

Retail Implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project

UC San Diego
ALTMAN CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Center for
Community Health



Mother's
NUTRITIONAL CENTER



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Nutrition & Health Impact



Evaluation Report | Prepared August 2024

UC San Diego Center for Community Health

The **University of California San Diego Center for Community Health** (UCSD-CCH), housed under the **Altman Clinical and Translational Research Institute** (ACTRI), is one of three grantees funded by the California Department of Social Services to develop and implement the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. UCSD-CCH was selected for this project based on its extensive nutrition incentive work across Southern California, including its ¡Más Fresco! More Fresh Nutrition Incentive Program. This program has demonstrated a significant increase in the purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables, while simultaneously helping to increase food security levels among program participants.

Founded in 1987 at UC San Diego, UCSD-CCH has over three decades of experience working with diverse communities to tackle complex health disparities at multiple levels. Our mission is to improve health outcomes and eliminate health inequities via interdisciplinary public health practice, research, education, and capacity building. We do this work by improving health equity, addressing food security and access to healthy foods, advancing health literacy, supporting resident leadership and capacity, empowering youth, building thriving refugee and immigrant communities, reducing health disparities and chronic diseases, advancing healthy policy, systems, and environmental changes, and supporting the translation of scientific discoveries into improved health.

Our current and legacy programs are grounded in a community-driven model for change to advance and sustain health equity in communities that have historically and systemically experienced racial and socioeconomic oppressions that have contributed to poor health outcomes. We employ a community asset-based framework and participatory approaches to assist focus populations and groups in defining problems and developing solutions on their own terms. UCSD-CCH is a trusted partner with deep community connections across multiple sectors including healthcare, agriculture, grocery, childcare, government, faith and ethnic-based community organizations, and the private business sector.

Mother's Nutritional Center

For nearly 30 years, **Mother's Nutritional Center** (MNC) has specialized in serving the needs of low-income community members, particularly those participating in the USDA Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) designed to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 at nutritional risk. MNC has extensive experience supporting community members who utilize WIC, CalFresh, EBT, and Pandemic EBT. MNC aims to elevate the traditional WIC shopping experience by offering unmatched personalized service and fresh and nutritious foods at competitive prices, including farm fresh fruits and vegetables, at stores located in low-income census tracts, including 79 grocery stores in 47 cities across San Diego, Orange, Riverside, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties.

Center for Nutrition & Health Impact

Founded in 1973, the **Center for Nutrition & Health Impact** is a national nonprofit research institute providing expertise in measurement and evaluation to help develop, enhance and expand public health programs. Our research focuses on encouraging healthy eating and active living, improving food security and healthy food access, and promoting local food systems—with a health equity lens across all initiatives. The Center for Nutrition & Health Impact works nationally and internationally, partnering with other nonprofits, academia, government entities and private foundations to conduct research, evaluation and scientific strategic planning. Learn more at centerfornutrition.org.

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the California Department of Social Services for their support and for providing us with the opportunity to conduct the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. This initiative would not have been possible without your vision and commitment to improving access to nutritious food for our communities.

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A special note of appreciation is due to the staff at Mother's Nutritional Center. Your participation in the retail evaluation survey was instrumental, and we are grateful for the time and effort you contributed. Your insights and feedback have greatly enriched our understanding and evaluation of the program.

This work also adds to an accumulation of nutrition incentive program key learnings, given our work on the implementation of the ¡Más Freco! More Fresh nutrition incentive program, that occurred in collaboration with the UC San Diego Department of Pediatrics, Division of Child and Community Health.

Thank you all for your collective efforts and for helping us advance our mission to support healthier communities.

Project Roles: UCSD-CCH led the development and implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot in partnership with MNC and CDSS to ensure it met the needs of the communities that we collectively serve. UCSD-CCH also brought together key partners to evaluate the retail implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot in MNC stores.



Center for Nutrition & Health Impact personnel, in close collaboration with UCSD-CCH and MNC, led evaluation procedures, including survey instrument development, advisement on recruitment strategies, data analysis and interpretation, and report writing. MNC coordinated survey recruitment, and MNC management and staff who participated in a survey are acknowledged for providing key insights that made the evaluation successful. Last, Adriana Bearse, MS (UCSD-CCH) is acknowledged for an editorial review of the final report and Dahiany Zayas, MSPH (Center for Nutrition & Health Impact) is acknowledged for assisting the analysis team with code construction for qualitative data analysis.

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Executive Summary

Context.

The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was one of the first programs of its kind to utilize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card as an incentive delivery mechanism, which could minimize implementation burden compared to other incentive delivery strategies (e.g., vouchers).

Purpose.

The purpose of the evaluation was to understand experiences and satisfaction with the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project among Mother's Nutritional Center (MNC) retailers who were charged with making decisions about and/or carrying out the program in California using a standard implementation science framework.

Methods.

A cross-sectional evaluation of MNC retailers' implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was conducted by a team including the Center for Nutrition & Health Impact, the University of California San Diego Center for Community Health (UCSD-CCD), and MNC. A CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project survey for MNC retailer audiences was developed following an implementation science framework to assess the following constructs: retail leadership, organizational characteristics (e.g., mission/procedure alignment), quality and fidelity monitoring and support (e.g., program delivery supports), staffing, and individual characteristics (e.g., retailer perceptions). Measures were sourced from available tools, when available, and also included opportunities to provide open-ended feedback. University of Nebraska Medical Center and UCSD-CCH Institutional Review Boards considered the evaluation exempt.



Results.

A total of 538 MNC retailers completed a survey (89.0% response rate). The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was considered to have strong leadership support; to be aligned with organizational mission and values; to offer useful program delivery assistance; to be generally easy for staff to implement; and to be an important customer service. A total of 247 (45.9%) MNC retailers provided feedback using open-ended response options. Of those who provided feedback, 51.4% shared that the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project supported community food and nutrition security and 27.5% shared beliefs that the project should be continued. Suggestions shared to minimize the implementation burden of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project included: improving incentive balance tracking capabilities (21.9%); enhancing customer awareness and understanding of the project (17.8%); changing or clarifying incentive transaction rules (13.4%); increasing staffing capacity (11.7%); addressing retailer-customer language barriers (9.3%); expanding nutrition incentive eligible food items (5.7%); and adding training and technical assistance opportunities (4.5%).



Key Recommendations.

Although the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project ended in April of 2024, there was strong support for continuation. Given the overall favorable views of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, sustained funding and state and national expansion opportunities for similar SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs should be explored. The below supports are grounded in the evaluation of the retail implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, and could be used to support the delivery and expansion of SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs:

- **Leverage Funding Sources:** Access new funding sources or payers to continue SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs at the local level and to expand to new types of brick and mortar food retailers and geographic locations (e.g., statewide, nationally).
- **Tailor Program Recruitment Strategies and Materials:** Use and adapt multiple recruitment methods and program materials/education to align with customers' local language, culture, or preferences to improve SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program understanding, engagement, and brick and mortar food retail implementation.
- **Change Adaptable SNAP EBT Nutrition Incentive Program Components:** Consider tailoring SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs to meet the needs of local SNAP recipients and brick and mortar food retailers (e.g., adjusting food products eligible for nutrition incentives, exploring varied incentive cap amounts).
- **Enhance Physical Layout and/or Add Equipment:** Consider the layout of brick and mortar food retail sites and assess the need for additional equipment or infrastructure to support an increase in the number of store customers resulting from participation in a SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program.

- **Enhance Staffing:** Plan for and carry out staffing enhancements that ensure capacity for high-quality, consistent delivery of SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs in brick and mortar retail sites.
- **Provide Technical Assistance:** Offer guidance (including through external organizations) on delivering SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs in brick and mortar food retail sites, which may include retail transaction support and building management capacity for supporting different aspects of staff implementation.
- **Encourage Use of New and Existing Technology:** Highlight existing or develop new external applications, websites, or store technologies that show nutrition incentive balances for SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs, as SNAP EBT customers were not fully utilizing available technologies for incentive balances.



Introduction

Food and nutrition security can be defined as reliable household access to enough, culturally appropriate and quality healthy foods to promote health or treat disease.^{1,2} Brick and mortar food retailers are key local partners for advancing food and nutrition security and health equity in United States (U.S.) communities.³ For example, households with lower income who struggle to achieve food and nutrition security⁴ prefer shopping at superstores, convenience, and smaller grocery stores compared to farmers markets.⁵ Yet, public health programs for food and nutrition security promotion in partnership with brick and mortar food retailers are complex, as business models are designed to meet consumer demand while maximizing profit.^{6,7} This reality often creates barriers to healthy food retail strategies.

