



Annual Impact Report

Federal Fiscal Year 2026



CalFresh Healthy Living has worked for over 30 years to achieve a California where everyone is healthy, active, and nourished. CalFresh Healthy Living served Californians with limited resources by promoting and supporting healthy living through good nutrition and increased physical activity. The program reached eligible Californians through individual, organizational, and community-focused, evidence-based interventions.

A federal bill passed in July 2025 discontinued funding for CalFresh Healthy Living and all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) programs across the United States as of the end of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025. This report demonstrates the positive impacts of CalFresh Healthy Living for FFY 2026 as well as over the past four years.



In FFY 2026, CalFresh Healthy Living reached

1.2 million

adults, adolescents, and children across the state through **Direct Education** and **Policy, Systems and Environmental change activities**.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in collaboration with State and Local Implementing Agencies, provides programming to eligible Californians.

State Implementing Agency (SIA)	Local Implementing Agencies (LIA)
Catholic Charities of California, Inc. (CCC)	12 Local Catholic Charities Organizations
California Department of Aging (CDA)	19 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)
California Department of Public Health (CDPH)	56 Local Health Departments (LHDs)
CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California (CFHL, UC)	18 UC Cooperative Extension programs (UCCEs)

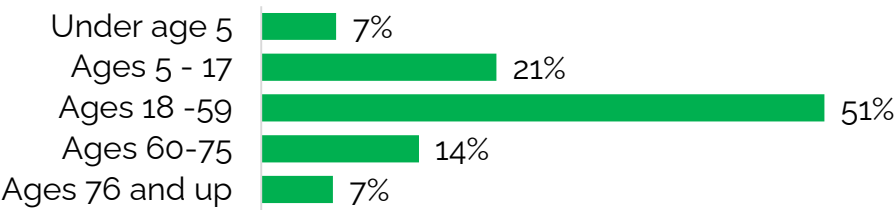


Who we serve

The CalFresh Healthy Living program served Californians of all ages who live in households with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), including those who qualify for CalFresh, known nationally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey from 2024, about one-third of Californians are eligible for CalFresh Healthy Living — representing about 10.6 million adults, adolescents, and children.

CalFresh Healthy Living Eligible Population (n = 10,585,722)

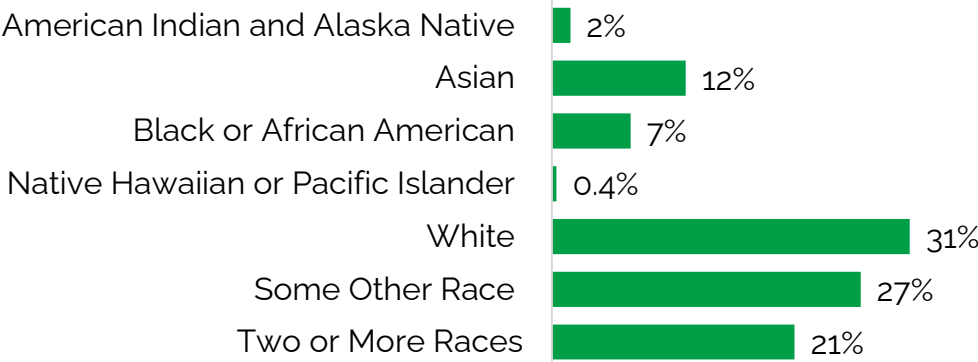
Age



Ethnicity



Race



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2020 - 2024), <https://data.census.gov/>



Direct Education

CalFresh Healthy Living delivered behavior-focused nutrition education and physical activity interventions, known as Direct Education, utilizing evidence-based curricula aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

Due to decreased funding and a shorter duration to complete Direct Education activities in FFY 2026, there were fewer interventions than in previous years. Additionally, outcome data were not reported at the state level since not all sites collected outcome data in FFY 2026. Therefore, findings related to the individual level SNAP-Ed Framework Indicators are not included in this report. Still, 3,733 Direct Education interventions took place, reaching almost 97,000 participants, mostly youth.

