



## **Eating Right When Money's Tight**

*Innovative Nutrition Education Projects  
in Mendocino County*

# Who We Are

- Community Outreach Unit
- Employment and Family Assistance Division
- Health and Human Services Agency
- County of Mendocino



# What We (Typically) Do

- Very small unit
- Outreach and enrollment assistance for CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and Covered California
- We also manage a Car Seat Safety Program
- Our work is focused “outside the four walls” of the Social Services Department



# Why SNAP-Ed?

- Lots of opportunities!
- A logical extension of CalFresh outreach work
- Focus on longer-term solutions
- Building partnerships with community based organizations and local Public Health Department



# Our Projects: Vets Can Cook

- “Beyond MREs, Ramen and Hot Dogs” – cooking classes for veterans
- Series of cooking classes held at local Veterans Hall
- Focused on vets lifestyle and background





# Our Projects:

## Teen Nutrition Advocates



- Teens teach elementary, middle- and high-schoolers at after school programs
- Focus on healthy choices, healthy environments, new foods
- Teens became lifelong nutrition advocates themselves



# Our Projects:

## Cooking with Kids and Parents

- Boys and Girls Club
- Series of cooking classes that began with kids and ended at parent pick-up time
- Method involves the whole family in a way that respects the time constraints of working families





# Our Projects:

## Nutrition Basics at Family Resource Centers



- Contracts with local Family Resource Centers for a series of cooking classes
- Very small contracts with a substantial payoff
- Helped disseminate this opportunity to our smallest and most isolated communities



# How does this work benefit our clients?



- Primary goal – encourage healthier choices within a limited budget
- As a Department, we get to be advocates for low-income families within a “foodie” world that doesn’t typically recognize the special situations of poverty



# How do these projects benefit our local Social Services department?



- Contributes to transforming the culture
- Build partnerships with the community
- Build partnerships with local Health Department
- Projects are FUN



# How can local Social Services Departments get involved?

- Consider partnering with your Local Public Health Department
- Is your local Public Health Department working on a [County Nutrition Action Plan \(CNAP\)](#)? Are you invited to those meetings?
- Viewpoint and expertise of Social Services Department is vital. Be there!



# Questions or Comments?