Healthy food retail strategies aim to improve the **availability**, **affordability**, **convenience**, **promotion**, **quality** and **sustainability** of healthier versus less healthy food products in food retail settings,⁸ as defined by dietary guidelines.⁹



For success, a healthy food retail strategy must align with brick and mortar food retailers' leadership priorities and organizational characteristics like business model, mission, and procedures; be monitored and supported to ensure strategies can be carried out; and align with staffing capacity and retailers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about worthwhile activities.¹⁰⁻¹³ Large federal assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provide an entry point for healthy food retail strategies because many brick and mortar food retailers maintain SNAP and/or WIC authorization to serve participating customers with lower income and to support store revenue.¹⁴ Given SNAP benefits have been shown inadequate to support household purchases of fruits and vegetables throughout the entire month of a benefit cycle,^{15,16} healthy food retail strategies centered on improving fruit and vegetable affordability are promising to promote food and nutrition security and health equity among SNAP recipients. These strategies can also support brick and mortar retailers' sale of fruits and vegetables, which are higher risk products compared to shelf-stable foods due to cost and perishability concerns.⁶

Nutrition incentive programs are one example of a healthy food retail strategy that provide SNAP recipients with a financial incentive for fruits and vegetables that can be accessed at SNAP-authorized farm direct or brick and mortar retail sites.¹⁷ These programs generally use vouchers, tokens, or loyalty cards to deliver the incentive to SNAP recipients, which is triggered by an eligible purchase and is value matched. Nutrition incentive programs are widespread nationally, especially following permanent funding in the U.S. farm bill for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP).¹⁷ The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project—carried out in California between November 2023 and April 2024—was one of the first programs of its kind to utilize SNAP recipients' Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card as the mechanism to deliver nutrition incentives. Use of the SNAP EBT card for nutrition incentive delivery has the opportunity to minimize practice and retailer burden to implement nutrition incentive programs at a wider scale.³





While more evidence is needed to understand factors that influence the success of nutrition incentive programs in brick and mortar food retail sites in general,¹¹ there is no implementation evidence on nutrition incentive programs like the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project that utilize the SNAP EBT card as the incentive delivery mechanism. Implementation science can frame this gap by providing a standard approach to identifying and overcoming factors that could thwart SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program adoption, implementation, sustainment, and scalability among brick and mortar food retailers.^{11,18-20}

In this context, the purpose of this evaluation project was to understand experiences and satisfaction with the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project among Mother's Nutritional Center (MNC) retailers who were charged with making decisions about and/or carrying out the program in California using a standard implementation science framework.

Project Methods

Design

A cross-sectional evaluation of MNC retailers' implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was conducted. The evaluation team consisted of UCSD-CCH, MNC, and the Center for Nutrition & Health Impact, who also represent the GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE). Center for Nutrition & Health Impact personnel, in close collaboration with UCSD-CCH and MNC, led evaluation procedures, including survey instrument development, advisement on recruitment strategies, data analysis, and report writing. Both the University of Nebraska Medical Center Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the UCSD-CCH IRB deemed and approved this evaluation as non-human-subjects-research (UCSD IRB protocol # 804647).

Mother's Nutritional Center

MNC is a privately-owned chain of 79 food retail stores concentrated in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties in Southern California. MNC stores are small grocery outlets that specialize in WIC services and use a "pharmacy-style" business model to maximize efficient customer service. MNC leadership, store management, and staff prioritize strong community and customer service connections and are authorized to accept federal nutrition assistance programs SNAP/EBT and WIC. In addition to the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, MNC participates in other nutrition incentive projects, such as a Summer EBT program and +ADD MILK, which allows customers to receive a dollar for dollar match for nonfat, 1%, and 1% lactose free milk, up to \$10 per transaction. As such, MNC is a local leader in supporting healthy food retail programs to improve the accessibility of healthy products among consumers with lower income to support food and nutrition security.

CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project

The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was developed and funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to create a scalable model for increasing the purchase and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables among SNAP recipients.

The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project is a novel nutrition incentive program in that the incentive delivery mechanism is through SNAP (i.e., CalFresh in California) recipients' existing EBT card, and thus aims to facilitate nutrition incentive transactions for participating food retailers and CalFresh recipients. When participating CalFresh recipients use their EBT card to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project partner sites, like MNC, they receive a 1:1 dollar value match (capped at \$60.00/month) that puts CalFresh dollars back on the EBT card, which can then be used to purchase any CalFresh-eligible food item at any SNAP-authorized retail location. A mobile phone application (ebtEDGE) was available for all customers that enabled them to check their EBT balance at any time, including after CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project incentives were delivered. SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs have been called for to improve opportunities for states to expand nutrition incentive program reach and promote equity.³

The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was carried out at 79 MNC stores between November 2023 and April 2024. MNC leadership and UCSD-CCH staff were proactive in efforts to engage stores in carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, including traveling to promote and market the program, leveraging staff with lived experiences, and underscoring the importance of the program to MNC employees and MNC customers. UCSD-CCH provided stores with implementation trainings and marketing and promotional materials for the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project and focused efforts on CalFresh recipient recruitment to participate in the program. MNC enhanced produce delivery procedures and added staff to support stores in carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project Retailer Survey

An evaluation survey was developed to measure factors related to the implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project following the Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, Sustainment (EPIS) framework. EPIS is a widely used framework in implementation science that is applied to understand factors that can positively or negatively influence the delivery of interventions, such as the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, at several key phases (i.e., EPIS name).^{10,12}

The survey was developed to focus on the EPIS Inner Context domain, or the MNC retail settings where the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was carried out, including factors such as retail leadership, organizational characteristics (e.g., mission and procedure alignment), quality and fidelity monitoring and support (e.g., supports to ensure program delivery), staffing, and individual characteristics such as retailers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions.^{10,12}

To initiate survey development, UCSD-CCH and MNC provided the Center for Nutrition & Health Impact with a list of example concepts and questions to query MNC retailers about their satisfaction and experiences with the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. Next, these concepts were mapped to EPIS Inner Context domains and measures for the survey tool were sourced from existing tools, when available. Measures also included items created in partnership with representatives from the National Grocers Association Foundation, who are GusNIP NTAE partners. The evaluation team created new questions following EPIS when needed. To ensure the survey captured the scope of factors that have been found to influence (to date) the implementation of nutrition incentive programs in brick and mortar food retail settings, a narrative review about barriers and facilitators to retail implementation of nutrition incentive programs (forthcoming) was used. Regular partner meetings were critical for survey development and ensured appropriate concepts were prioritized and that the survey language was consistent with MNC retail terminology and easily understandable for retail audiences (i.e., face validity). The complete survey that used both closed and open-ended response options is available in **Appendix I**.

Pre-existing (i.e., in the published literature) measures and items utilized on the survey are described briefly. To measure leadership support for carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, the Implementation Leadership Scale (ILS)²¹ was chosen. The ILS was created by implementation scientists to measure support for interventions by four facilitating leadership characteristics (proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, and perseverant).²¹ The ILS includes: (1) management-facing scales that assesses management's perspectives on their support for implementation

(e.g., store-level management) and (2) staff-facing scales that assesses staff's perceptions of management support for implementation (e.g., store staff). The ILS has been previously tested for factor structure, internal consistency, and convergent and discriminant validity.²¹ It is one of the only pragmatic quantitative tools available to assess leadership support for implementation. The evaluation team made minor modifications to ILS language to align with the MNC retail and CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project context.

In addition, some items developed as part of a health-enabling retail environment survey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community settings²² were adapted for use on this survey, including questions focused on store management relationships with local communities and having enough staff with the right skills to facilitate healthy food retail programs (**Appendix I**). An Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) question was also included as a standard metric to understand MNC retailers' satisfaction with carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project ("On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to a friend or colleague?").²³

Last, an economic impact calculator created for U.S. nutrition incentive programs (nutritionincentivehub.org/resources/calculator) was used to estimate the local economic impact resulting from MNC retailers' involvement in the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. The tool was created using data from Impact Analysis for Planning and the Census of Agriculture, which was analyzed to develop nine input-output models representing regional groupings of states based off similar food economy characteristics.²⁴ Each grouping had unique economic multipliers for brick and mortar and farm direct food retail outlets, which can be used to calculate the total estimated economic impact of these programs using the total value of nutrition incentive dollars redeemed. The economic multiplier for brick and mortar sites in California, such as MNC, is 1.7 (i.e., \$100 of incentives spent at brick and mortar sites in California result in \$170 of local economic impact).²⁴

Retailer Population

MNC retailers with any role in the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project were prioritized for surveying. At the time, 620 people were employed at MNC. The MNC retail positions eligible to take a survey included:

- **Higher-level leadership** (i.e., Owner, Operations Directors, Marketing Directors, Buying Directors, Information Technology Directors, and Special Projects Directors);
- **Store-level management** (i.e., District Managers, Marketing Managers, Managers, Assistant Managers, 3rd Persons, and Crew Leaders); and,
- **Store staff** (i.e., Cashiers, Produce Attendants, and Stockers).

Surveying occurred between March 26 and April 8, 2024, during the final weeks of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, to gain MNC retailers' insights about carrying out the project prior to it ending. A survey link using the online platform Qualtrics was distributed to MNC retailers via an electronic store memo, with two subsequent follow-up reminders. Store managers at each MNC site carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project (n=79 stores) encouraged survey participation during shift hours and on a store computer. MNC retailers were provided with fresh juice to encourage survey participation, which served as compensation for the time needed to complete the survey. There were 552 survey responses, which resulted in a response rate of 89.0%.

Survey Data Analysis

Quantitative Data

All survey responses were scanned for illogical or impossible data. Of the 552 survey responses received, 14 were removed from the final dataset due to missing or duplicate data.

Most survey items were analyzed descriptively. Likert scale questions (e.g., Completely disagree [0]; Disagree [1]; Neither agree nor disagree [2]; Agree [3]; Completely agree [4]) were scored from 0-4, with higher numbers representing higher agreement, and are shown as mean scores and standard deviations.