FFY 2026 Overview



3,733
Direct Education
interventions



1,033
Direct Education
Sites



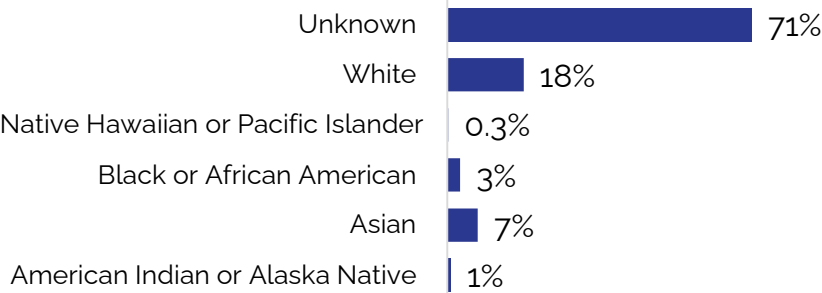
96,819
Direct Education
participants

FFY 2026 Direct Education Participants (n = 96,819)

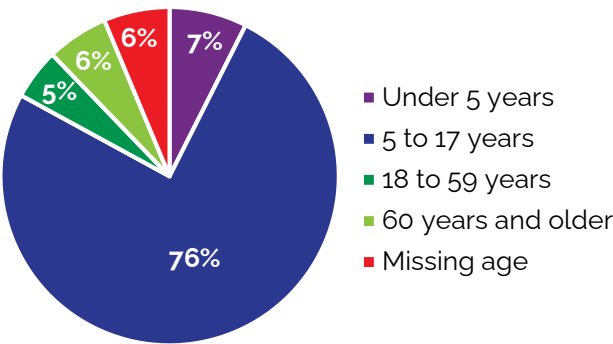
Ethnicity of participants



Race of participants



Age of participants





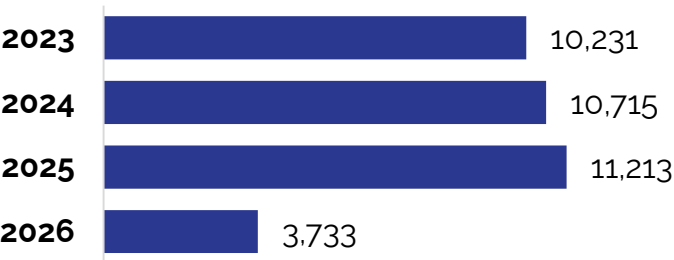
Direct Education

Over the years, CalFresh Healthy Living has offered Direct Education classes both in person and online, providing instruction in 12 languages across all 58 counties in California. Many sites also implemented Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) changes to reinforce and support Direct Education goals.

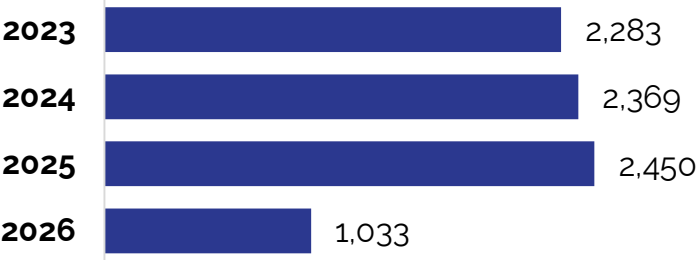
As shown below, these efforts enabled CalFresh Healthy Living to expand the reach of the program in terms of number of interventions, sites and participants from 2023 through 2025, reaching 289,577 participants at its peak. With program funding ending in September 2025, limited funding and a shortened implementation period resulted in lower reach in FFY 2026.

