Self-Sufficiency Division within the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Florida Department of Corrections (DOC). They chose the Baker Correctional facility in North Florida because it was already designed to aid individuals for re-entering society through a number of different programs. With a maximum population of 1,165 adult males, they were all being prepared for work release and could apply to all the federal aid programs, including SNAP, through a computer that took them to an online application.

Once their application was received by the Economic Self-Sufficiency Division, it would be given a unique partner identification number for the eligibility workers to track. DOC re-entry liaisons for the Baker Correctional facility then coordinated with DCF staff assigned to conduct the eligibility interviews, which were done via phone. In rare cases where an individual indicated they'd be joining a family (99.9% of their applications applied as separate, single households), then their application was pended until they provided information about these family members. Otherwise, their eligibility was determined and their benefits would not be started until the day

they were actually released from the facility. Their release date was considered the actual date of application, as part of Florida's federal waiver procedures. On their day of release, the appropriate DCF eligibility workers would issue their card and mail it out to the address provided on the application.

During the pilot, they had a monthly average of 50 applications received. Of those applications, 95% were approved, with less than 3% denied and the remaining 2% not being eligible due to residency requirements.

At the conclusion of the pilot project, Florida decided to end the pilot, based on the determination that individuals who re-entered society without this program and applied the traditional way were being processed within the federally mandated time standards. Note that Florida's timeline for expedited services is seven days, not the three days required under California law.

Montana

Montana acquired a waiver in 2015 to operate a SNAP pre-enrollment program. However, upon contacting Montana's Human & Community Services Division, I learned that they haven't implemented a program yet. The implementation in Montana should continue to be monitored for possible learning opportunities.

New York

New York City operates a SNAP pre-enrollment program for people being released from Riker's Island, which is the city's main jail complex. It is a short-term facility, with most people serving sentences for less than a year. It also holds a large portion of people awaiting trail. The average daily population is 9,000 inmates, but Riker's Island correctional staff manages over 100,000 admissions a year. A local community-based organization (CBO) and its funder, a foundation, work closely with New York City's Department of Corrections (DOC) and Human Resources Administration (HRA) to implement the program. Their pre-enrollment program has existed for many years, the last known USDA waiver dating back from 2007.

Currently this pre-enrollment program operates in two facilities on Riker's Island. The CBO does outreach among the housing units to identify individuals interested in applying to SNAP. As HRA works with multiple organizations throughout the city, they have a computer-based system where CBOs can submit the applications online remotely. The CBO takes whatever documentation they can from individuals and submits them to HRA, which processes the applications and puts them on pending status. Individuals are instructed to show up at any of HRA's offices once they are released to complete the required eligibility interview in order to activate their benefits and receive their EBT card. They also have the option to complete their interview over the phone. Since HRA has the dates of release provided from the DOC, they retroactively load benefits from this official release date.

On average, HRA receives 1,300 applications a year from Riker's Island. For 2015, 30% of these applications were approved for benefits, 30% were denied, and 40% were pending a decision; many of these do not complete their eligibility interviews. The most common reasons for denial

for any SNAP applications are failure of applicants to provide the requisite documentation or complete the interview process. Compared to other CBO outreach efforts that have an 70% completion rate for their applications, only 60% of applications in this pre-enrollment program have follow-through, which prompted the HRA to re-evaluate its process as the key missing element is individuals failing to go to an office once they are out.

Recently, officials within HRA spearheaded an 11-month planning process with the DOC to implement a new pre-enrollment program for Riker's Island. It is still waiting for approval on its waiver request that the New York state government sent to the USDA on April 15, 2016; however, this new pre-enrollment program is intended to fix many of the inefficiencies in the current program. If their waiver is granted, HRA plans to establish their own unit of eligibility workers on Riker's Island and will no longer contract services from a CBO. Given the fact that individuals must be transported to the HRA unit, it is a resource-intensive undertaking on the part of the DOC and their corrections officers to implement. The HRA eligibility workers would then process joint Medicaid/Cash aid/SNAP applications. Since they are onsite, they would also be able to do eligibility interviews and generate the EBT cards at this office so that eligible recipients' cards are processed in time to be included in an individual's discharge papers. Under this new plan, individuals would be released with their benefits in their hand, which would be activated on the day of their release.

Since a large portion of individuals who cycle through Riker's Island are often returning to jail (rather than newly incarcerated), this new pre-enrollment plan is seen as a critical part of overall city efforts to lower recidivism. It also a major testament to New York City's inter-agency collaboration as it requires significant coordination.

South Dakota

South Dakota has had a SNAP pre-enrollment program since applying for a waiver in 2010. They release approximately 2,000 individuals annually from their correctional facilities. Their process is to have an incarcerated individual's caseworker send the completed appication to the closest local office of South Dakota's Department of Social Services, which administers the program statewide. The local office then schedules a phone interview with the individual while they are still in the facility and collects the release date information from the correctional institution. The eligibility worker then verifies with the correctional institution via phone or email that the individual was, in fact, released on the proposed date. Once this has been confirmed, then their release date becomes their application date and their benefits begin from that application date.

Vermont

Vermont received its USDA waiver and implemented its SNAP pre-enrollment program in 2005. SNAP is administered through their Department of Children and Family, which is a state agency. They have 12 district offices across the state.

As individuals are awaiting their pre-release at their state facilities, this list of individuals is passed to the Department of Children and Family, who then issues a card for each individual with one dollar of GA benefits on it that is then mailed to their assigned probation office. However, in order to get their SNAP benefits, the formerly incarcerated individuals still need to

participate in an eligibility interview and can show up at any district office to do so. Once they do, their benefits are provided to them and start from their official release date.

Currently, Vermont has not tracked how many formerly incarcerated individuals have utilized this program.

California's unique circumstances and strengths

Given the size of California's incarceration system, it poses unique challenges for any kind of CalFresh pre-enrollment program because it would involve the coordination of multiple systems of government. Not only would protocols and procedures need to be developed within each county between their respective county jail and local Human Services Agency, but the California Department of Social Services would also need to establish a MOU with the CDCR for receiving applications from individuals in state facilities. However, unlike other states, California has long been grappling with these sorts of challenges in implementation in part because its program delivery for all public assistance programs already is decentralized. In this, California has been performing complicated inter-agency collaborations that involve all levels of government for decades at a level of scope that none of the other states have had to undergo. Both AB 720 and AB 2308, as laws, exemplify the different successes California has achieved in introducing new programs within its current infrastructures.

V. Policy recommendations for implementing CalFresh pre-enrollment

Based on my analysis, I recommend that California implement a CalFresh pre-enrollment program for individuals leaving prison and jail. It clears away barriers that just-released individuals would face in getting their entitled benefits during their first few critical months re-integrating into society. Local county governments, who are now responsible for holding and supervising post-release a larger portion of incarcerated individuals thanks to Realignment and Proposition 47, would also benefit from having this program. Finally, a CalFresh pre-enrollment program would enable county Human Services Agencies to have more flexibility and time in processing this particular subset of applications.

Before California can implement a CalFresh pre-enrollment program, it needs authorization from the USDA through applying for a waiver. This can be done through the administration, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and does not need to go through the California Legislature first. Initiating this work would fall particularly on the shoulders of the Director of CHSS and Director of CalFresh. Below, I lay out the steps needed to create a CalFresh pre-enrollment program.

Step 1: Convene key stakeholders in a working group to design program

For all five state agencies with whom I spoke who had received waivers, they mentioned the hardest part was hammering out the requisite memoranda of understanding in order to apply to the USDA waiver in the first place. In applying for the waiver, administrators will be required to

outline the exact process California will follow in processing applications, as federal mandate requires that individuals not receive benefits until after they've been released from an institution.

To do so, CDSS should convene county and other stakeholders into a working group to design a pre-enrollment process that is specific enough to meet the requirements of the federal waiver process and flexible enough to work throughout the state. This development process should include county Human Services Agencies, the County Welfare Director's Association, and the CDCR, as well as public benefits advocates and organizations representing incarcerated or recently released individuals.