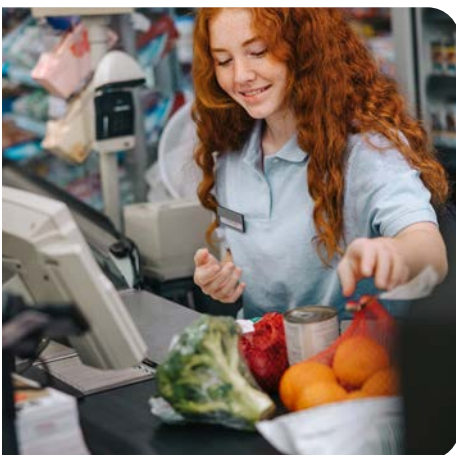
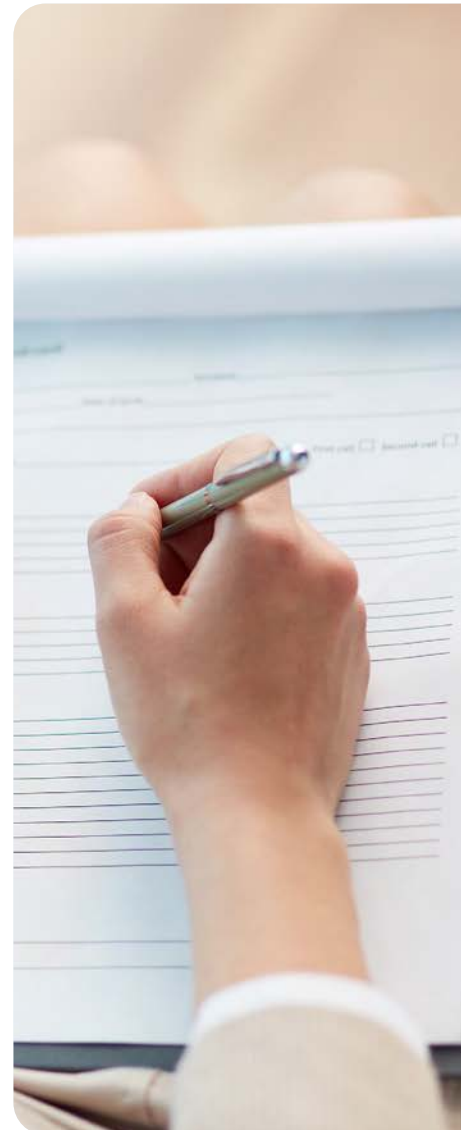
Non-Likert questions are presented as the number of responses and respective percentage for each response option (i.e., frequencies). Last, eNPS question responses were analyzed following eNPS scoring criterion,²³ which classifies "promoters" as those who rate highly, or between 9 and 10, "passives" as those giving a rating of 7 or 8, and "detractors" as those giving a rating of 6 or less. The percentage of "promoters" is subtracted by the percentage of "detractors" for the eNPS score, with the possible range of scores varying from -100 to +100. Below, the sample sizes for survey results are denoted in the tables, as not all questions were asked of all respondents, due to job title-specific skip logic built into the survey, and not all respondents answered all questions (**Appendix I**).

To characterize the communities served by MNC stores carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, store zip codes reported by survey respondents were matched to secondary data on community-level socioeconomic information that influences health (e.g., education, housing) using the Social Deprivation Index (SDI)²⁵ and residential race/ethnicity information from the American Community Survey 2020 5-year estimate data.²⁶ The SDI values range from 0-100, with values closer to 100 indicative of a higher severity of area-level socioeconomic disadvantage.²⁵ Store zip codes provided by participants that did not match the comprehensive list of store zip codes by MNC were not included in **Table 1** (n=48). Last, to determine the economic impact of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, MNC provided the total dollar amount of incentives redeemed through the project, which was loaded into the economic impact calculator (nutritionincentivehub.org/resources/calculator).

Qualitative Data

Responses to open-ended questions for MNC retailers' feedback about the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project were reviewed to create a list of nine codes with accompanying definitions, which were used to tag and group responses with similar concepts for qualitative data analysis. Once the concepts were formed, an analyst applied one or more codes to each open-ended response. These concepts were confirmed by a second analyst, and any disagreements were mediated by a third analyst. We report the percentage of retailers who provided responses that relate to each concept and give example quotations.

Last, survey responses and MNC retailers' feedback about the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project were used to inform recommendations for "implementation strategies"¹⁹ that could be used as supports to ensure SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs, like the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, can be successfully implemented and sustained in brick and mortar food retail sites and, ultimately, expanded to new sites and locations. Implementation strategies were sourced from the Implementation Strategies Applied in Communities (ISAC) compilation,²⁷ which is a list of strategies to support public health programming in community settings.



Project Results

Characteristics of MNC Retail Sites

The MNC retail sites carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project were located in socioeconomically, racially, and ethnically diverse communities across seventy-one unique zip codes in Southern California ([Appendix II](#)).

The range of SDI index scores²⁵ was 29-100 (average SDI score of 84), indicating that MNC stores carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project served residents experiencing heightened socioeconomic disadvantage.

While most store locations served communities that were majority Hispanic or Latino, certain locations also served large non-Hispanic Asian, Black, and White populations. Across all reported MNC store zip codes, 66.8% of the local population was Hispanic or Latino, 14.03% was non-Hispanic White, 8.50% was non-Hispanic Black or African American, and 8.24% was non-Hispanic Asian. See [Appendix II](#) for detailed social and demographic information by store zip codes.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

MNC retailers who responded to the survey were in majority store cashiers and crew leaders ([Table 1](#)). MNC retailers largely identified as female (76.2%) and Hispanic (94.4%) and were, on average, 28 years of age. Most respondents were either employed for less than one year or for 10 or more years. See [Table 1](#).



Project Results

Table 1: Characteristics of Mother’s Nutritional Center (MNC) retailers carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, n=538.

Characteristics of MNC Retailers	n(%)
Job Title	
Cashier	193 (35.9%)
Crew Leader	107 (19.9%)
Manager	74 (13.8%)
Assistant Manager	69 (12.8%)
3 rd Person	24 (4.5%)
Stocker	21 (3.9%)
District Manager	16 (3.0%)
Marketing/Outreach Manager	11 (2.0%)
Produce Attendant	11 (2.0%)
Marketer/Outreach	7 (1.3%)
Director	4 (0.7%)
Owner	1 (0.2%)
Age (Median [Min, Max])	27.5 [16.0, 69.0]
Gender	
Female	410 (76.2%)
Male	125 (23.2%)
Non-binary/third gender	2 (0.4%)
Prefer not to answer	1 (0.2%)
Race	
American Indian or Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	7 (1.3%)
Asian, non-Hispanic	2 (0.4%)
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	17 (3.2%)
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin	508 (94.4%)
Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	3 (0.6%)
White, non-Hispanic	19 (3.5%)
Some other race	2 (0.4%)
Prefer not to answer	7 (1.3%)
Length of Employment	
< 1 month	18 (3.3%)
> 1 month but < 1 year	149 (27.7%)
1-2 years	86 (16.0%)
2-3 years	42 (7.8%)
3-5 years	36 (6.7%)
5-10 years	79 (14.7%)
10+ years	123 (22.9%)
Prefer not to answer	5 (0.9%)

Leadership Support

Leadership support for the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project across key factors (proactive, knowledgeable, supportive, and perseverant management) scored highly, in general, both from MNC management and staff perspectives (**Table 2**). However, across most items, MNC management tended to rate themselves slightly higher than staff ratings for MNC management. The items with the largest disagreement among the two groups pertained to the removal of implementation obstacles and recognizing and appreciating employee efforts. See **Table 2**.



Table 2: Leadership support for carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in Mother’s Nutritional Center (MNC) stores using the Implementation Leadership Scale (ILS).

ILS Concepts ¹	MNC Leadership (n=306) Mean ± SD ²	MNC Staff (n=232) Mean ± SD ²
Proactive Leadership	3.52 ± 0.62 (n=303)	3.41 ± 0.57 (n=207)
Provision of tools and resources	3.53 ± 0.77	3.57 ± 0.68
Removal of implementation obstacles	3.52 ± 0.65	3.10 ± 1.00
Establishing clear standards	3.52 ± 0.65	3.49 ± 0.65
Knowledgeable Leadership	3.65 ± 0.56 (n=304)	3.57 ± 0.55 (n=231)
Knowledgeable about the program	3.64 ± 0.64	3.53 ± 0.67
Ability to answer questions	3.64 ± 0.59	3.57 ± 0.57
Knowing what they are talking about	3.66 ± 0.58	3.59 ± 0.56
Supportive Leadership	3.65 ± 0.58 (n=304)	3.48 ± 0.55 (n=230)
Recognizing and appreciating employee efforts	3.70 ± 0.60	3.47 ± 0.66
Supporting employee efforts to learn more about the program	3.64 ± 0.63	3.48 ± 0.60
Support employee efforts to carry out the program	3.63 ± 0.62	3.48 ± 0.57
Perseverant Leadership	3.51 ± 0.58 (n=291)	3.48 ± 0.52 (n=220)
Persisting through the ups and downs	3.49 ± 0.64	3.46 ± 0.57
Continuing through the challenges	3.50 ± 0.65	3.48 ± 0.60
Responding to critical issues	3.49 ± 0.62	3.49 ± 0.54
Total	3.60 ± 0.52 (n=289)	3.50 ± 0.47 (n=201)

¹ The ILS is tool used to understand factors about leadership that have been found to be linked to successful implementation.²¹ MNC retailers in store-level management roles were asked to rate themselves and MNC staff were asked to rate store management.