FFY 2023 - 2026

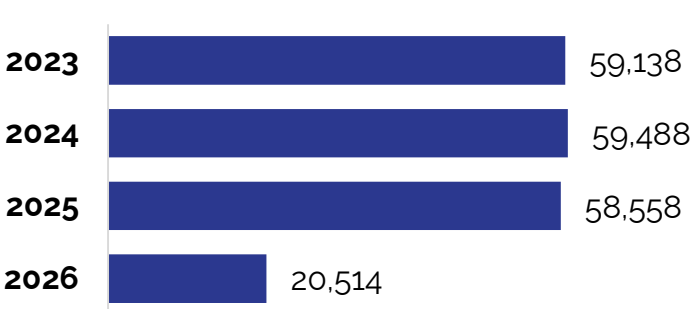
Number of Direct Education Programs



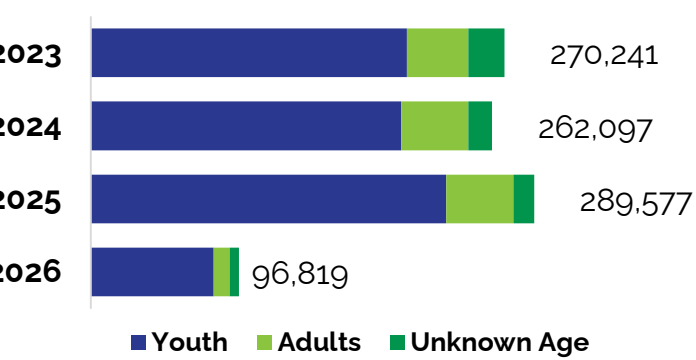
Number of Direct Education Sites



Number of Direct Education Sessions



Number of Direct Education Participants



Resilience Through Change: How Volunteers are Filling the Gaps

Catholic Charities of Orange County

Since 2016, the CalFresh Healthy Living program at Catholic Charities of Orange County has provided nutrition education and wellness programming to communities across Orange County, equipping residents with practical tools to lead healthier lives. As the program evolved, community members across multiple partner sites recognized the value of this education and stepped up to ensure these opportunities would continue. Since February, volunteers have increased their teaching roles,



progressing from leading small portions of classes to facilitating full sessions independently by June. Thanks to volunteer leadership, 80% of partner sites now have trained community members prepared to continue classes and physical activity programming. The CalFresh Healthy Living team has created a strong foundation for sustainability by developing a shared inventory of educational materials accessible to volunteers and partner sites. Volunteers will lead classes while receiving ongoing encouragement and support from partner organizations. Another key indicator of sustainability will be the continued recruitment and training of new volunteers, ensuring that leadership development remains community-driven and that the program's impact continues.

Fall Prevention Program Participants Experience Improved Physical and Mental Health

Area Agency on Aging - Serving Del Norte and Humboldt

This year the fall prevention program in Del Norte County was expanded to include Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention. The program was 8 weeks long with 2 classes per week and was led by nurses from Sutter Health. This class was the most attended program to date with participants feeling as though they could follow the program and be successful. Multiple participants expressed how they felt so peaceful after class, their stress just went away. They also felt more stable on their feet. One participant began the session in a chair, and by the end of the 8 weeks was doing most of class standing. Another participant explained how she could move her arms better after class. Many of the students have asked for more classes and are excited to keep improving. Those who may have been nervous to start an exercise program were encouraged to come and grow at their own pace. This program not only improved strength and mobility but reduced stress for many of the participants. This demonstrates the connectedness of physical and mental health.



Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) Change Activities

CalFresh Healthy Living has supported community health by implementing community-based PSE interventions that increased access to and enhanced the appeal of healthy foods, while expanding opportunities for physical activity. PSE interventions have been implemented in a wide range of settings in communities where 50% or more of the population are CalFresh-eligible. In FFY 2026, there were 811 PSE interventions creating 4,054 changes.

FFY 2026 Overview

Type of PSE Change	Number of PSE Changes
Policy changes	303
Systems changes	1,738
Environmental changes	2,012
Promotional changes	1



4,054
PSE changes



837
Sites with
PSE activities



1,129,965
Californians reached
(estimated)

Most Frequent PSE Setting Types, Number of Sites

Schools (K-12, elementary, middle, and high)	248
Food assistance sites, food banks, and food pantries	133
Early care and education facilities	128
Before and after-school programs	70
Individual homes or public housing sites	46