This group can review existing models from other states as a part of its beginning deliberations. Despite their differences, all of their federal waivers contain these common elements:

- USDA allows for applications to be submitted for individuals who are within 30 days of being released.
- Pre-enrollment is designated only for individuals starting new cases, not those joining existing households.
- The date of release is the official date of application.

Additionally, my research suggests that best practices for a pre-enrollment program include the following:

- Waive most verification requirements and/or acquire necessary documents from what the CDCR and county jails already have in their systems.
- Have interviews happen while individuals are still within their facilities.
- Ideally, complete the application in time so individuals are issued EBT cards as a part of their discharge papers (although this is especially county contingent and may not be something that can be written in the federal waiver).

Finally, it is also important to note that this working group would need to discuss how to design the pre-enrollment program to accommodate state prisons and county jails. This will likely entail creating a separate set of procedures and protocols for state prisons versus county jails. The waiver request would need to be written in such a way that makes this possible.

Step 2: Create a MOU with CDCR for pre-enrolling in state prisons

Once the working group has finalized the program design, the CDSS can begin to draft a MOU with the CDCR on pre-enrolling in state prisons.

Currently, the CDCR has an existing program that could be expanded to include CalFresh pre-enrollment. Housed in the Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO), CDCR's Transitional Case Management Program contracts 59 social workers to help individuals apply to Social Security, SSI, Medi-Cal and VA benefits. To aid these workers in covering all 35 institutions, the DAPO updated its existing Benefit Application Support System (BASS) in April 2015. Though

the CDCR is still seeking strategies to improve outcomes of its efforts,[4] the Transitional Case Management Program already has an established set of protocols both the CDCR and county Human Services Agencies follow for Medi-Cal pre-enrollment that can be adopted and copied for CalFresh pre-enrollment.

I recommend that the MOU that CDSS creates with the CDCR simply adds CalFresh applications into what the Transitional Case Management Program currently does. As a part of crafting this MOU, it can follow the existing procedures in place for Medi-Cal pre-enrollment, where CDCR mails paper applications to the counties who then process them according to specified guidelines.

Step 3: Notify and recruit interested counties for pre-enrolling in county jails

Separate from its collaborations with the CDCR, CDSS can concurrently initiate a process to identify counties who would want to start a CalFresh pre-enrollment program in their county jail.

My recommendation is that CDSS follows a framework similar to AB 720, which leaves it to the counties to determine whether and, more importantly, *how* they will administer their own pre-enrollment program within their county jail. As many counties are already implementing their own versions of AB 720, adopting a similar system for CalFresh pre-enrollment won't disrupt their current arrangements and would allow them to easily tack on CalFresh screening to the Medi-Cal screening process they already are offering to incarcerated individuals in county jail.

As a part of each county's deliberations on how to design their procedures in conjunction with the Sheriff's Department, they will need to determine if they will offer pre-enrollment to non-sentenced individuals along with sentenced individuals. Non-sentenced individuals comprise the majority of county jail populations; however, they are also the group with the most rapid cycling of release.

It should be noted that a person who was receiving CalFresh before they were placed in custody may still retain their eligibility if they are in the institution for less than 30 days. Timely hearing rights in the criminal court system require a person to have their hearing within 30 days, but this rule is most frequently waived. As a result, people who are low-income (like those on CalFresh) and often unable to pay bail will lose their benefits and be forced to re-apply, even if they were innocent all along. A pre-enrollment program would be of particular benefit to ameliorating this specific kind of churn in CalFresh, but not as successful as preventing it all together with an end to the money-bail system or timely pre-trial release. For county Human Services Agencies working with the Sheriff's Department implementing a CalFresh pre-enrollment program, timely pre-trial release to prevent program churn should be one of the goals.

Step 4: Apply for a federal waiver

[4] The latest data reported to the California Rehabilitation Oversight Board shows that the program has much room for improvement. Out of the 40,375 individuals released for fiscal year July 2014 to Jun 2015, only 18,845 individuals (47%) had applications submitted (California Rehabilitation Oversight Board, 2015). Moreover, for Medi-Cal, the average rate for pending application was 85.9% and the average approval rate was 13.7%.

While all the planning leading up to the drafting of the waiver is vital, nothing can happen unless and until CDSS submits a waiver to the USDA. In their waiver, they can specifically cite the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Plata* as well as recent Realignment as reasons for requesting the ability to pre-enroll incarcerated individuals into CalFresh.

Step 5: Educate counties on best practices

Once federal authorization is secured, implementation will fall upon the shoulders of counties to document promising practices and lessons learned and to then share them with one another in order to maximize the reach of CalFresh to all people who are exiting jail or prison. I recommend that counties have access to training materials and webinars as well as have information presented at the annual County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) conference and regular CWDA meetings. Until the CalFresh pre-enrollment program is set, and likely even once it is, the program will work best if there is policy analyst at the CDSS who is assigned to serve as the point person and a person identified in each county Human Services Agency as the pre-enrollment contact for CalFresh.

In the beginning, a workgroup should be established to support the successful rollout and identify additional policy changes and or support as needed to ensure success of this new option. Ongoing support should be offered through CDSS to ensure that counties are able to leverage CalFresh participation in order to maximize funding for these participants in the CalFresh Employment and Training program.

Conclusion

My report shows that California is completely capable of implementing a CalFresh pre-enrollment program. The benefits of CalFresh pre-enrollment go beyond the individuals who directly use them upon release, the program would also provide counties with increased flexibility and resources in managing this high-needs, high-risk population. Now is the time to do so, as formerly incarcerated individuals are entitled to these benefits and counties are pressed in ways they have never been before to handle their new enlarged responsibilities in the wake of Realignment's seismic changes to California's criminal justice system.

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Appendix A: Federal Waivers

Below are the waivers for the pre-enrollment programs of the five states mentioned in this report.

State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

DATE:	March 30, 2012	**TRANSMITTAL NO.: I – 12-03-0005**
TO:	Economic Self-Sufficiency Operations Managers Economic Self-Sufficiency Program Offices	
FROM:	Jeri Flora, Chief, Program Policy **(Signatures on File)** William Martinez, Chief, Technology & Data	
SUBJECT:	Department of Corrections Incarcerated Individual Release Pilot Project – Baker County	
	Informational Only	
EFFECTIVE:	April 1, 2012	

This memorandum provides staff with information about the Department of Corrections (DOC) Incarcerated Individual Release Pilot Project. This pilot project will only be implemented in Baker County and coordinated between Baker Correctional Institution and specialized Headquarters staff in Tallahassee.

Release of Incarcerated Individuals:

Effective April 1, individuals incarcerated in the Baker Correctional Institution who are serving the last month of their sentence may complete a web application for any benefit type with the assistance of the prison's Re-entry Liaison. The incarcerated individual can only complete these pre-release applications within 30 days of the expected release date.

Because incarcerated individuals cannot have access to computers, the Re-entry Liaison will assist the incarcerated individual by completing the web application based on the applicant's statements. Since the incarcerated individual cannot complete the e-signature, the liaison will print the "Case Summary" and have the applicant sign it. The Re-entry Liaison will submit the application electronically and forward the signed "Case Summary" to specialized staff in Tallahassee who will determine eligibility for these applications.

The date of the individual's release will be the date of application for any benefit for which the individual is applying. If the time of the release is after business hours or on a weekend/holiday, the date of application is the next business day.

Specialized staff in Tallahassee will complete the interview and determine the individual's living arrangement. If the individual is a mandatory member of a household

that is currently receiving any kind of public assistance, the application is a request to add an individual. If the individual is not joining a household that is already receiving benefits, specialized staff will establish the eligibility of the individual using the normal application process. If the household is eligible for expedited service, food assistance benefits must be available within seven days after the individual's date of the release.

ACCESS Technology:

The Baker Correctional Institution will be assigned a unique Partner ID. Applications received with this Partner ID will be routed within AMS to specialized staff in Tallahassee designated to handle these applications. The alert 'Department of Corrections application' will display on AMS Client Registration, Work Item Details and the ACCESS Summary.

