

PRESS RELEASE

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COMMUNITY BRIDGES
PUENTES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Thousands of Santa Cruz residents now eligible for emergency CalFresh (SNAP) benefits *Community Bridges' Family Resource Centers are open and providing enrollment assistance*

WATSONVILLE, CA – Last week over 8,000 people in Santa Cruz County filed for unemployment, compared to 144 four weeks ago. CalFresh is the first line of defense for these newly unemployed or furloughed employees facing an urgent need to provide food for themselves and their families.

Individuals making less than \$2,082 and families of four making less than \$4,292 are eligible for CalFresh benefits. Under the recently passed Families First Act, emergency supplemental CalFresh benefits will increase the benefits for many households up to the monthly maximum. Additional emergency coronavirus relief is expected to augment this benefit even further.

The Families First Act also established a new program, Pandemic EBT (P-EBT), that provides food assistance benefits for households with children who attend a school that has closed and who would otherwise receive free or reduced-price meals. P-EBT is available regardless of immigration status and households do not have to be enrolled in CalFresh in order to be eligible. P-EBT is not considered in a public charge test.

“Understanding what public benefits are available to you and navigating the application process can be confusing and stressful,” says Ray Cancino, Community Bridges CEO. “Hundreds of families are reaching out to our Family Resource Centers in this time of crisis to get help in meeting their essential needs.” Cancino notes the Family Resource Centers are open and providing drop-in support to all community members affected by the stay at home order, regardless of immigration status. “You don’t have to do this alone,” states Cancino.

In addition to CalFresh enrollment, the FRCs can assist in applying for other benefits including:

- Unemployment
- State Disability
- Medi-Cal
- Covered California [emergency COVID-19 enrollment]

FRCs also provide food distributions and clothing pantries. Additionally, the FRCs offer free telephonic mental health counseling, which is crucial in helping people manage the fear, anxiety and stress related to the COVID-19 situation. Virtual parent support services are also available from for families adjusting to a new routine.

ABOUT THE FAMILY RESOURCE COLLECTIVE

The compassionate and knowledgeable staff at the four Family Resource Centers (FRCs) offer a warm, friendly, safe place for the Santa Cruz County community to access resources that offer stability and hope for the future. Bi-lingual and bi-cultural advocacy services meet the long and short-term needs of families at no or low cost. FRCs help our community access benefits and resources such as housing, employment, healthcare, disability, unemployment, immigration, mental health counseling, literacy education, youth tutoring, substance abuse recovery, domestic violence prevention, nutrition, and child care.

Watsonville: La Manzana Community Resources

521 Main St, Suite Y Watsonville, CA 95076

<https://communitybridges.org/lmcr/>

Live Oak: Live Oak Community Resources

1740 17th Ave, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

<https://communitybridges.org/locr/>

Felton: Mountain Community Resources

6134 Hwy 9, Felton, CA 95018

<https://communitybridges.org/mcr/>

Santa Cruz: Nueva Vista Community Resources

711 E Cliff Dr, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

<https://communitybridges.org/nvcr/>

ABOUT COMMUNITY BRIDGES

Community Bridges envisions a thriving community where every person has the opportunity to unleash their full potential. Together, our family of programs delivers essential services, provides equitable access to resources, and advocates for health and dignity across every stage of life. To learn more, please visit www.communitybridges.org.

The Community Bridges family of programs includes the Child & Adult Care Food Program, Child Development Division, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), La Manzana Community Resources, Live Oak Community Resources, Mountain Community Resources, Nueva Vista Community Resources, Elderday Adult Day Health Care, Lift Line and Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County.