Top PSE Changes

	Initiated or expanded use of edible gardens for nutrition education	327
	Initiation, improvement, expansion, reinvigoration or maintenance of edible gardens	315
	Increased opportunities for parents, students, or community members to work in the garden	275
	Increased or improved opportunities for structured physical activity	158
	Improved quality of structured physical activity	145
	Established or improved physical activity facilities, equipment, structures, or outdoor space	88

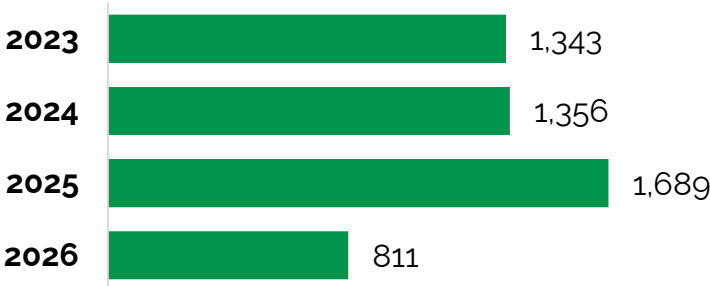


Policy, Systems and Environmental Change Activities

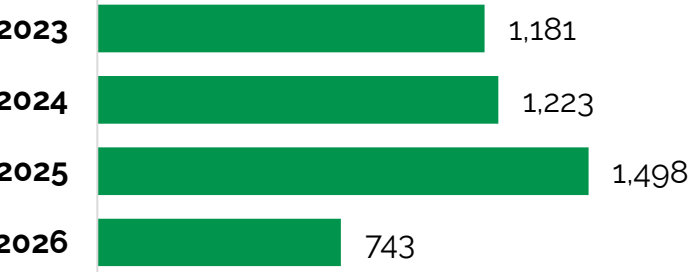
Over the past 4 years, the number of PSE change activities has increased substantially, reaching almost 2 million eligible Californians in FFY 2025.