FLORIDA processing will not begin until the incarcerated individual is released. For new applications, existing procedures to complete AMS Client Registration will be used. If the individual is known to FLORIDA, the existing PIN of the individual will be matched and linked to the closed case if appropriate.

If the incarcerated individual is being added to a household already receiving benefits, existing procedures to add an individual will be used. Matching to the existing PIN if the individual is known to FLORIDA is required.

AMS Work Item Details

Specialized staff cannot update the received dates in AMS Work Item Details. The application date will be based on the date the individual is released and notated in the comments section on AMS WID.

FLORIDA

The AIIC screen will be updated with the date the individual was released or the next business day if the individual was released after hours, on a weekend or holiday. The appropriate living arrangement will be entered on the AIIC screen.

The application date will be entered on the AGPY screen based on the date the incarcerated individual was released or the next business day if the individual was released after hours or on a weekend or holiday.

Specialized staff will update CLRC to explain the discrepancy between the e-signature date and the application date.

If there are policy questions, Region offices may contact Connie Mathers at (850) 717-4121. For system questions, Region offices may call Connie Riblett at (850) 413 6789.

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

SEP 24 2015

Food and Nutrition Service

Park Office Center

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria
VA 22302

Ms. Melinda Cummings
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Manager
Human and Community Services Division
Department of Public Health and Human Services
P.O. Box 20925
Helena, Montana 59260-2925

RE: Montana Application Filing for Prisoners – Initial – Approval

Dear Ms. Cummings:

This is in response to the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' (DPHHS) request for a waiver to allow incarcerated individuals to submit applications for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and to consider the individual's release date from the correctional facility as the date of application.

Following SNAP regulations, incarcerated individuals are ineligible for SNAP benefits because they are residents of an institution. The waiver allows DPHHS to accept and process applications submitted by prisoners nearing their release date. Applicants will be directed to the State's online application or provided a paper application, if requested, approximately 5-10 days before release. Once the application is received, DPHHS will conduct an interview with the inmate by telephone. If the individual is otherwise eligible, the processed application will be held until the individual is released at which point the State agency can issue benefits.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recognizes that rules regarding internet access for inmates may vary by prison and jail within a State. As such, FNS encourages the DPHHS to offer flexibility to each correctional facility participating in this initiative and ensure that inmates incarcerated in institutions with more restrictive web access are able to apply for benefits using a paper application.

FNS is approving the waiver for a 2-year period, effective November 1, 2015, through October 31, 2017, following the conditions in the attached response. This waiver assists the State agency in meeting the needs of this vulnerable population by providing benefits quickly upon release to help ensure food security. If you have any questions, please contact Kathie Herrman at kathie.herrman@fns.usda.gov and Phil Fraley at philip.fraley@fns.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

Sasha Gersten Paal

Sasha Gersten-Paal
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Attachment

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Attachment

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2150068

2. **Type of request:** Initial

3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi), 7 CFR 273.2(c)(l), 273.2(g)(1)

4. **State:** Montana

5. **Region:** Mountain Plains

6. **Regulatory requirements:** SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi) prohibit a resident of an institution from participating in SNAP, with some exceptions.

   7 CFR 273.2(c)(l) provides that State agencies must document the date the application was filed by recording the date of receipt at the local office. However, when a resident of an institution is jointly applying for SSI and SNAP prior to leaving the institution, the filing date of the application that the State agency must record is the date of release of the applicant from the institution.

   7 CFR 273.2(g)(1) provides that eligible households must be given an opportunity to participate no later than 30 calendar days from the date of application, except residents of public institutions who apply jointly for SSI and SNAP benefits prior to release from the institution. Residents of public institutions who apply for SNAP prior to release shall be given an opportunity to participate no later than 30 calendar days from the date of release from the institution.

7. **Description of alternative procedures:** Allow applications to be submitted by incarcerated individuals prior to release and define the application date as the date the individual is released from the facility. Interviews are completed over the telephone (with permission and assistance from the facility) via the hardship rules. All non-waived SNAP regulations and rules are adhered to in the application process. Applicants will be directed to our online application or provided a paper application if requested, approximately 5-10 days prior to his/her anticipated release day.

8. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** FNS is approving this request with conditions specified in item 11 to improve access to SNAP benefits for former prisoners at a particularly vulnerable time, when they have just been released from prison and are unlikely to have the resources needed to ensure food security.

9. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** Approval is based on 7 CFR 272.3(c)(1)(ii), which allows FNS to approve waivers that would result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program.

10. **Conditions and reasons:** This waiver is approved under the following conditions:

    - The waiver applies only to new applicant households;
    - This waiver applies only to those individuals scheduled to be released within 30 days from the date the State agency receives the application;
    - Only merit system personnel may conduct the interview and determine eligibility;
    - This waiver does not apply to prisoners who are joining an existing SNAP household or who are being released to an ineligible institution; and
    - The State agency must screen prisoners for and ensure that prisoners meet expedited service eligibility before allowing postponement of verification until after issuance.

11. **Information required for extension:** At least 60 days before the waiver expires, the State agency must submit a report that details any problems encountered during waiver implementation and the payment error rate for the waiver group. When calculating the payment error rate for this group, the State agency must use a sample size of 10 cases or 10 percent of waiver cases, whichever is greater. The State must provide payment error information for all Montana cases from the same time period to serve as a comparison group.

12. **Expiration date:** This waiver is approved for a two-year period, effective November 1, 2015 through October 31, 2017.

13. **Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests:** Approval of this waiver is limited to the Montana State agency.

14. **Quality control procedures:** No special QC procedures are required for cases subject to the provisions of this waiver. Cases should be reviewed using standard review procedures contained in the FNS Handbook 310.

15. **Date of State agency's request:** June 12, 2015

16. **Date of Regional Office transmittal of request to national office:** June 12, 2015

17. **Date of National Office action:** SEP 24 2015

18. **Date of State implementation (notify FNS if actual date differs):** November 1, 2015

United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.
Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

MAY 25 2007

Steve Ptak, Director
Food Stamp Program
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, NY 12243

Dear Mr. Ptak:

We approve your request to extend waiver 2050056, which allows the State to pend food stamp applications for up to 90 days for the Seriously and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI) who are scheduled to be released from incarceration. This waiver is extended indefinitely as requested.

The waiver is subject to the following two conditions:

1. If the household appears at the Job Center within 30 days of release, benefits will be issued from the date of release.
2. If the household appears at the Job Center after the first 30 days from the date of release, the benefits will be issued from the date the household initially appears at the Job Center.

Please contact Katie Blanchette at (617) 565-6415 if you have any questions concerning this waiver.

Sincerely,

Mark F. Johnson for

Mary A. Ferris, Director
Food Stamp Program
Northeast Region

Enclosure

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

WAIVER RESPONSE

1. **Waiver serial number:** 2050056

2. **Type of request:** Extension

3. **Primary regulation citation:** 7 CFR 273..2(c)(1), 273.2(e)(3), 273.2(g)(1), 273.2(h)(4)(iii) and 273.2(i)(2)(3)

4. **Secondary regulation citations:**

5. **State:** New York

6. **Region:** Northeast

7. **Regulatory requirements:** The current regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) provide that the length of time for delivering benefits to eligible households is calculated from the date the application is filed in the designated food stamp office. An exception is made for residents of public institutions who are applying jointly for SSI and food stamps prior to leaving the institution. Under this exception, for purposes of calculating normal or expedited processing timeframes and for issuing initial month benefits to applicants residing in institutions, their application filing date is the date of their release from the institution.

8. **Description of proposed alternative procedures:** New York is requesting to extend indefinitely its waiver of 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) to pend food stamp applications for up to 90 days for the Seriously and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI) who are scheduled to be released from incarceration. New York City estimates that there are less than 100 such applicants per month. The New York City Human Resources Administration currently takes public assistance applications from these individuals while they are incarcerated and pends their applications for up to 90 days. Their joint food stamp applications also would be pended, for up to 90 days, until the applicant is released and appears in a Job Center.