² Response options for each of the concepts ranged from 0 (Completely disagree) to 4 (Completely agree); therefore, higher mean values indicate more leadership support.

Organizational Support

Higher-level MNC leadership were asked about the reasons MNC participated in the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, which was reported to be to benefit customers (100%), to be a part of something new (80%), to increase sales of fruits and vegetables (60%), to increase sales of other items (40%), and because of being asked to join (40%). Higher-level leadership also believed the cost and time investment required to carry out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was worthwhile (average score=3.6 ± 0.55; n=5).

There was strong organizational support for MNC to carry out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. MNC retailers considered the store's relationship with local communities a facilitating factor for implementation (average score=3.67 ± 0.56; n=537) and considered the project generally in alignment with MNC processes/procedures (80.6%), the needs of MNC's customer base (78.2%), and the MNC mission/values (78.0%).

The local **economic impact** resulting from MNC retail sites implementing the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was estimated to be upwards of **\$13M.**



Delivery Support

MNC retailers perceived delivery supports for the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project positively. Most MNC retailers considered their experiences with marketing and promoting the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project (average score=3.54 ± 0.68; n=532) and the provided trainings, resources, and materials (average score=3.47 ± 0.67; n=532) to be favorable. Most MNC retailers (83.0%) indicated not needing additional support to carry out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Staffing Support

Staffing support for carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was rated highly, with small variations. The ease of explaining qualifying fruits and vegetables to customers (average score=3.46 ± 0.69; n=532) and ringing up or handling CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project transactions (average score=3.43 ± 0.69; n=532) were rated the highest among MNC retailers. Further, the ease of explaining differences between the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project and other federal or state programs (e.g., WIC) (average score=3.26 ± 0.79; n=532) and MNC having enough staff with the right skills to carry out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project (average score=3.22 ± 0.86; n=532) were rated slightly lower. The lowest rated staffing impact to carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, although it still scored above a 3 out of a possible 4, was about the ease of explaining how the project worked to customers (average score=3.06 ± 0.89; n=532).

The types of questions MNC retailers reported SNAP customers to ask them about included: how the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project worked in the store, such as how to use incentives and eligible items (86.6%); the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project ending (83.8%); incentive/EBT balance (77.3%); how to sign up for nutrition programs at MNC (e.g., CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, SNAP, WIC) (50.6%); filling out the CDSS online participant survey (20.1%); why the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project exists (1.0%); or the impacts of project participation on future EBT benefits (0.4%). Only one MNC retailer reported not receiving any questions from customers.

Last, most MNC retailers noted that transactions for customers new to the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project took between 2 to 5 minutes (36.1%) or between 30 seconds and 2 minutes (29.4%). Fewer indicated that more than five minutes (13.0%), less than 30 seconds (8.2%), or no additional time (6.5%) was required.

Individual Support

In general, MNC retailers demonstrated high support for the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. MNC retailers' experience carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was rated highly (average score= 3.47 ± 0.74 ; $n=532$). Retailers indicated they would support MNC participation in similar programs in the future (average score= 3.63 ± 0.63 ; $n=537$), believed it was important to support programs like the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project (average score= 3.66 ± 0.58 ; $n=537$), and that participation provided an opportunity to give back to the community (average score= 3.54 ± 0.65 ; $n=537$).

The Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) was based on MNC retailers' likelihood to recommend the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to a friend or colleague, with a possible score ranging from -100 to +100.

The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project eNPS score was excellent, an **89**



Throughout the survey, MNC retailers had the opportunity to provide feedback via open-ended responses about various aspects of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. Of 538 survey respondents, 247 (45.9%) chose to do so. MNC retailers' feedback across nine concepts are summarized below with example quotations. Additional quotations for each concept are shown in [Appendix III](#).

- **51.4% (n=127) of MNC retailers shared that the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project supported food and nutrition in the community.** MNC retailers believed that the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was a positive benefit in the community, given the project's support for community food and nutrition security amid inflation and the high cost of living, especially among senior populations and children.

“

This program helped many people in need. We all should have the right to feed our families a healthy meal. I am so thankful that this program exists. The disbelief and gratitude that we saw from our customers was so unforgettable. Fresh fruit and veggies are a part of healthy living. Thank you.

— MNC retailer

- **27.5% (n=68) of MNC retailers shared that extending the duration of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project could maximize benefits to customers, communities, and MNC.** MNC retailers expressed the desire to continue the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project for a longer amount of time, or permanently, as a way to preserve the positive impacts of the project to MNC customers, the local communities, and the MNC organization.

“

Please keep the program alive. It's a win/win/win for everyone, mainly our customers.

— MNC retailer



- **21.9% (n=54) of MNC retailers shared that CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project participants had difficulties with understanding their incentive balances, which impacted staffing capacity.** At times, challenges with customers not being aware of nutrition incentive balances, or not understanding how to check them, created time constraints for retailers and slowed down the transaction process. MNC retailers explained that customers often did not look at or keep receipts, which required cashiers to ring up a transaction in order to see incentive balances. Although customers were able to check their EBT balance using a mobile app, it appears to have been underutilized. A few retailers even suggested creating an app to let customers check their balances, which indicated not all retailers were aware that this tool already existed. Other suggestions for improvement in this area included adding kiosks to stores where customers could check their balances and changing the in-store terminals to include a button MNC employees could press to look up a customer's balance.

The entire staff, and the EBT participants would greatly benefit if there could be a way for us to check the balance used. We can only check current balance available in the EBT card, but not how much of the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot program was used. We always strive to provide an easy, fast and friendly shopping experience.

— MNC retailer

- **17.8% (n=44) of MNC retailers shared there was a need to improve awareness, understanding, and reach of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project through changes to advertisements, promotions, and customer education.** Some MNC retailers reported confusion among customers pertaining to how certain aspects of the program worked, such as the ability to spend the \$60 across multiple transactions rather than all at once and how the incentives would be distributed back to their EBT card. It was also reported that program advertisements and marketing materials contained language that may have led to customer misunderstanding of how the program worked, which presented challenges when trying to explain the program at the store. Retailer suggestions for improvement included altering wording on promotional materials and setting up a hotline for people to call if they had questions about how the program operated, especially for elderly populations who were described to have a hard time understanding program nuances. In addition, four retailers described that some customers were unaware of the program and therefore did not necessarily know about the full \$60 benefit available to them, even though all SNAP shoppers at MNC received the incentive.

Many people come in and expect their EBT to gain money, such as a customer coming in with \$10 and spending it, expecting to have a total of \$20. Most of the customers that come in expect that to happen, not knowing that it doesn't work that way.

— MNC retailer

Project Results

- **13.4% (n=33) of MNC retailers shared perspectives on changing or clarifying CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project incentive transaction rules to improve check-out efficiency and/or customer impact.**

Some MNC retailers offered several suggestions for changing or clarifying the incentive transaction rules as they pertain to the program and store operations. Ten retailers indicated that they would like the incentive cap amount to increase, although two suggested decreasing the amount. Retailers also advocated for removing barriers for those with low or zero CalFresh balances. While allowable under the program rules, customers often ended up needing to make several small transactions if they had limited EBT dollars, so that they could receive the full incentive if their CalFresh balance was less than \$60 (e.g., making six \$10 purchases to receive the full \$60 benefit), which was described to impact staff capacity and checkout wait times, and occasionally led to frustrated customers. Additionally, retailers proposed various limits on transactions (e.g., limiting the amount of produce items that could be purchased at one time; special shopping hours or days for certain customers), mainly as ideas to improve operations and better serve specific customers (e.g., EBT versus WIC shoppers). For example, some retailers expressed concerns that the influx of EBT shoppers was making it more challenging for WIC shoppers to shop in the store and purchase certain items. Other recommended changes included changing project eligibility rules to allow for non-EBT shoppers and MNC employees to participate.

Most times, customers arrive with only a couple of dollars on their card, making it difficult for them to take their desired produce. Therefore, this also makes it difficult for us because we have to ring up multiple transactions in order to meet the desired amount they would like to take.

— MNC retailer



- **11.7% (n=29) of MNC retailers shared that improving staffing capacity, support, and store operations could help to improve the delivery of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.**

A small number of MNC retailers suggested more staff be hired to support the program, as stores became noticeably busier as the program increased in popularity. Staff that could communicate in customers' frequently spoken languages and shelf stockers were noted staffing needs. Additionally, improvements to store layout and infrastructure were recommended to keep up with increased customer demand, given MNC is a smaller store. Retailers also mentioned communication from higher-level leadership could help reduce program implementation confusion among staff. Other ideas to reduce burden included dedicating specific lanes and shopping hours for WIC customers, changes to produce delivery schedules, and increasing recognition for MNC employees through a reward system.

I would staff stores accordingly and hire new employees because number of customers increased, and many Mothers' stores became busier.