FFY 2023 – 2026 Overview

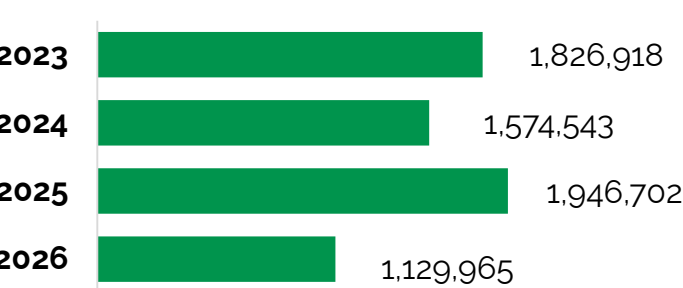
Number of PSE Activities



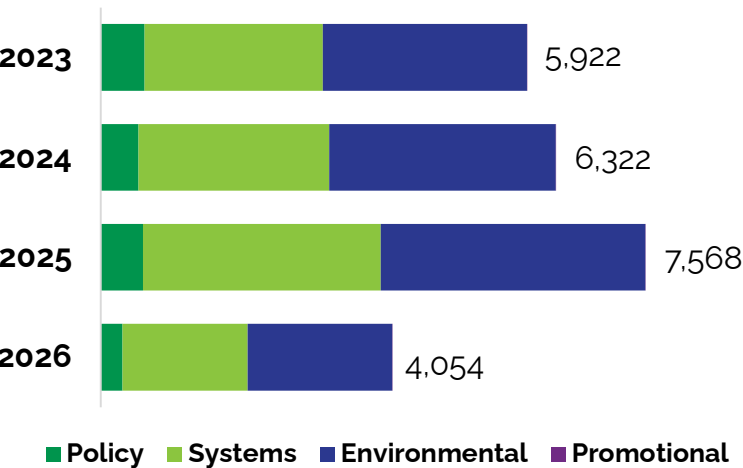
Number of PSE Sites



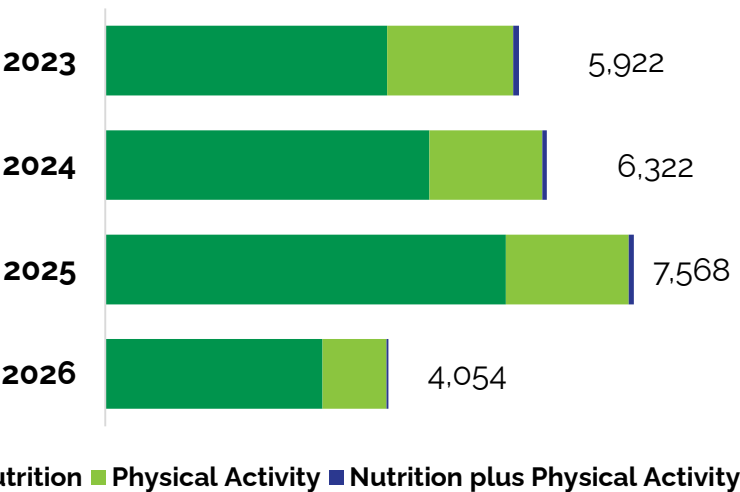
Estimated PSE Reach



Number and Type of PSE Changes



Number and Category of PSE Changes



Cultivating Lasting Change: Building Community Ownership for Healthy Living

CalFresh Healthy Living UCCE, Alameda County (CFHL, UCCE)



In anticipation of CalFresh Healthy Living program closure in September of 2026, CalFresh Healthy Living UCCE, Alameda County (CFHL, UCCE) is focusing on long-term systems change, community ownership, and program sustainability. For the South County Homeless Project, a strategic partnership has been developed with the University of California Master Gardener Program allowing for continued success and stewardship with mentorship from trained Master Gardeners. At senior public housing sites, site coordinators are training to independently continue nutrition education and wellness programming. After advocacy and planning, the Oakland Unified School District Early Childhood Education Department has agreed to continue the Early Childhood Education Environment, Food and Garden Champion Project and hire the current CalFresh Healthy Living Lead Garden Educator to sustain this work. Sustainability is not simply about maintaining programs, it is about cultivating community connections, ownership, strengthening partnerships, building leadership, and embedding healthy practices into the fabric of daily life. Through intentional collaboration, capacity building, and innovative partnerships like these across the state, CalFresh Healthy Living, UC has laid the foundation for continued healthy living impact.



Student Nutrition Ambassador Cohort (SNAC): Inspiring Lasting Change Through Student Leadership

Sacramento County Health Department

The Student Nutrition Ambassador Cohort (SNAC) was designed to give high school students the tools to champion health and wellness among their peers. In Spring 2026, SNAC engaged 14 students from Luther Burbank High School in a four-week series of structured in-person, interactive training sessions exploring healthy eating, physical activity, food waste reduction, the influence of junk food marketing, the importance of adequate sleep and overall wellness. Through creative, hands-on projects, including surveys, interviews, and flyers, students shared information and perspectives with their peers while gathering feedback on school food and wellness. By giving students the tools and confidence to lead, SNAC helped create a lasting ripple effect of positive change throughout the school community. Programs like SNAC demonstrate the value of providing structured nutrition education and creating opportunities for students to apply wellness concepts through leadership and peer engagement.

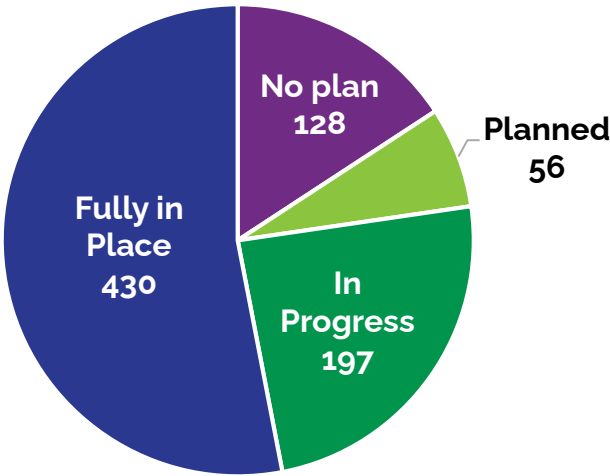
"I usually don't plan what I eat but learning that not having a balance can disrupt my focus on school, is improving myself as a person." -SNAC Participant