   On the first day that such applicants appear in a Job Center, they will be screened for expedited processing of their application and will be interviewed to determine their eligibility. Upon completion of the application process and determination of eligibility, food stamp benefits would be issued from the date of release if the SPMI individual appears at the Job Center requesting food stamp benefits within the first 30 days from the date of release. Should the SPMI individual appear at the Job Center after the first 30-day period from the date of release, the State agency would calculate benefits from the date the household initially appears at the Job Center.

9. **Justification for Request:** New York City statistics through April 21, 2007 show that, since February 2006, HRA has approved 315 of 1257 registered applications. The State agency states that no QC errors have occurred as a result of implementing this waiver. The State agency anticipates that because of the low number of cases, the potential impact on the State agency's error rate will continue to be miniscule.

   The State agency believes that extending this waiver will continue to benefit many incarcerated individuals who are seriously and persistently mentally ill and would otherwise be unsuccessful in securing the necessary transitional supports after they are released, and have a high rate of recidivism. The pre-release application process continues in place for temporary assistance and Medicaid.

   The State agency further contends that the waiver would allow the Job Centers to process applications in a more efficient and expeditious manner by simplifying the application process and increasing participation levels for affected households at a time when food security is at risk.

10. **Action and reason for approval or denial:** We are approving the State agency's waiver request with conditions specified below. With these conditions, the waiver provides for a degree of consistency with the current regulations on pre-release joint applicants for SSI/food stamps.

10. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** We are approving this waiver under the authority of 7 CFR 272.3(c)(1)(ii), which authorizes waivers that would result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program.

11. **Conditions and reasons:** If the household appears at the Job Center within 30 days of release, benefits will be issued from the date of release. If the household appears at the Job Center after the first 30 days from the date of release, the benefits will be issued from the date the household initially appears at the Job Center.

12. **Information required for extension:** Not applicable.

13. **Expiration date:** As requested, this waiver is approved indefinitely. The State agency has identified no payment accuracy issues in connection with this waiver.

14. **Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests:** This waiver is limited to the New York State Agency. The New York State Agency was prompted to request this waiver as a result of a ruling in a court suit. Since this is a situation unique to the State of New York we do not believe it would be appropriate to make it available to State agencies in general.

USDA

MAY 28 2010

United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive

Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

2100028

SUBJECT: SNAP – South Dakota Waiver Request – 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi) and 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) – Waiver of the Application Processing Regulations for Incarcerated Individuals – Initial – Approval

TO: Jody Cornwell
Regional Director
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Mountain Plains Region

This is in response to the South Dakota State agency's request to allow applications to be submitted by incarcerated individuals prior to their release date and define the application date as the date the individual is released from the facility. The State agency's request would waive the provisions that certain residents of public institutions are ineligible for SNAP benefits and would allow the State agency to process and approve applications from the date of release if the applicant is released within the 30 days from the date of application. This waiver would only apply to those individuals scheduled to be released within 30 days from the date the State agency receives the application.

This waiver is intended to improve access to SNAP benefits for former prisoners at a particularly vulnerable time, when they have just been released from prison and are unlikely to have the resources needed to ensure their own food security.

All non-waived SNAP rules and regulations will be adhered to in the application process, including the screening for and providing of expedited service as required under 7 CFR 273.2(i)(2).

The Food and Nutrition Service is approving the waiver request for 2 years as requested with conditions attached. If you have any questions, please contact Vicky Robinson at (703) 305-2476 or by email at vicky.robinson@fns.usda.gov.

Angela Kline
Chief
Certification Policy Branch
Program Development Division

Attachment

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Waiver Response

1. **Waiver Serial Number**: 2100028
2. **Type of Request**: Initial
3. **Primary Regulation Citation**: 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi)
4. **Secondary Regulation Citation**: 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1), (e)(1), (g)(1), and (i)(3)
5. **State**: South Dakota
6. **Region:** MPRO
7. **Regulatory Requirements:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations at 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi) prohibit a resident of an institution from participating in SNAP.

   SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(c)(l) provide that State agencies must document the date the application was filed by recording the date of receipt at the local office. However, when a resident of an institution is jointly applying for SSI and SNAP prior to leaving the institution, the filing date of the application that the State agency must record is the date of release of the applicant from the institution. The length of time a State agency has to deliver benefits is calculated from the date the application is filed at the local office designated by the State agency to accept the household's application, except when a resident of a public institution is jointly applying for SSI and SNAP prior to his/her release from an institution. Residents of public institutions who apply for SNAP prior to their release from the institution shall be certified in accordance with §273.2(g)(1) or §273.2(i)(3)(i), as appropriate. Each household has the right to file an application form on the same day it contacts the local office during office hours. State agencies shall document the date the application was filed by recording on the application the date it was received by the local office. When a resident of an institution is jointly applying for SSI and SNAP prior to leaving the institution, the filing date of the application to be recorded by the State agency is the date of release of the applicant from the institution.

   SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(e)(1) provide that, except under some exceptions, households must have a face-to-face interview at initial certification.

   SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(g)(1) provide that eligible households must be given an opportunity to participate no later than 30 calendar days from the date of application, except residents of public institutions who apply jointly for SSI and SNAP benefits prior to release from the institution. Residents of public institutions who apply for SNAP prior to release shall be given an opportunity to participate no later than 30 calendar days from the date of release from the institution.

SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.2(i)(3)(i) provide that households entitled to expedited service shall receive benefits no later than the seventh calendar day from the date of application, except that residents of a public institution (that jointly apply for SSI and SNAP) who are entitled to expedited service, the 7-day count starts from the date the application is filed, which is the date of release of the applicant from the institution.

8. **Proposed Alternative Procedures:** The South Dakota State agency requests to allow applications to be submitted from incarcerated individuals prior to their date of release from the institution. As permitted with residents of public institutions who apply jointly for SSI and SNAP benefits prior to release, the State agency would define the date of application as the date the individual is released from the institution.

   The State agency also proposes to conduct interviews by phone (if permitted by the facility) without the need to document household hardship.

   Approximately 2000 individuals are released from South Dakota correctional facilities annually. The State agency believes that accepting applications from prisoners prior to release will improve access to SNAP and help reduce recidivism.

9. **Action and reason for approval and denial**: As requested, The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving this waiver for a 2-year period from June 1, 2010 through May 31, 2012.

   This approval waives the regulations at 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi) prohibiting a resident of an institution from participating in SNAP. Rather than deny the application, this waiver would allow the State agency to begin processing the application, including the conducting of the interview and obtaining the necessary verifications, prior to the applicant's release from prison.

   This waiver also provides that the date of application will be the date the individual is released from the institution rather than the date the application is received at the local office. This waiver further allows the State agency to conduct a phone interview, if permitted by the facility, without the need to document household hardship.

   All non-waived SNAP rules and regulations will be adhered to in the application process, including the screening for and providing of expedited service as required under 7 CFR 273.2(i)(2). The Food and Nutrition Act restricts provision of expedited service to those who meet certain income and resource criteria. As a

consequence, the State agency must ensure that only those prisoners who meet expedited service eligibility criteria are afforded expedited service. Households entitled to expedited service shall receive benefits no later than the 7th calendar day from the date the application is filed, which is the date of release of the applicant from the institution. The State agency should take note that there is no restriction against offering eligibility determination in less than 7 days to any household, but that they must ensure that only households eligible for expedited service have their verification postponed until after issuance.

10. **Regulatory or legislative basis for action:** This waiver is approved under 7 CFR 272.3(c)(1)(ii), which allows FNS to approve waivers that result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program.

11. **Conditions and reasons:** Approval is based on the following conditions:

    - The waiver applies only to new applicant households;
    - This waiver applies only to those individuals scheduled to be released within 30 days from the date the State agency receives the application;
    - Only merit system personnel may conduct the interview and determine the eligibility of a prison application;
    - This waiver does not apply to prisoners who are joining an existing SNAP household or who are being released to an ineligible institution; and
    - The State agency must screen prisoners for and ensure that prisoners meet expedited service eligibility before allowing postponement of verification until after issuance.