— MNC retailer

Project Results

- **9.3% (n=23) of MNC retailers shared that there was a need to bridge language barriers between them and CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project participants.** Some MNC retailers reported that it was difficult to communicate with customers who did not speak English or Spanish. They recommended adding resources that included other languages, such as in-store flyers and translation tools, to help communicate the program's nuances to customers. Armenian, Korean, and Vietnamese were specifically called out as languages that could use additional translation support.

Allowing access to flyers with a variety of languages to better explain the program to customers who speak languages other than English and Spanish.

— MNC retailer

- **5.7% (n=14) of MNC retailers shared ideas about expanding eligible products for CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project incentives beyond only fresh fruits and vegetables.** Some MNC retailers believed that earning nutrition incentives should be allowed for a wider range of products, beyond only fresh fruits and vegetables. Frozen/canned fruits and vegetables were most frequently mentioned, followed by dairy products and eggs. One retailer suggested allowing prepared foods, such as salads. This was tied to community equity concerns.

I understand that this program is to promote healthy eating and encourage more fresh produce in one's diet, but a good chunk of our customers are either homeless or do not have a place to prepare their meals. Therefore, possibly adding frozen and canned fruits and veggies to the program can meet the needs of these MNC customers.

— MNC retailer

- **4.5% (n=11) of MNC retailers shared that more training and technical assistance opportunities could be useful to support the delivery of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.** A few MNC retailers requested more training and technical assistance opportunities, such as having site visits with individual stores to support employees. Two MNC employees described needing to learn on their own. Areas identified as needing additional technical assistance included translation and certain transactions related to the program.

I felt we should have had an expert of the program come to each store to explain to us about the program. Even though there was talk about it from managers, we still needed some questions answered. There were things we found out over time on our own about working through the program.

— MNC retailer

Summary of Key Learnings

Evaluation results about the retail implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project underscore the value of this effort from MNC retailers' perspective, which is critical given the historic nature of this project. The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, which was one of the first nutrition incentive programs to utilize the SNAP EBT card as the incentive delivery mechanism, was considered to have strong leadership support; to be aligned with organizational mission and values; to offer useful assistance for delivering the program; to be generally easy for staff to implement; and to be an important customer service from MNC retailers' perspectives. For example, MNC retailers' high satisfaction with the program, as emphasized by the excellent eNPS score of 89 (out of 100)²³ and their beliefs about the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project favorably impacting food and nutrition security in local communities, highlights the alignment between this healthy food retail strategy and the MNC business model. Further, upwards of 13 million dollars in local economic impact was estimated to result from MNC stores carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Despite generally high ratings across a range of organizational factors measured, some MNC retailers also shared opportunities to improve the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to support staffing capacity and high-quality customer service, which is a key value for MNC. Areas highlighted by MNC retailers for improvement included: incentive balance tracking capabilities; customer awareness and understanding of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project; changing or clarifying incentive transaction rules; staffing capacity; retailer-customer language barriers; nutrition incentive eligible food items; and training and technical assistance opportunities.

Strengths & Limitations

This evaluation had several strengths. An implementation science framing was used, which fills a key need in healthy food retail research and evaluation.¹¹ Additionally, there was a high survey participation rate (89%), which adds rigor to the overall approach and improves the likelihood that results reflect the majority of MNC retailer perspectives.

High levels of buy-in from all evaluation partners, particularly from MNC partners who were instrumental in promoting the survey to their employees, added to the success of the evaluation. Further, the context of the retail implementation of this SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program was a strength, although minimizes the generalizability of results to other types of food retail settings and to those located in other geographic locations. For example, the MNC business model, mission, and values were already strongly aligned with CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project goals, which is well recognized as a key facilitator of program implementation.^{10,12} There was also substantial support provided in advance of retail implementation from UCSD-CCH and MNC. Last, MNC stores are located in California, which is a progressive state relative to other U.S. locations. Overall, the social, political, and organizational factors specific to the retail implementation of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project likely contributed to the overall favorable responses from MNC retailers. Future efforts to expand SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs like the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to other types of brick and mortar food retail stores and other U.S. geographic areas should assess readiness.

There are also several limitations to consider. The 11% of the MNC retail staff that did not complete a survey may hold differing views about carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, although given the small percent this would be unlikely to change the results of the evaluation. Further, most retailers had similar demographic characteristics (i.e., female, Hispanic ethnicity). The timing of survey distribution likely influenced some of the responses, including the feedback received through open-ended survey questions. The survey coincided with an (unplanned) announcement of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project ending, which led to a substantial increase in participants seeking to secure incentive benefits prior to the project end. As such, MNC stores and retailers were particularly busy when asked to complete the survey. This may have influenced topics that retailers discussed, such as long lines and customer frustration, although not all feedback was indicative of this.



Key Recommendations

The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project ended in April of 2024, and there was strong MNC retailer support for continuation. Given the overall favorable views of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, sustained funding and state and national expansion opportunities for similar SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs should be explored. As this evaluation demonstrates, SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs seem promising from the food retailer perspective, especially with attention to and additional planning for possible challenges that may arise during implementation.

At the time of this report (to our knowledge), similar SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs in partnership with food retailers were being launched in other states, including Rhode Island (Shop & Shop and Walmart locations),²⁸ Colorado (independent and other food retailers),²⁹ and Louisiana (SNAP-authorized stores in general).³⁰ As such, the below supports or “implementation strategies,”^{19,27} which are grounded in the first retail evaluation of a SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program (CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project), are intended to be used to support ongoing and future implementation and expansion efforts.

Leverage Funding Sources

Access new funding sources or payers to continue SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs at the local level and to expand to new types of brick and mortar food retailers and geographic locations (e.g., statewide, nationally). Utilizing implementation science framing for these future efforts, such as the EPIS framework,^{11,12,21} can help to inform how to prepare for expansion to differing food retail sites and geographic locations.

Tailor Program Recruitment Strategies and Materials

Use and adapt multiple recruitment methods and program materials/education to align with customers’ local language, culture, or preferences to improve SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program understanding, engagement, and brick and mortar food retail implementation. Given some evidence of limited awareness and customer confusion about the SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program operations, which impacted retailers’ time and capacity, ensuring that promotional materials are clearly understood by target audiences and available in multiple local languages could support implementation. Cognitive testing of promotional materials/explainer text and gathering feedback about preferred modes for disseminating this type of information among SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program end-users is recommended.

Change Adaptable SNAP EBT Nutrition Incentive Program Components

Consider tailoring SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs to meet the needs of local SNAP recipients and brick and mortar food retailers. For example, adjusting the food products eligible for nutrition incentives, beyond only fresh fruit and vegetables, could improve the value and equitable impacts of SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs, especially among customers that face heightened barriers to achieving a healthy diet (e.g., housing insecurity, limited food preparation tools or spaces). Such changes could also distribute customer demand for incentivized products across other store items, as some retailers indicated demand for fresh fruits and vegetables impacted store operations, availability, and service to other nutrition program recipients (e.g., WIC). Further, exploring the impact of different nutrition incentive cap amounts on both SNAP recipient and retailer outcomes could be beneficial.

Key Recommendations

Enhance Physical Layout and/or Add Equipment

Consider brick and mortar food retail site layout and assess the need for added equipment/infrastructure to support an increased number of store customers resulting from store participation in a SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program. Assessing such needs before and at multiple points during implementation can ensure retailers are able to maintain the same standard of customer service throughout all phases of implementation. Other critical time-points for consideration may be during holiday seasons when food retail and food assistance program demand grows or at time-points of the month aligning with SNAP benefit distribution.³¹

Enhance Staffing

Plan for and carry out staffing enhancements that ensure capacity for high-quality, consistent delivery of SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs in brick and mortar retail sites. Areas to consider regarding staffing enhancement may include hiring additional staff to support the increase in customers and demand for incentivized products (e.g., stockers), ensuring that staffing operations and capacity account for staff turnover and busier times of the month/year, and leveraging staff with lived experience and with the ability to communicate with diverse customers in their native language.

Provide Technical Assistance

Offer guidance (including through external organizations) on delivering SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs in brick and mortar food retail sites, which may include retail transaction support and building managers' capacity for supporting different aspects of staff implementation. National organizations, such as the GusNIP NTAE and other professional retail organizations (e.g., Produce Marketing Association), could be leveraged to support these efforts. Technical assistance needs for brick and mortar food retailers should be assessed prior to SNAP EBT nutrition incentive program implementation and periodically during implementation to inform responsive assistance to minimize retail burden and maximize customer experience.

Encourage Use of New and Existing Technology

Highlight existing or develop new external applications, websites, or store technologies that show nutrition incentive balances for SNAP EBT nutrition incentive programs. Given evidence that SNAP EBT customers were not fully utilizing available technologies for incentive balances (e.g., perhaps they were unaware or did not prefer the technology), and the impact on retailers that needed to ring up a transaction to determine this information for customers, attention to suitable technology solutions from both customers' and retailers' perspectives will be important.



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Appendix I

Retail Implementation of CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Pilot Project Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Thank you for your interest in taking this survey about the retail implementation of the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Pilot Project.

You can take this survey if you are at least 18 years old and employed by Mother’s Nutritional Center (MNC). Your answers will be included in a research study about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project. We want to learn about your role in carrying out the program. When answering questions, please think about your experiences carrying out the entire program since it was first carried out in MNC stores starting in December 2023. This information is important to help improve food retailers’ experiences with programs like this one.

