**STIGMA & MISINFORMATION**

Stigma and misinformation are very common themes in public assistance programs. Those seeking help may feel shame or have inaccurate information. Negative views towards programs like CalFresh can discourage enrollment and participation.

“At first [CalFresh] would confuse me. Many years ago I used to get food stamps, but I stopped because I was scared of public charge.”

— REGION 1, CENTRAL EAST

**TOP COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

**STIGMA.**
When service providers cannot culturally and linguistically support you, it’s difficult to ask for help with enrollment. This can also lead to misunderstandings and increase anxiety. Some may also feel shame towards needing food assistance and asking for help.

**MISINFORMATION.**
There are many stories shared at the community level that may circulate negative or false information about qualifying for CalFresh.

**COMPARISON TO WIC.**
Community members shared that they experience Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) as a friendlier program in comparison to CalFresh because they felt WIC staff have more empathy towards their clients.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Coordinate to meet the psychological safety of participants by developing trust
- Develop long-term community outreach strategies to combat deeply rooted stigma towards CalFresh
- Learn from WIC’s community-friendly approaches

**MYTH:**
Having a job or an income prevents you from getting public food assistance benefits.

**FACT:**
The calculation of your benefits is based on many factors. For instance, if you are earning an income, you may still qualify because there are income eligibility guidelines. In 2019, over 605,000 Angelenos qualified for CalFresh, but did not enroll.*

Source: "American Community Survey

CHECK OUT THE PROJECT AT GOODFOODLA.ORG/CALFRESH