12. **Information required for extension:** At least 90 days before the waiver expires, the State agency must submit a report that documents the mode of operation of the waiver, any problems encountered, and the payment error rate for the waiver group. The State agency should use a sample size of 25 cases for calculation of a payment error rate for this group. The State should provide payment error information for all South Dakota cases from the same time period to serve as a comparison group.

13. **Expiration date:** This waiver is approved for a two-year period, from June 1, 2010 through May 31, 2012.

14. **Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests:** This waiver is limited to the South Dakota State agency.

15. **Quality Control procedures:** No special procedures are required for cases subject to the provisions of this waiver. Cases should be reviewed using standard review procedures contained in the FNS handbook 310.

USDA

DEC 13 2006

United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

Northeast Region

10 Causeway St.
Room 501
Boston, MA 02222

Joesph Patrissi
Deputy Commissioner
Agency of Human Services
Department of Children and Families
Economic Services Division
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-1201

Dear Mr. Patrissi:

This is in response to your November 1, 2006 request for a waiver to permit eligibility workers to pend food stamp applications taken from individuals incarcerated in Vermont's jails until their release date.

This waiver #2070008, is approved pursuant to 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi) and 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) with the following conditions.

- The waiver applies only to prisoners who are establishing a new food stamp case and
- This waiver does not apply to prisoners who are joining an existing food stamp household or who are being released to an ineligible institution.

The waiver is approved conditionally for two years from December 1, 2006 and will expire on November 30, 2008. If you have any questions, please call Beth Wright at (617) 565-6403.

Sincerely,

Laura Hurd

Laura Hurd, Chief
State Program Improvement
Food Stamp Program
Northeast Region

cc: Renee Richardson

Enclosure

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Waiver Response

1. Waiver Serial Number: 2070008

2. Type of Request: Initial

3. Primary Regulation Citation: 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi)

4. Secondary Regulation Citation: 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1)

5. State: Vermont

6. Region: Northeast

7. Regulatory Requirements: Presently, federal food stamp regulations at 7 CFR 273.1(b) (7) (vi) prohibit a resident of an institution from participating in the Food Stamp program. Regulations also state that the filing date is the day the appropriate food stamp office receives the application, and that this date is the application date. In addition, the state must document the application date by recording it on the application (7 CFR 273.2(c) (l)). Benefits must be delivered to an eligible household no later than 30 days from the application date (or within 7 days for expedited food stamps).

   For residents of public institutions who are applying jointly for SSI and food stamps before leaving an institution, however, 7 CFR 273.2(c)(1) provides an exception that allows the applicant resident of an institution to complete an application while in the institution and requires the state to record as the filing date the resident's date of release from the institution.

8. Proposed Alternative Procedures: Since January of 2006, in concert with the Vermont Department of Corrections, Vermont has operated a pilot/test program to provide food stamp benefits to offenders as soon as possible upon their release from prison. During the 25 days leading up to release, designated eligibility workers visit inmates at the correctional facility and conduct face-to-face screening interviews, assist inmates complete an application, obtain necessary verifications, and explain their rights and responsibilities to them. The inmate signs and submits a Vermont General Assistance (GA) application while still incarcerated. This causes a GA benefit of $1, funded by the Department of Corrections, to be issued to the inmate a few days before their scheduled release date, which in turn, begins an account and triggers the issuance of an EBT card to the inmate.

The purpose of this program is to ensure that prisoners have near immediate access to food benefits as soon as they are released from prison. Holding the application in a pending status while they are still incarcerated would have no effect on eligibility for expedited benefits since they would not have an expedited need for food until they are actually released. The date of release triggers the food stamp application to be processed. Once released, they all receive their benefits within the 7-day processing standard for expedited food stamps whether or not they are technically eligible for expedited benefits. This waiver will make it easier to have all verifications upfront for this particular population. They can be certified for the full 4 - 6 months from the beginning, which will make handling the case much simpler for both the worker and the client.

The inmates will be certified for 4 months initially, and will fall under simplified reporting. For those who would be in ABAWD status when they leave the prison, we are using our 15 percent exemption to exempt them from ABAWD requirements. They will be required to register for work, however. We have coding in place to track all ABAWDS, so these will be tracked just as all other ABAWDS are when they are in simplified reporting.

The State agency anticipates applying the waiver procedure to approximately 150 cases per month.

9. Action and reason for approval and denial: We are approving waiver request 2070008 for two years, effective December 1, 2006 through November 30, 2008.

10. Regulatory or legislative basis for action: This waiver is approved under 7 CFR 272.3(c)(1)(ii), which allows FNS to approve waivers that result in a more effective and efficient administration of the program.

11. Conditions and reasons: Approval is based on the following conditions:

    1. The waiver applies only to prisoners who are establishing a new food stamp case.
    2. This waiver does not apply to prisoners who are joining an existing food stamp household or who are being released to an ineligible institution.

12. Information required for extension: At least 90 days before the waiver expires, the State agency must submit a report that documents the operation of the waiver, any problems encountered, and the error rate for the waiver group.

13. Expiration date: November 30, 2008

14. Limitation, if any, on regional office approval of like requests: This waiver is limited to the Vermont State agency.

Appendix B: Medi-Cal pre-enrollment survey and responses

Below is the survey I distributed to all 58 counties. Depending on how they answered Question #2, it would change the wording of Question #4.

1. Which county are you?
2. Does your county pre-enroll people being released from your local county jails into Medi-Cal?
3. If your county contains a state prison, do you also pre-enroll people into Medi-Cal who are being released from the state prison?

For those who said yes, Question #4 would read as this:

4. Can you briefly describe how you implement AB 720 in your county? Please describe the processes you've established to pre-enroll people into Medi-Cal as they are being released from incarceration. Feel free to share any other relevant or important information you've learned in serving this particular population through your program.

For those who said no, Question #4 would read as this:

Can you briefly describe why your county does not participate in Medi-Cal pre-enrollment for people leaving incarceration? What are the reasons you do not pre-enroll? What, if any, are the specific barriers you face that make it hard to do this program?

5. Who are the best people to contact within your county to inquire more about your AB 720 Medi-Cal pre-enrollment processes and implementation? Please provide their name, email and telephone number.

I discovered that my wording for Question #3 represented my erroneous understanding at the time of how CDCR distributes Medi-Cal applications. It is be removed from the table of responses to avoid any confusion. The short answer is that all counties are expected to process the Medi-Cal applications CDCR sends them because CDCR has already separated out the applications according to the county of release for incarcerated individuals—it does not matter from what prison the application originates.

The table on the following page shows the 42 responses my survey collected along with the five additional counties I gleaned from the reports Californians for Safety and Justice. I have organized the table in alphabetical order. At the end of the table is a list of the counties from whom I heard no response either way.

1. County	2. Pre-enroll?	4. If yes, how is it implemented? If no, why not?	5. Contact person
Alameda	Yes	The Alameda County Sheriffs Office (ACSO) sends a referral to our Program Planning and Support unit within Social Services agency (SSA) to initiate a request for health coverage for an inmate who has been admitted in an acute inpatient hospital off the grounds of the facility. SSA screens to determine if the individual is already active on Medi-Cal, If yes, no application is required and the Medi-Cal is suspended and eligibility is determined for the Medi-Cal Inmate Eligibility Program (MCIEP). If the individual is not active on Medi-Cal, we notify ACSO to submit an application for health coverage and other required forms. Once the application is received from ACSO, the application is logged and forwarded for assignment to an Eligibility Services Technician (EST) in intake for a determination of Medi-Cal. Alameda County SSA is also in the process of working with ACSO in developing an electronic application process within ACSO's Advanced Technology Information Management System (ATIMS) system upon release of the inmate.	Sabrina Jean (sjean@acgov.org)
Amador	Yes	CDCR provides us an application for the inmate with the a designated Authorized Rep for the inmate at the Prison. We communicate the receipt of the application and also let them know when the case is granted. At the county level, the Sheriff's office provides us a list of inmates and their release dates. Currently we send an application for the inmate to the jail if the release date is in the near future. We were sending a worker over to the jail but the process was awkward and became a workload issue for our worker due to extended wait times to meet with inmates. We are in the process of trying to figure out a better way to assist county inmates in completing the applications. The Sheriff's office has indicated in the past that they to not have someone to assist the inmate like they do at the State Prison level.	Bethany Cammisa bcammisa@amadorgov.org, 209-223-6271 or Judy Brown, jbrown@amadorgov.org, 209-223-6611
Butte	Yes	We go into the jail and interview inmates to help them apply. For more information please contact	Socorro McCracken.