A team at the Center for Nutrition & Health Impact is leading the evaluation. Taking the survey is voluntary, and all your answers will be confidential. Information you provide will not be shared with your coworkers or your supervisor. Your responses will be combined with responses from other people who fill out the survey to protect your identity. All questions in this survey, including those that ask for information that could be used to possibly identify you, are optional. Please answer honestly, as there are no right or wrong answers.

All MNC employees will receive a juice as a thank you for your participation in this study. Your responses are valuable in evaluating this pilot project, and we appreciate the time that you spend on this survey.

If you have questions, you may contact Center for Nutrition & Health Impact senior research associate and project manager, James Marriott, at jmarriott@centerfornutrition.org or Joe Prickitt at the University of California San Diego, at jprickitt@health.ucsd.edu.

By participating in this survey, you agree to having your survey responses be included in a research study.

I Agree (1)

I Do Not Agree (2)

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Social and Demographic Characteristics

Q2 First, we would like to learn about you and your position at MNC.

.....

Q3 What is your age?

Please select this response and enter your age in the text box below: (1) _____

Prefer not to answer (2)

.....

Q4 How do you describe yourself?

- Female (1)
 - Male (2)
 - Non-binary/third gender (3)
 - Prefer not to answer (4)
-

Q5 How would you describe your racial or ethnic background? Check all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
 - Asian (2)
 - Black or African American (3)
 - Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin (4)
 - Other Pacific Islander (5)
 - White (6)
 - Some other race: _____ (7) _____
 - Prefer not to answer (8)
-

Q6 For how long have you worked at MNC?

- Less than one month (1)
 - Less than one year, but more than one month (2)
 - Between 1 and 2 years (3)
 - Between 2 and 3 years (4)
 - 3 years or more (5)
 - 5 years or more (6)
 - 10 years or more (7)
 - Prefer not to answer (8)
-

Q7 What is your current job title?

- 3rd Person (7)
 - Assistant Manager (6)
 - Cashier (9)
 - Crew Leader (8)
 - Director (Operations Director, Marketing Director, Buying Director, IT Director, Special Projects Director) (2)
 - District Manager (3)
 - Manager (5)
 - Marketer/Outreach (12)
 - Marketing/Outreach Manager (4)
 - Owner (1)
 - Produce Attendant (10)
 - Stocker (11)
-

Appendix I

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = District Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Or What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q8 In what zip code is your MNC store located?

Please select this response and enter your zip code in the text box below: (1) _____

Prefer not to answer (2)

I don't know and/or not applicable (3)

End of Block: Social and Demographic Characteristics

Start of Block: Module 2: EPIS Leadership

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

Or What is your current job title? = Director (Operations Director, Marketing Director, Buying Director, IT Director, Special Projects Director)

Or What is your current job title? = District Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q9 I have provided staff with the tools and resources to help carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in MNC stores/my store.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Completely agree (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Q10 I have removed obstacles to carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in MNC stores/my store.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Completely agree (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

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Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q11 I have established clear standards for carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in MNC stores/my store.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Completely agree (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Appendix I

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

Or What is your current job title? = Director (Operations Director, Marketing Director, Buying Director, IT Director, Special Projects Director)

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q12 I am knowledgeable about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Completely disagree (1)

Disagree (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4)

Completely agree (5)

Prefer not to answer (6)

I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q13 I can answer staff's questions about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q14 I know what I am talking about when it comes to the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q15 I recognize and appreciate employee efforts toward successfully carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Completely disagree (1)

Disagree (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4)

Completely agree (5)

Prefer not to answer (6)

I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q16 I support employee efforts to learn more about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q17 I support employee efforts to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

Or What is your current job title? = Director (Operations Director, Marketing Director, Buying Director, IT Director, Special Projects Director)

Or What is your current job title? = District Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q18 I persist through the ups and downs of carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Completely disagree (1)

Disagree (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4)

Completely agree (5)

Prefer not to answer (6)

I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q19 I continue through the challenges of carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Completely agree (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Display This Question:

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Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Q20 I respond to critical issues about carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project by openly and effectively addressing the problem(s).

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Completely agree (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

End of Block: Module 2: EPIS Leadership

Start of Block: Module 2: Other Staff

Appendix I

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q21 Next, we would like to learn about MNC store leadership/management support for the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in your store from your perspective.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q22 MNC leadership/management has provided the tools and resources to help carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Completely disagree (1)

Disagree (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Agree (4)

Completely agree (5)

Prefer not to answer (6)

I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q23 MNC leadership/management has removed obstacles to carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q24 MNC leadership/management has established clear store standards for carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q25 MNC leadership/management is knowledgeable about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q26 MNC leadership/management is knowledgeable about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q27 MNC leadership/management can answer my questions about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q28 MNC leadership/management knows what they are talking about when it comes to the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q29 MNC leadership/management recognizes and appreciates employee efforts toward successfully carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q30 MNC leadership/management supports employee efforts to learn more about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q31 MNC leadership/management supports employee efforts to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q32 MNC leadership/management continues through the challenges of carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q33 MNC leadership/management responds to critical issues about carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project by openly and effectively addressing the problem(s).

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Completely agree (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q34 MNC leadership/management responds to critical issues about carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project by openly and effectively addressing the problem(s).

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Completely agree (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

End of Block: Module 2: Other Staff

Start of Block: Module 3: EPIS Organizational Characteristics

Q35 Next, we would like to learn about the alignment of the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project with MNC's mission, values, and store processes/procedures.

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

Or What is your current job title? = Director (Operations Director, Marketing Director, Buying Director, IT Director, Special Projects Director)

Q36 Why did MNC choose to participate in the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project? Check all that apply.

- To benefit customers (1)
- To increase sales of fruits and vegetables (4)
- To increase sales of other items (5)
- To be a part of something new (6)
- We were asked to join (7)
- We know other stores who joined (8)
- Another reason, please describe: _____ (9)
- Prefer not to answer (11)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (12)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

Or What is your current job title? = Director (Operations Director, Marketing Director, Buying Director, IT Director, Special Projects Director)

Q37 The cost investment for MNC to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was worthwhile.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (4)
- Neither agree nor disagree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Completely Agree (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = Owner

Or What is your current job title? = Director (Operations Director, Marketing Director, Buying Director, IT Director, Special Projects Director)

Q38 The time investment for MNC to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project was worthwhile.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (4)
- Neither agree nor disagree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Completely Agree (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

Q39 MNC has a good relationship with the community that makes it easier to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (4)
- Neither agree nor disagree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Completely Agree (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

.....

Q40 Is there anything you would change about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to better align with MNC's mission or values?

- Yes, please describe: _____ (1)
- No (11)
- Prefer not to answer (12)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (13)

.....

Q41 Is there anything you would change about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to better align with MNC's store processes/procedures?

- Yes, please describe: _____ (1)
- No (11)
- Prefer not to answer (12)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (13)

.....

Q42 Is there anything you would change about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to better meet the needs of MNC's customers?

- Yes, please describe: _____ (1)
- No (5)
- Prefer not to answer (6)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (7)

End of Block: Module 3: EPIS Organizational Characteristics

Start of Block: Module 4: EPIS Quality and Fidelity Monitoring and Support

Appendix I

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = District Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Or What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q43 Next, we would like to learn about available or needed supports to help to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in your store.

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = District Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

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Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Or What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q44 How would you rate your overall experience with marketing and promotion of the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in your store?

- Very negative (1)
 - Negative (2)
 - Neutral (3)
 - Positive (4)
 - Very positive (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = District Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person*
- Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader*
- Or What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q45 The provided trainings, resources, and materials helped to prepare me/my team to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (2)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (3)
 - Agree (4)
 - Completely agree (5)
 - Prefer not to answer (6)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (7)
-

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = District Manager

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Or What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q46 Do you or your team need additional support to better carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project (e.g., communication, resources, technical assistance, training, site visits)?

Yes, please describe: (1) _____

No (2)

Prefer not to answer (3)

I don't know and/or not applicable (4)

End of Block: Module 4: EPIS Quality and Fidelity Monitoring and Support

Start of Block: Module 5: EPIS Organizational Staffing Processes

Q47 Next, we would like to learn about how carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project impacts store staff.

Display This Question:

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Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Or What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q48 MNC has enough staff with the right skills to carry out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Completely disagree (1)

Disagree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (5)

Agree (6)

Completely Agree (7)

Prefer not to answer (8)

I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = District Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Or What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q49 How easy or difficult is it to explain how the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project works to customers?

- Very difficult (1)
 - Difficult (4)
 - Neutral (5)
 - Easy (6)
 - Very easy (7)
 - Prefer not to answer (8)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (9)
-

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = District Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person*
- Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader*
- Or What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q50 How easy or difficult is it to explain the types of fruits and vegetables that qualify for the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project?

- Very difficult (1)
 - Difficult (4)
 - Neutral (5)
 - Easy (6)
 - Very easy (7)
 - Prefer not to answer (8)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (9)
-

Display This Question:

If What is your current job title? = District Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Manager

Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager

Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person

Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader

Or What is your current job title? = Cashier

Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant

Or What is your current job title? = Stocker

Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach

Q51 How easy or difficult is it to explain the differences between the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project and other federal/state store programs (e.g., WIC, CalFresh, cash EBT)?

