

The County of Fresno is committed to promoting healthy eating, good nutrition, and active lifestyles.

WHEREAS, in November 2002, the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) revealed that more than 2.24 million low-income adults in California cannot always afford to put food on the table and, as a result, almost one out of three of these adults (658,000) experience episodes of hunger; and

WHEREAS, the ranks of food-insecure Californians include not just the most impoverished but: working adults, the elderly with fixed incomes and many families; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity and poor nutrition pose substantial risks to health resulting in large costs to society through increased needs for medical care relating to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, etc., and impede education and work productivity; and

WHEREAS, nutrition education and access to quality food improve health, education, and employment outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2003 American Community Survey indicates that Fresno County has the seventh-highest poverty rate of all counties in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Food Stamp Program was first established as the Food Stamp Plan in 1939 to help needy families and a lagging economy during the depression era and was revised in 1961 with additional changes made in 1977; and

WHEREAS, the Food Stamp Program is the first line of defense against food insecurity and malnutrition; and

WHEREAS, fifty-one percent of all food stamp recipients are children and nine percent of recipients are age 60 or older; and

WHEREAS, the Food Stamp Program supports local farmers and federal benefit dollars could potentially contribute an additional \$88 million to Fresno County's economy, with an economic multiplier effect of 1.84, resulting in an economic gain of \$161.9 million annually; and

WHEREAS, Fresno County's Department of Employment and Temporary Assistance has successfully improved business practices that resulted in a significant increase in the Food Stamp Program Accuracy rate from 85% in Federal Fiscal Year 2000 to 96% in 2003; and

WHEREAS, California's food stamp participation rate is the lowest in the nation, but Fresno County is actively addressing access to food stamps in the County and has increased outreach activities that resulted in an 80% increase in the non-assistance Food Stamp Program participation from Fiscal Year 1999-00 to 2003-04; and

WHEREAS, Community Food Bank is undertaking a partnership with Fresno County, the Congressional Hunger Center, Fresno Metro Ministry, Foodlink for Tulare County, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Western Region Office and other County businesses and organizations to continue to increase County residents' access to the Food Stamp Program through widespread outreach efforts and cooperation with Community Based Organizations.

Now, THEREFORE, as the Food Stamp Program contributes to the current and future health and well-being of the people of Fresno County, Be It Resolved, that we the members of the Board of Supervisors do hereby proclaim the year leading to the 2005 holiday season as Food and Nutrition Access Year in Fresno County. We call upon the communities of Fresno County to work with state and federal agencies to improve access to the Food Stamp Program to strengthen this region's people and economy and to improve the health of our County.

Approved Unanimously by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors 12-13-04