		the Supervisor listed in the last question.	SRMccracken@buttecounty.net (530)538-5146
Calaveras	Yes	In the case of people being released from County Jail we actually go to the jail when we are notified by the Jail that they have people they are releasing. We interview at the jail and then put the case on if eligible (most of them are). In the case of Prison releases we receive Inmate Referrals into our county and they are assigned to our Medi-Cal Intake workers to process. There is a simple method in place to process these cases that is written down for reference. We process through the inmates representative. Most of these are also approved.	The person currently doing referrals from the County Jail is Denice Branson. dbranson@co.calaveras.ca.us and I am the supervisor of the Medi-Cal Intake Unit and you can contact me at dkittrell@co.calaveras.ca.us if you have further questions.
Contra Costa	Yes	Developed MOU with the Sheriffs office and our Behavioral health dept. Medi-Cal apps placed in residential units in the jail with drop boxes for inmates to deposit apps. Behavioral health collects apps and enters them into online portal, which then comes to a specialized unit for immediate processing per MOU timeframes.	Patricia Perez at 925-313-1681. Dana Wargo at 925-313-1554.
El Dorado	Yes	According to Californians for Safety and Justice's 2016 report "County Health Coverage Enrollment Efforts For California's Justice-Involved Populations."	
Fresno	Yes	For county inmates - we work directly with community based organizations and our sheriffs office to identify inmates that have been sentenced or have a release date, and take the application, the workers in our department then process the applications and grant eligibility. For state inmates we receive applications directly from the TCMP workers who are contracted from UC San Diego (I think) who are at each of the facilities to help assist the inmate in completing their applications 60-90 days prior to release. Those applications are received in our offices, and all staff process the applications. Forms and Medi-Cal Cards are mailed to the facility for the inmates to have access to benefits	Angela Perdue, 559-600-5625 or adelossantos@co.fresno.ca.us

		upon release.	
Glenn	Yes	I don't know. I've heard we're doing something but I don't know what.	Eloise Valencia: 530-934-1415 EValencia@hra.co.glenn.ca.us
Imperial	Yes	In Imperial County one of our local community based organizations (CBO) will assist the county inmates, who are scheduled for release, to complete a Medi-Cal application packet. Just prior to release the Medi-Cal application is forwarded to our office by the Imperial County Sherriff's Office for processing. If a county inmate was active on Medi-Cal prior to incarceration, the inmate's case is suspended until their release. If the time of incarceration exceeds the date of their scheduled renewal, the case is discontinued and the inmate can reapply prior to release. In addition, this county has a Day Reporting Center for inmates who are released which they report to for probation issues and are able to apply for Medi-Cal as well. For State prison inmates, each prison in the state will send a completed Medi-Cal application packet to our county if the inmate is scheduled to return to our county upon release. Our department will process the application and set the beginning date of aid (the beginning of the month of their release) as the start date for Medi-Cal coverage if the inmate is eligible.	Charlie Cruz, Assistant Director Imperial County Department of Social Services: 760-482-2703 charliecruz@co.imperial.ca.us
Inyo	Yes	According to Californians for Safety and Justice's 2016 report "County Health Coverage Enrollment Efforts For California's Justice-Involved Populations."	
Kern	Yes	We formed a workgroup made up of all the agencies and a local CBO to design our processes and work out how we would get the applications to our County to determine eligibility for when it comes to County Inmates. The local CBO and our County Hospital were the drivers of pre-enrollment, so they got permission from the Sherriff's Department to be co-located at the facility. They regularly hold sessions with those who are being released and submit the inmate's application via CalHEERs or	Kathy Manning (661) 631-6776 or manningk@kerndhs.com

		as a paper application. They also enter this information into an Excel Log that a designated worker has access to so she can pull the application to work. Once eligibility is determined or denied, the response is entered into the Excel Spreadsheet so that the CBO and our County Hospital can see that an inmate was granted MC. The BIC and NOA go to the inmate at the address they are released to. For State inmates, we receive the paper applications from the TCMP staff located at the prisons. We do not have a liaison at our State prisons as they do not want to give anyone else access to their facilities. When we receive an application from TCMP, we review it to see if there's an existing case in our county. If there is, the application is sent to the on-going worker to determine the MC. If it is an unknown case (new) to us, we have a designated screener who reviews and assigns it to one of our intake workers to determined eligibility and grant the MC.	
King	Yes	For the state prison population CDCR has established an on site group at each of the prison who assist the inmate in completing and submitting an application. Once the application is received by HSA we will process it 45 days from the release date provided to us. For the county jail inmates it depends upon their release date. Some are arrested and release within a 24 to 48 hours. This group is given a brochure we designed with how to apply for MC. For the inmates who has a future release date we follow up via the county's probation department to see if the inmate already has a MC case. If the inmate has no case, probation will contact CWD if needed. 95% of the inmates in our county jail have been active on a case in Kings, Fresno, or Tulare and are in suspend status to be released when inmate is released.	Art Taft, art.taft@co.kings.ca.us 559 852 4247
Lake	Yes	Outreach to and referral from jail/prison and determination prior to release, or as soon thereafter as possible.	Ed Baskett, ebaskett@dss.co.lake.ca.us, (707) 995-4262
Lassen	Yes	We do outreach for pre enrollment for Medi-Cal in the jail 45 days prior to their release only with giving them an application for CalFresh that they	Jennifer Uruburu (530)251-8004 juruburu@co.lassen

		can submit upon release. We go to the Day Reporting Center and offer support for those who have already been released in accessing additional assistance. We also go to the state prison and the federal prison and do educational outreach for both Medi-Cal/ACA and other assistance that they may be eligible to when they are released. Medi-Cal applications are submitted by the state prison by a contracted vendor in house.	.ca.us
Los Angeles	Yes	LA County Sherriff Dept. screens inmates 60/90 days prior to release. Applications resulting from this process are forwarded to DPSS for processing. Benefits are issued to the individual based on the date of release.	Elizabeth Morris 562-908-3030
Madera	Yes	We have an Eligibility Worker who goes out to our corrections facility and enrolls. We have also worked with our corrections staff in their new laptop program, they have the link to the c4yourself.com website that they have their inmates apply for services.	Debbie Blankenship, debbie.blankenship@co.madera.ca.us, 559-675-7841
Marin	Yes	For the county inmates, we have someone who is not our employee but contracted to us by a local CBO who goes into the jail and takes applications electronically. He then submits those through C4Yourself, the online web portal for the C-IV automated welfare system. Since he goes in there two days per week regardless of whether there are people interested in applying, there is no need for us to coordinate separately with the jail staff to determine who wishes to apply. On our end, once it is identified as a pre-release app, it is assigned to one particular individual who is aware of the special requirements around these (like aligning begin date of aid with the inmate's release date). For state inmates, CDCR sends us the paper applications which we then forward to the county the inmate intends to reside in after release. These are all over the place, some are sent to us 90 days or more ahead of release, some are sent after the inmate has already been released. CDCR is working to firm up their system so we get them all around 30 days before release (an additional wrinkle is that some	Susana Aceves oversees these pre-release processes. Her e-mail is saceves@marincounty.org and her phone is 415-473-3347.