Very difficult (1)

Difficult (4)

Neutral (5)

Easy (6)

Very easy (7)

Prefer not to answer (8)

I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

Q52 What kinds of questions have customers asked about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project? Check all that apply.

Questions about how the program works in the store (e.g., how to participate in the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project at MNC versus farmers markets, how to use incentives). (1)

Questions about program logistics (e.g., eligible purchase items) (4)

Questions about the pilot project ending (5)

Questions about incentive/EBT balance (e.g., balance amounts on receipt or ebtEDGE phone app, incentive delivery) (6)

Questions about signing up for CalFresh EBT or similar programs (e.g., WIC) (7)

Questions about filling out the CDSS online program participant survey (8)

Other, please specify: _____ (9)

Customers did not ask me any questions about the program (10)

Prefer not to answer (11)

I don't know and/or not applicable (12)

Appendix I

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = District Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person*
- Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader*
- Or What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q53 How easy or difficult is it to ring up or handle transactions for the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project?

- Very difficult (1)
- Difficult (4)
- Neutral (5)
- Easy (6)
- Very easy (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = District Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person*
- Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader*
- Or What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q54 Compared to transactions for repeat CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Program customers, how much extra time would you say that it takes, on average, to process a transaction for a customer who is new to the program?

- No more time (1)
- Less than 30 seconds (4)
- Between 30 seconds to 2 minutes (5)
- Between 2 minutes to 5 minutes (6)
- More than 5 minutes (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

End of Block: Module 5: EPIS Organizational Staffing Processes

Start of Block: Module 6: EPIS Individual Characteristics

Q55 Lastly, we would like to learn about how individual beliefs and perceptions can impact carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Display This Question:

- If What is your current job title? = District Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketing/Outreach Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = Assistant Manager*
- Or What is your current job title? = 3rd Person*
- Or What is your current job title? = Crew Leader*
- Or What is your current job title? = Cashier*
- Or What is your current job title? = Produce Attendant*
- Or What is your current job title? = Stocker*
- Or What is your current job title? = Marketer/Outreach*

Q56 Overall, how would you rate your experience carrying out the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project?

- Very negative (4)
 - Negative (7)
 - Neutral (8)
 - Positive (9)
 - Very positive (10)
 - Prefer not to answer (11)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (12)
-

Q57 On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to a friend or colleague?

- 1 (Not at all likely) (1)
 - 2 (4)
 - 3 (5)
 - 4 (6)
 - 5 (7)
 - 6 (8)
 - 7 (9)
 - 8 (10)
 - 9 (11)
 - 10 (Extremely likely) (12)
 - Prefer not to answer (13)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (14)
-

Q58 It is important to support programs like the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project that promote access to fruits and vegetables.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (4)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (5)
 - Agree (6)
 - Completely Agree (7)
 - Prefer not to answer (8)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (9)
-

Q59 Participation in the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project gives me an opportunity to give back to my community.

- Completely disagree (1)
 - Disagree (4)
 - Neither agree nor disagree (5)
 - Agree (6)
 - Completely Agree (7)
 - Prefer not to answer (8)
 - I don't know and/or not applicable (9)
-

Q60 I would support MNC participation in a program similar to the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project again.

- Completely disagree (1)
- Disagree (4)
- Neither agree nor disagree (5)
- Agree (6)
- Completely Agree (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (9)

End of Block: Module 6: EPIS Individual Characteristics

Start of Block: Module 7: Closing Question

Q61 Would you like to share anything else with us (e.g., what you like, what you dislike) about the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project?

- Yes, please describe: _____ (4)
- No (8)
- Prefer not to answer (9)
- I don't know and/or not applicable (10)

End of Block: Module 7: Closing Question

Appendix II

Table: Communities served by Mother’s Nutritional Center stores carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.

Respondent Reported Store Zip Codes	Social Deprivation Index (SDI) ¹	% Hispanic or Latino	% Non-Hispanic White	% Non-Hispanic Black or African American	% Non-Hispanic Asian
90001	99	89.9%	0.6%	8.8%	0.3%
90002	100	80.7%	0.3%	16.5%	1.4%
90003	100	79.7%	0.4%	18.2%	0.2%
90004	91	47.9%	19.9%	3.8%	24.9%
90006	99	72.7%	4.5%	3.1%	18.3%
90011	100	91.3%	0.7%	6.5%	0.5%
90015	99	58.3%	15.2%	6.0%	17.6%
90016	89	54.6%	9.9%	26.8%	5.2%
90018	97	57.3%	6.4%	28.1%	5.4%
90019	89	42.4%	18.0%	17.2%	17.4%
90037	100	79.9%	1.5%	16.0%	1.1%
90044	100	66.1%	1.0%	31.1%	0.5%
90065	81	54.9%	26.2%	1.4%	14.3%
90221	94	76.2%	0.9%	20.3%	1.3%
90242	69	75.8%	10.9%	4.6%	6.8%
90249	68	39.1%	13.7%	26.8%	14.8%
90255	98	97.3%	1.3%	0.7%	0.5%
90260	74	59.0%	16.4%	7.8%	12.9%
90262	92	87.4%	2.2%	8.7%	0.7%
90270	98	97.6%	0.9%	0.3%	0.5%
90280	92	95.3%	3.0%	0.3%	0.8%
90302	94	47.3%	6.7%	39.9%	2.4%
90638	33	42.3%	32.8%	1.3%	20.7%
90640	86	79.1%	6.6%	0.6%	12.9%
90650	68	67.8%	11.7%	5.0%	13.0%
90660	60	90.5%	4.8%	0.8%	3.5%
90706	83	56.8%	15.2%	12.0%	12.0%
90716	93	77.4%	8.4%	2.3%	10.9%
90723	87	81.7%	5.4%	7.7%	3.5%
90805	95	60.1%	7.5%	18.2%	10.7%
90813	100	66.4%	8.7%	11.2%	11.1%

Appendix II

Respondent Reported Store Zip Codes	Social Deprivation Index (SDI) ¹	% Hispanic or Latino	% Non-Hispanic White	% Non-Hispanic Black or African American	% Non-Hispanic Asian
91303	91	58.8%	25.5%	2.6%	10.4%
91331	81	87.1%	4.2%	2.5%	4.9%
91340	75	91.8%	3.5%	1.4%	2.5%
91402	97	70.4%	10.3%	3.4%	14.9%
91405	95	60.9%	24.1%	4.1%	8.4%
91606	88	52.7%	35.8%	4.3%	4.4%
91706	73	73.2%	3.2%	1.1%	21.4%
91710	62	55.2%	22.7%	5.0%	13.9%
91723	74	66.3%	20.1%	3.7%	8.3%
91733	91	73.0%	2.4%	0.5%	22.0%
91761	64	69.3%	17.0%	5.3%	6.1%
91762	79	71.3%	15.5%	4.2%	6.2%
91764	85	70.1%	13.0%	6.4%	5.5%
91767	89	68.6%	13.5%	6.9%	8.7%
91910	80	61.2%	22.9%	3.4%	9.2%
91950	92	62.9%	12.9%	4.5%	16.8%
92105	98	52.4%	13.2%	12.8%	17.7%
92114	71	44.6%	9.7%	18.4%	22.8%
92220	85	46.1%	37.3%	6.8%	3.4%
92324	80	72.0%	15.4%	6.9%	4.1%
92335	90	84.0%	9.8%	3.8%	1.3%
92336	40	58.1%	17.4%	10.2%	10.4%
92345	85	59.2%	33.2%	3.6%	1.9%
92376	88	78.5%	7.7%	10.4%	2.0%
92395	93	49.9%	29.5%	13.5%	3.4%
92404	97	66.2%	17.5%	10.8%	2.6%
92410	100	74.8%	8.8%	10.9%	3.2%
92411	96	78.7%	4.9%	13.3%	1.8%
92503	69	60.7%	25.6%	4.3%	7.1%
92504	74	53.5%	31.3%	7.3%	5.0%
92507	95	52.0%	23.8%	7.1%	13.2%
92509	73	74.0%	17.9%	2.9%	3.6%
92530	80	58.9%	30.1%	4.5%	3.7%
92543	97	51.8%	32.7%	9.8%	2.7%
92553	92	67.1%	10.3%	16.2%	4.0%

Appendix II

Respondent Reported Store Zip Codes	Social Deprivation Index (SDI) ¹	% Hispanic or Latino	% Non-Hispanic White	% Non-Hispanic Black or African American	% Non-Hispanic Asian
92571	77	79.3%	6.8%	8.6%	4.1%
92704	75	69.0%	9.8%	0.7%	19.5%
92801	89	59.6%	15.6%	4.2%	17.8%
92869	29	35.3%	48.3%	0.9%	12.0%
92882	53	51.6%	31.5%	4.5%	8.2%

¹The SDI uses American Community Survey data to estimate the socio-economic variation in health outcomes using the following variables: percent living in poverty; percent with less than 12 years of education; percent single-parent households; the percentage living in rented housing units; the percentage living in the overcrowded housing unit; percent of households without a car; and the percentage of unemployed adults under 65 years of age.²⁵

Appendix III

Table: Mother’s Nutritional Center (MNC) retailers’ perspectives about the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project, n=247.

