

CSAC 2018 Submission - 2018 County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency

Program Title: Telephonic Signature Process for Semi-Annual Reports

Overview: In June 2016, Access/Access2Health (A2H) Customer Service Center implemented a telephonic signature process for CalFresh Semi-Annual Reports (SARs) to deliver enhanced customer service.

Challenge: San Diego County residents experienced challenges in submitting their SARs in a timely fashion which directly impacted their CalFresh benefits. The customer had to submit the report via mail, in person at a Family Resource Center or online through MyBenefitsCalWIN which can cause processing delays, especially if the report is incomplete. Customers and community-based organizations made requests to simplify the process and provide an option for those who have transportation issues getting to a Family Resource Center. As a result, San Diego County asked for and received approval from the California Department of Social Services to implement a first of its kind for the state, a telephonic SAR process. The initial challenge was to operationalize the process. This challenge was addressed by working with Eligibility Operations throughout the entire planning phase, during and after implementation.

Innovative Solution: A SAR is a Semi-Annual Report used by CalFresh customers to determine ongoing eligibility and benefit amounts, and requires the customer's signature. CalFresh is also known as the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). CalFresh is a program for low-income families and individuals that meet certain income guidelines. CalFresh benefits help supplement the food budget and allows families and individuals to buy nutritious food.

As a part of ongoing efforts to offer alternative pathways for customers, Access/A2H implemented a pilot to capture telephonic signatures in order to complete CalFresh SARs for customers' continuity of benefits. This allows an electronic completion of the form rather than a manual wet signature. Once the telephonic signature is captured, the audio file is saved in the case-imaging repository. The telephonic signature process serves as a great benefit to our most vulnerable customers. They include the homeless population, customers with transportation or mobility barriers and customers that cannot take time off work to come into an office due to economic hardship or other barriers. This new process supports the County's vision of *Live Well San Diego* through improved technology, communication, and world class customer service.

Originality: San Diego was the first of the large counties in the state of California to implement a telephonic SAR process for the CalFresh program paving the way for other counties to adopt the idea.

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Cost Effectiveness (If applicable): The operating and capital costs incurred in developing and implementing this program was minimal to the department. The technology changes were primarily completed by the County's current contracted services, which incurred no additional costs to the department.

Results: The implementation of the SAR telephonic signature process has significantly enhanced Access/A2H's ability to deliver services to the residents of San Diego County. It allows customers to have continuity of CalFresh benefits. In 2016, Access/A2H processed 3,369 CalFresh telephonic SARs (averaging 480 per month). In 2017, Access/A2H processed 9,774 CalFresh telephonic SARs (averaging 815 per month). The volume continues to increase in 2018, which is a testament to the need and success of the project.