		inmates are released ahead of their anticipated release date for various reasons). For those inmates who expect to release to our county, we hold the apps until they are around 30 days before release and then assign them to one individual on staff who is aware of the specific issues these often raise (incomplete apps, little information available, etc). A particular difficulty of these is that so many inmates anticipate being homeless after release and it is hard to get them approved unless everything sails through the federal e-verification process. This is because we are often unsuccessful in reaching homeless inmates after release, and so we cannot get what we need from them. CDCR staff generally cannot or will not provide additional assistance even when the inmate is still incarcerated.	
Mariposa	Yes	All of our Eligibility staff have taken the PREA (prison rape elimination act) training to be able to enter the jail. Staff goes to the jail every other Tuesday. The jail staff give us a list of who we need to speak with (they have the information about who will be released). During the interview, the inmate is also given information about other community resources.	Launa Gann - lgann@mariposahsc.org - (209)742-0832
Mendocino	Yes	Eligibility staff meet with county inmates at the County Jail prior to release to assist with Medi-Cal application completion. Applications are processed so that eligibility is determined prior to release. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) also sends applications to our county for state inmates who are to be released to Mendocino County. Applications are processed with determinations completed in the month of release.	Jesse Vanvoorhis vanvoorhisj@co.Mendocino.ca.us (707)463-7809
Merced	Yes	According to Californians for Safety and Justice 2014 report "Health Coverage Enrollment of California's Local Criminal Justice Populations."	
Mono	Yes	We are accepting applications from the State prisons and completing the Medi-Cal application at the jail.	Francie Avitia favitia@mono.ca.gov or 760-924-1789
Monterey	Yes	CDCR sends Medi-Cal Pre release applications to our county when inmate is being released to our county. We grant effective month of release.	Mary Hiebner hiebnerme@co.Monterey.ca.us

		County Jail completes the pre release applications and sends to our office for review. MC is authorized effective month of release.	831-755-4406
Napa	Yes	We do not have a state prison in our county but we do receive pre-release applications from prisons around the state. The applications are received by mail and an email is sent to the prison confirming its receipt. The applications are processed by one worker and the BIC is sent to the prison rep if there is enough time to process prior to the release. There are times we are only given a very short amount of time to process. In that case the BIC is sent to the client's home address. For jail applications, we are contacted by the county jail regarding inmates in need of Medi-Cal. If an application is needed we facilitate the application and it is processed by the same worker. Our plan was to have an Eligibility Worker stationed at our county jail but the earthquake of 2014 damaged our jail and there is no space for a worker at this time. We will however have an Eligibility Worker stationed at our adult probation office beginning 5/2/16.	Darlene Washburn, Self Sufficiency Manager darlene.washburn@countyofnapa.org
Orange	Yes	Sheriff staff advise inmates who are close to release that they can file for Medi-Cal and refer interested inmates to application assisters who are employees of a private, nonprofit organization we have contracted to have at the jail. The challenges: it isn't easy to find an organization which has expertise in providing social services to inmates and which is interested in pursuing this. Also, it is very cumbersome to get someone who is not already an employee of the Sheriff authorized to be in contact with inmates in the jail. It took quite a while to get this up and running. Right now, we are taking applications from the general population, but we are working with the inmate Medi-Cal staff to develop a procedure for them to refer inmates they treat who have chronic Medi-Cal conditions (e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma) and would most benefit from having Medi-Cal coverage upon release.	Wendy Aquin 714-541-7783 Wendy.Aquin@ssa.ocgov.com
Placer	Yes	Placer County Detention Staff provides Human Services with a monthly 90 day Pending Release	Theresa Whiteside, twhitesi@placer.ca.

		Report. Those individuals are checked against County and State systems for current Medi-Cal coverage. All individuals not receiving Medi-Cal are visited inside the Detention Facility by the Human Services Liaison to assist the inmate with application completion.	gov, 916-784-6040 Sherry Rogers, srogers@placer.ca.gov, 916-784-6117
Riverside	Yes	Riverside County focuses enrollment on individuals who are connected to County correctional facilities and participate in the Residential Substance Abuse, Veteran's Enrichment and Transition, or Riverside Alternative Sentencing Programs, all of which are administered by the facility. Riverside County DPSS staff make regular visits to the correctional facility to gather applications and/or necessary follow-up information from inmates. Riverside County also has an initiative to focus efforts on Medi-Cal enrollment for individuals who are supervised by and report to Day Reporting Centers through the Department of Probation. DPSS staff make regular visits to the centers to gather applications and information as necessary.	Ann Barnes-Dansby ADANSBY@riversidedpss.org (951) 358-3011
Sacramento	Yes	According to Californians for Safety and Justice's 2016 report "County Health Coverage Enrollment Efforts For California's Justice-Involved Populations."	
San Benito	No	We lack a process for pre-enrollment. We have asked surrounding counties for information regarding their implementation but have not been successful in planning our own processes for implementation. A county with proven Best Practices would be beneficial if willing to share.	Lorena Jones, Program Manager; ljones@cosb.us, 831-630-5136
San Bernadino		We have designated district offices who receive pre-release applications from the State prison and county jail facilities. State employees take applications in the prisons and forward to San Bernardino County when inmates are within 90 days of release. San Bernardino County has contracted with a Community Based Organization (CBO) who takes applications from county inmates approaching 90 days of his/her release date. Applications are processed according to regular Medi-Cal processing standards, and any correspondence is sent	Anita Cirillo acirillo@hss.sbcounty.gov or 909-383-9859

		directly to the inmate.	
San Diego		The process of pre-enrollment is initiated by the CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) 45-90 days prior to release for state inmates. The CDCR representatives at the prison assist the inmates in completing applications and forward those applications to the county with a cover letter that indicates the release date. The county processes these applications similarly to Medi-Cal applications received through other channels. The process of pre-enrollment for Medi-Cal for people leaving county jails is similar to the CDCR process except it is county contracted community based organizations that assist the prisoners in completing the applications.	Matthew Kloberdanz Matthew.Kloberdanz@sdcounty.ca.gov 619-338-2832
San Francisco	Yes	We work closely with a specific part of the jail staff, the classification unit, who provides us with the name and SSN of individuals scheduled to be released in 30 days on an encrypted spreadsheet. We screen these individuals to see if they have an active case; if not, then we process the applications as new Medi-Cal cases. We also work closely with jail staff and a CBO who helps individuals awaiting their trial to apply. Finally, we post someone at the probation office to help individuals apply. We also provide an exit orientation video that discusses the public benefit programs available.	Tiana Wertheim 415-558-1108 tiana.wertheim@sfgov.org
San Joaquin	Yes	The basic process is: 1. Receive application from prison. 2. Log application into system. 3. Determine if this case will application will be added to a continuing case or if it is a new case. 4. Assign case to an Eligibility Worker. 5. Schedule an appointment. 6. Process application.	Anthony Rocha arocha@sjgov.org or 209-468-2050
San Luis Obispo		We have a designated Eligibility staff member assigned to our local jail. He takes the applications there for inmates that are expected to be released within 90 days. This information is provided by the Jail per agreements in an MOU. The applications are then processed with eligibility effective the month of release. BIC cards are sent to the address of release, if there is one, the Probation office, if applicable, or to our office for pick up once released.	Tim Siler (ERS assigned to Jail) tsiler@co.slo.ca.us 805 781 1677 Peggy Ayers (Tim Siler's Supervisor) payers@co.slo.ca.us 805 781 1670 Pati Garcia (Medi-Cal Program Manager)