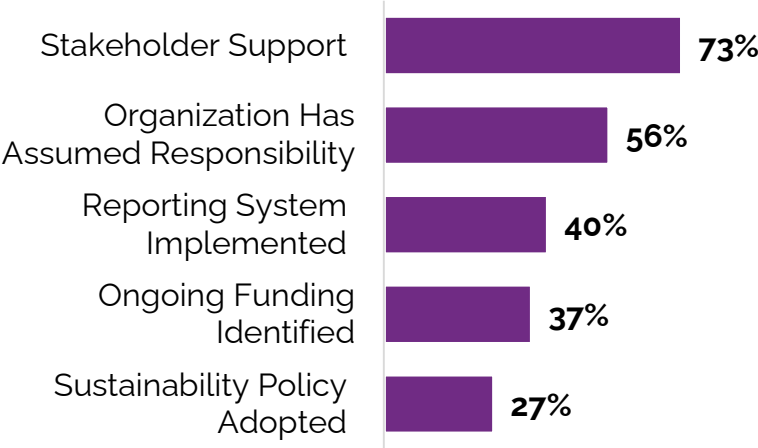
What's Next

Sustainability mechanisms are put in place to ensure the that PSE changes continue without the ongoing involvement of CalFresh Healthy Living Implementers. These efforts were particularly important during the program's final year. Over half of the 811 PSE activities had a sustainability plan fully in place. Of those 811, more than half indicated stakeholder support and/or the partner organization has assumed responsibility for the PSE activity. Additionally, 47 (84%) of the 56 California counties with PSE activities had a sustainability plan in place for at least one PSE activity.

FFY 2026 Sustainability Plan Status for PSE Interventions (n = 811)



FFY 2026 Sustainability Mechanism (n = 430)*



**Note: More than one option could be selected.*

With SNAP-Ed ending, the future of nutrition education and PSE efforts to expand healthy food access remains uncertain. CalFresh Healthy Living SIAs and LIAs have worked to preserve essential program components through alternative funding and longstanding partnerships. Core activities such as capacity building, staff training, and publicly available tools and resources will sustain aspects of the program, while many PSE improvements will remain embedded in communities and inform future health initiatives. Although dedicated funding and staffing cannot be fully replaced, the program's partnerships, expertise, and infrastructure provide a strong foundation for advancing nutrition, wellness, and health equity across California.



Final Thoughts from the CalFresh Healthy Living Section Supervisor

On behalf of the California Department of Social Services, CalFresh Healthy Living, I am proud of what we've accomplished together and of the sustainable, resilient foundation built for the future. Our vision for healthy, active, and nourished Californians remains strong, even as the landscape continues to evolve.

For more than 30 years, the program has supported healthier habits, reduced nutrition-related disparities, and helped families across California improve their quality of life. None of this would have been possible without thousands of partnerships that brought our work into schools, churches, community centers, libraries, food banks, senior centers, and other local spaces. Through collaboration and innovation, we sparked meaningful change—helping families shop wisely, cook nutritious meals, and stay active. The program's success has been reflected in participant stories, partner feedback, evaluation data, and published research documenting positive outcomes.

The closeout of the CalFresh Healthy Living Program in 2026 has been a bittersweet journey filled with camaraderie, innovation, accomplishments, and achievements. The program's impact will continue through the tools, resources, and training we've shared; the nutrition and cooking skills gained by Californians; the systems and environmental changes achieved; and the wellness policies established across communities. Even as the program ends, the work will live on through other initiatives, through our partners, and through the champions who carry this mission forward.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the program and supported its thoughtful closure and sustainability efforts. We extend our appreciation to the CalFresh Healthy Living Team, our State agency partners, Local implementing agencies, CDSS subcontractors, and the many community partners who made this work possible. Your dedication has strengthened communities, improved health, and created a lasting legacy.

-Lin Van

CalFresh Healthy Living Section Supervisor