Positive and Negative Concepts Shared by MNC Retailers	% Responses	Example Quotations
<p>The CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project supports food and nutrition in the community.</p>	<p>51.4%</p>	<p><i>“This program helped many people in need. We all should have the right to feed our families a healthy meal. I am so thankful that this program exists. The disbelief and gratitude that we saw from our customers was so unforgettable. Fresh fruit and veggies are a part of healthy living. Thank you.”</i></p> <p><i>“There’s nothing to dislike about the program. It had a great positive impact on the community, and it promoted healthy eating.”</i></p> <p><i>“There’s nothing to dislike about the program. It had a great positive impact on the community, and it promoted healthy eating.”</i></p> <p><i>“I like that it’s a very big help for the community, especially the elderly people. They’ve been showing a lot of appreciation to the program, as well as being very grateful for it.”</i></p> <p><i>“This program is so helpful for those who need the help. It brings a lot of smiles when they hear that they will get their money back.”</i></p> <p><i>“This program has been very beneficial to our community and customers. Many customers have thanked our staffed and also brought tears to them while explaining how grateful they are for this program. Many families has struggled in the past before this program had begun and now families are able to feed their kids with more healthy fruits and vegetables.”</i></p> <p><i>“I am proud to be able to promote this program to the community. My job was to promote it and see the faces when they understood the program and the happiness and relive it brought them. I’ve been thanked by the people that I’ve told this program to. I hope it continues in some form. It brought a lot of happiness and fed a lot of people from toddlers to senior citizens.”</i></p>

Positive and Negative Concepts Shared by MNC Retailers	% Responses	Example Quotations
<p>Extend the duration of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to maximize benefits to consumers, communities, and MNC.</p>	<p>27.5%</p>	<p><i>“Please don’t end the program. It’s amazing how many fruits and vegetables we sold during this time. It shows you how this program helps people eat healthier.”</i></p> <p><i>“I would like the program to be extended because it helps the people in our community.”</i></p> <p><i>“Make it permanent.”</i></p> <p><i>“Please keep the program alive. It’s a win/win/win for everyone, mainly our customers.”</i></p>
<p>Improve incentive balance tracking capabilities for participants of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.</p>	<p>21.9%</p>	<p><i>“The entire staff, and the EBT participants would greatly benefit if there could be a way for us to check the balance used. We can only check current balance available in the EBT card, but not how much of the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot program was used. We always strive to provide an easy, fast and friendly shopping experience.”</i></p> <p><i>“If we could be able to check how much the customer has received back, because they don’t always keep their receipt.”</i></p> <p><i>“Add a system where incentive balance can be checked before customer makes their purchase since they can forget how much is still available for them to take.”</i></p>
<p>Improve awareness, understanding, and reach of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project through changes to advertisement, promotion, and consumer education.</p>	<p>17.8%</p>	<p><i>“I think the program should have been better explained to the customers. Customers would complain to us that they didn’t understand how the program worked. They believed that they would receive the incentives at a later date added to their EBT balance. They would also complain that the store would charge them and accused us of not being honest. This created a few problems for the cashiers.”</i></p>

Positive and Negative Concepts Shared by MNC Retailers	% Responses	Example Quotations
<p>[cont.] Improve awareness, understanding, and reach of the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project through changes to advertisement, promotion, and consumer education.</p>	<p>17.8%</p>	<p><i>"I would change the way that the company advertises the project; many of the customers will find only the other customers that post it on social media and no other way. I would recommend that we do a radio and add it to the news for each county the stores are in to indicate what it is about. Next, I would have the company give proper explanations on the ways the program works on the advertisements. Many people come in and expect their EBT to gain money, such as a customer coming in with \$10 and spending it, expecting to have a total of \$20. Most of the customers that come in expect that to happen, not knowing that it doesn't work that way."</i></p> <p><i>"More awareness with flyers or letters to EBT participants. Many new customers weren't aware of this pilot program."</i></p> <p><i>"I would change the phrase of "buy a \$1, to receive \$1". The phrase confused many customers and started issues because people believed they'd be getting \$60 back into their account and expected an \$60 increase in their balance."</i></p> <p><i>"Find a way to promote to more people. Maybe going door to door at senior citizen homes, apartments, or public housing places."</i></p> <p><i>"Maybe a hotline that can answer any questions they may have besides what we explain to them. We noticed it was hard for some to grasp the concept, especially the elderly. I feel people are more comfort calling and talking to a person than getting on a website."</i></p> <p><i>"Inform customers about the benefits of the program and that not all \$60 need to be taken home in one day."</i></p>
<p>Change incentive transaction rules for the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to improve check-out efficiency and impact.</p>	<p>13.4%</p>	<p><i>"I would think it's best to limit certain produce items for EBT purchases, because at times it has affected our WIC customers when buying produce. We'd run out of produce before our WIC customers were able to take their full benefits. For a time, we hadn't seen our regular WIC customers because of the shortage of produce after having our EBT customers. As I've mentioned before the limit in produce would positively effect our sales in WIC while still allowing there to be purchases for EBT."</i></p>

Positive and Negative Concepts Shared by MNC Retailers	% Responses	Example Quotations
<p>[cont.] Change incentive transaction rules for the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project to improve check-out efficiency and impact.</p>	<p>13.4%</p>	<p><i>"If CalFresh is giving away \$60 a month to customers who purchase fruits and vegetables, they should be able to purchase fruits and vegetables even if they have no balance on their cards. Most times, customers arrive with only a couple of dollars on their card, making it difficult for them to take their desired produce. Therefore, this also makes it difficult for us because we have to ring up multiple transactions in order to meet the desired amount they would like to take."</i></p> <p><i>"I would like it best if it was to be made one transaction per day, so that it can give everyone a chance to get specific fruits and vegetables."</i></p> <p><i>"Increase the funds from \$60 to \$100 so that people would enjoy more fruits and vegetables."</i></p>
<p>Improve staffing capacity, support, and operations to better carry out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in MNC stores.</p>	<p>11.7%</p>	<p><i>"I would like to see more employees to be able to upkeep with the new amount of customers and stocking that is required to maintain the store; it becomes very overwhelming."</i></p> <p><i>"To be more considerate of what the staff have to do with just WIC and now adding something else for them to do. It can be too much and overwhelming for some staff members."</i></p> <p><i>"I would staff stores accordingly and hire new employees because number of customers increased, and many mothers' stores became busier."</i></p> <p><i>"I think if the project is here to stay, Mother's should hire people based off the community they are serving. For example, certain locations have a lot of Asian customers that do not speak English. This makes explaining information to them difficult because of the language barrier."</i></p> <p><i>"Produce loads arriving earlier so we can better organize ourselves for our customers."</i></p>

Positive and Negative Concepts Shared by MNC Retailers	% Responses	Example Quotations
<p>[cont.] Improve staffing capacity, support, and operations to better carry out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project in MNC stores.</p>	<p>11.7%</p>	<p><i>“We don’t have enough employees to maintain the standards that the company wants. Many team players complain about how it’s too much work for the number of staff; we have customers wait most of the time for 5 mins or more because of that and complain to us or leave the location. Curbside is not supported well. When it comes to both types of consumers, we don’t have enough people to help in store as well as online orders at the same time. There’s not enough registers and our store is too small to handle new numbers of people, which makes it very difficult for staff to navigate and stroll. This program is great, but we need more space and more people. This program will be better for other larger locations, but for us, it’s very overwhelming.”</i></p> <p><i>“I believe there should have been better communication about how the program worked.”</i></p>
<p>Bridge language barriers between retailers and consumers to improve CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project implementation and engagement.</p>	<p>9.3%</p>	<p><i>“Allowing access to flyers with a variety of languages to better explain the program to customers who speak languages other than English and Spanish.”</i></p> <p><i>“The language barrier made it difficult for costumers fully understand the program. Communication, in this case, can be a little better.”</i></p> <p><i>“Most of our customers were Vietnamese; language was a big barrier for us. They didn’t have much access to technology or weren’t too advanced in that area, so most of the time we had to be super detailed about how the program works what products applied to the program.”</i></p>

Positive and Negative Concepts Shared by MNC Retailers	% Responses	Example Quotations
<p>Allow CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project incentives to be used for a wider variety of products.</p>	<p>5.7%</p>	<p><i>"I understand that this program is to promote healthy eating and encourage more fresh produce in one's diet, but a good chunk of our customers are either homeless or do not have a place to prepare their meals. Therefore, possibly adding frozen and canned fruits and veggies to the program can meet the needs of these MNC customers."</i></p> <p><i>"I really like how we have the opportunity to help other people, especially since the cost of living is going up. the only thing is when telling the customers that they cant take eggs or milk with the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Project they get upset. hopefully soon we can get some more programs up and going."</i></p> <p><i>"Offer more benefits like milk, cheese, and eggs."</i></p>
<p>More training and technical assistance opportunities to support retailers in carrying out the CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot Project.</p>	<p>4.5%</p>	<p><i>"I felt we should have had an expert of the program come to each store to explain to us about the program. even though there was talk about it from managers, we still needed some questions answered. There were things we found out over time on our own about working through the program."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, having more information at the beginning would've helped us with our first customers. Having initial information, other than that everything was ok."</i></p> <p><i>"Some technical assistance to help with certain transactions."</i></p>

UC San Diego

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Center for
Community Health



Mother's
NUTRITIONAL CENTER



CENTER FOR
Nutrition & Health Impact