		Prison applications are received via USPS from facilities all over the State for inmates that intend to be released in our county. These applications are also processed in the same manner by the same Eligibility staff member.	pagarcia@co.slo.ca.us 805 781 1893
San Mateo	Yes	For State pre-release applications, I get referrals from CDCR at the State level. I receive them and keep a log, before sending them to be processed by our staff. For County pre-release applications, most are submitted at or near the time of release through the Covered CA website. These come to our agency and go directly to our staff. I am currently working with our Correctional Health and Behavioral Health agencies to streamline the process and make it easier for our staff to get the necessary information by developing a cover letter that provides key information that may not be in the application.	Gabriela Behn, gbehn@smcgov.org 650-802-5129
Santa Barbara	Yes	We entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sheriff's Department and will go to the county jail when contacted by them to take applications from individuals who will be released.	Lilia Ramirez L.ramirez@sbcsocialserv.org 805-346-7388
Santa Clara	Yes	Santa Clara has a workgroup created with various County organizations as a subset of AB109. This group now meets every other month, discussing strategies and implementation issues. In our County facilities, we have Correction officers complete the medi-cal application with inmates and these applications are sent to a specialized unit in Social Services. We have also embedded an Eligibility worker at our County correction facility to assist Correctional officers identify inmates prior to release. In addition, to assist those who were released prior to our implementation, we have Social Services staff present in the Probation/Parole departments to speak with their clientele	Denise Boland, DEBS Director, 408-755-7735
Shasta	Yes	According to Californians for Safety and Justice 2014 report "Health Coverage Enrollment of California's Local Criminal Justice Populations."	
Sierra	No	Our County Jail has been closed and all inmates	

		are housed in Nevada County.	
Siskiyou	Yes	We follow DHCS guidance for individuals being released from prison. We work closely with prisons as we are made aware of the upcoming release date. We also work with local adult probation in these cases	Jeri Poling, Medi-Cal Program Manager
Solano	Yes	With the implementation of ACA and the passing of AB720, we convened a workgroup consisting of Public Health, Sheriff's Dept, Health & Social Services, Substance Abuse, Public Defender, Community Based Organizations, etc. We mapped out and developed a process to ensure inmates being released would get the services they are in need of. For jail applications: Prior to their release (60 days) the Sheriff's Dept. sends a list of inmates being released to our Outstation staff and due to the ever changing/evolving list another list is sent 30 days prior to the inmates release. Upon receipt of that list, all the names are checked in the system to see whether or not that potential applicant has benefits. If not, then an appointment is scheduled with the inmate to initiate the application. The appointment is completed via iWeb (similar to Skype), another avenue and a new way of having jail visitation without physically being at the location. Once the application is completed it is processed by the inmate's release. For prison applications: Prior to their release (60 days) an application is mailed in and assigned to the worker that processes prison applications. The worker reviews the application to see if benefits are already issued. If not, then processes the application per our process. Benefits are issued by the time the applicant is released	(Jail Apps) Renee Smith, Supervisor-Outstation ZG20 Unit, ersmith@solanocounty.com, (707) 784-8053 (Prison Apps) Leslie Daugherty, Intake Supervisor, ljdaugherty@solanocounty.com, (707) 553-5169 (Intake Bureau) RobyLyn Fernandez, Countywide Intake Manager, rfernandez@solanocounty.com, (707) 784-8700
Sonoma	Yes	We have a certified assistor who goes to the jail to help complete applications and then forwards them to a designated worker who processes the applications so benefits are available upon release.	Dawn Moore, dmoore@schsd.org, 707 565-5825
Stanislaus	Yes	County Inmates Stanislaus County has partnered with a Community Based Organization, El Concillo, to complete Medi-Cal (MC) applications on	Margaret McKain MCKAINM@stancounty.com or

		Customers in County jail facilities. Utilizing the Covered CA online application, inmates complete a full MC application with the Certified Enrollment Counselor. The individual is placed on In-patient Inmate MC aid code until they are released from jail. Upon release, the individual is assessed for full scope MC benefits. In addition, Stanislaus County has an Eligibility Worker at probation to complete MC and other program applications for inmates upon release. State Inmates Pre-release applications are received by a designated Clerical Supervisor and is then assigned out to an Eligibility Worker. The Eligibility Worker attempts to approve MC with the information provided on the pre-release application prior to the individuals release from prison. The Worker will contact the prison staff person working with the inmate via email and/or telephone if additional information is needed to determine eligibility.	Teresa Brockman BrockmT@stancounty.com
Tulare	Yes	We co-locate an eligibility worker with our Probation office and jail staff that receive lists of inmates pending release and they meet with them to process Medi-Cal applications and issue BIC cards. Depending on workload an application may be taken by the co-located worker and then imaged and task assigned to a "processing" worker in another office to finalize.	Angie Arroyo, Medi-Cal Program Specialist, (559) 623-0131 AArroyo@tularehhsa.org
Tuolumne	Yes	The department works in collaboration with the local jail to obtain a list each week of individuals who are scheduled to be released within the upcoming 90 days. A county staff member is assigned to assist these individuals through the application process with the goal that upon existing jail they will be able to immediately access health care	Rebecca Espino 209-533-5746 respino@co.tuolumne.ca.us
Ventura	Yes	Met with appropriate stakeholders in the local county jail; talked to other counties on how they were proceeding; visited an adjacent county's program; established an MOU and evaluated progress once launched.	For program development and launch: Lauri Flack, Deputy Director; for how program is operating: Jose-Vazquez, Program Manager,

			Community Services Department
Yolo	Yes	In a coordinated effort between the Sherriff Dept and Health and Human Services, we meet with inmates scheduled to be released within 30-60 days. We enter the jail to assist inmates in completing an application and process at our satellite office located on the jail campus.	Melinda Gutierrez, (530) 661-2661 Melinda.Gutierrez@yolocounty.org James McMahon, (530) 661-2643 James.McMahon@yolocounty.org

Counties that did not respond: Alpine, Colusa, Del Norte, Humboldt, Modoc, Nevada, Plumas, Santa Cruz, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, and Yuba.

Appendix C: Interviewee list

Administrators from other states

Aletha Hayden. Benefit Programs Assistant Administrator at Vermont's Department for Children & Families. Interview occurred on March 3, 2016. Contact: Aletha.Hayden@vermont.gov or (802) 241-0613.

Amanda Doherty. Program Administrator within the Division of Economic Assistance at South Dakota's Department of Social Services. Interview occurred on April 19, 2016. Contact: Amanda.Doherty@state.sd.us or (605) 773-5468.

Dianna Laffey. Chief of Program Policy within the Economic Self-Sufficiency Division at Florida's Department of Children and Families. Interview occurred on March 11, 2016 and March 18, 2016. Contact: Dianna.Laffey@MyFLfamilies.com or (850) 717-4221.

Jill Berry. Deputy Commissioner of Family Independence Administration Operations within New York City's Human Resources Administration. Interview occurred on April 13, 2016. Contact: berryji@hra.nyc.gov or (929) 221-6392.

Ruby Benasky. Executive Assistant to Jamie Palagi, Division Administrator of Montana's Human and Community Services Division. Contact: RBenasky@mt.gov or (406) 444-4154.

Tom Hedderman. Director of Food and Nutrition Policy at New York's Office of Temporary Assistance and Disability. Interview occurred on April 15, 2016. Contact: tom.hedderman@otda.ny.gov or (518) 473-1469.

California interviewees

A. Smith. Formerly incarcerated within California state prison. Interview occurred on April 15, 2016.

Anonymous woman. Released in 2007 from California state prison. Interview occurred on April 8, 2016.

Azadeh Zohrabi, National Campaigner at Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. Interview occurred on March 10, 2016.

Elizabeth Siggins. Director of Local Safety Solutions Project at Californians for Safety and Justice. Interview occurred on August 5, 2016.

Henry Montgomery. Formerly incarcerated in California state prison. Interview occurred on April 13, 2016.

Karen Narita. Released in 2011 after 28 years of incarceration in California state prison. Interview occurred on August 21, 2016.

Kellen Rosoniello. Staff Attorney on health and drug policy at the ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties. Interview occurred on March 1, 2016.

Lauren Hansen. Staff Attorney at Public Interest Law Project. Interview occurred on April 11, 2016.

Leo O'Farrell. CalFresh Program Director at San Francisco's Human Services Agency. Interview occurred March 4, 2016.

Liz Gomez. Associate Director of Client Services at the Alameda County Community Food Bank. Interview occurred on March 1, 2016.

Lizzie Buchen. Co-Coordinator at Californians United for a Responsible Budget. Interview occurred on August 5, 2016.

Malachi Scott. Formerly incarcerated in California state prison. Interview occurred on April 18, 2016.

Michael Brodheim. Released in 2015 after 35 years of incarceration in California state prison. Interview occurred on April 9, 2016.

Nikita Singh. CAL-ID Coordinator within Division of Rehabilitative Programs at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Interview occurred on April 20, 2016.

Sonja Tonnesen. Deputy Director at Root & Rebound: Reentry Advocates. Interview occurred on February 24, 2016.

Tiana Wertheim. Senior Analyst at San Francisco's Human Services Agency. Interview occurred March 4, 2016.