Those who are in search of food assistance may also experience housing insecurity, unemployment, and other hardships. An eligible applicant may not have the emotional bandwidth to endure the administrative burdens of navigating programs like CalFresh. Studies have shown that when administrative services are more efficient, clients feel more dignified and their time feels respected.

“...It's not easy, the paperwork was confusing, lots of ‘proof of this,’ ‘proof of that.’ It took me a long time to gather everything because it was my first time going in. I didn’t know what I needed. It was confusing.”

— REGION 5, ANTELOPE VALLEY

TOP COMMUNITY CONCERNS

SOMEONE TO TALK TO.
Many felt the application was so complicated to the point that it discouraged them from applying at all. Having someone to walk through the requirements and technical language made a difference.

VARIATION OF SERVICES.
Many felt that their interaction with DPSS staff lacked consistency because each encounter is often different. A culturally-responsive person may not always be available to support them. This can further add onto their emotional burden.

DPSS OFFICE ENVIRONMENT.
The best service-providing elements community members would like to see more of include supportive staff, a welcoming environment, and consistency of what to expect.

MYTH:
Applying for public food benefits must be done in-person.

FACT:
There’s more than one way to apply. Enrollment services available, including online applications as well as community-serving organizations who can help with enrollment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Provide direct support for enrollment and recertification
• Streamline enrollment and services
• Apply Human-Centered Design
• Learn from changes related to COVID-19 and wildfire response

CHECK OUT THE PROJECT AT GOODFOODLA.ORG/CALFRESH