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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Help a Hungry Senior Connect to CalFresh During Hunger Action Month

Good nutrition can lead to a better quality of life for older adults

(Indio, CA) – Sept. 3, 2015 Lydia’s e-mail to FIND Food Bank was her last-ditch effort to get help. Sitting alone in her rented room, she and her cat were on their last can of shared food – peas – and, yes, they do share. “I have to feed my cat,” she told our outreach worker. “If there’s food for me, there’s food for her.” In her early 60s and living on her limited disability income, Lydia was unaware that she might also qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or CalFresh as we call it in the Golden State.

Desperation shouldn’t have to be a motivator, but it often is for California seniors living with food insecurity. Less than one in five eligible seniors in our state (17.9%) participate in CalFresh. While several factors contribute to the low participation rate, lack of understanding about the program is a significant barrier.

There are many reasons low-income, older adults should apply for CalFresh/SNAP: eating better, health, family, and financial security. Using CalFresh to help pay for nutritious food can make a huge impact on an older adult’s ability to manage a chronic condition and stay independent. **During Hunger Action Month in September, FIND Food Bank and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) encourage older adults and their caregivers to see if CalFresh can help them.**

“For many older adults, mobility, technology, and the stigma attached to applying for SNAP create obstacles,” said Lura Barber, Director of NCOA Hunger Initiatives. “Talking to your loved ones and the older adults in your community about SNAP could inspire them and put us well on our way to eradicating senior hunger.”

FIND is part of NCOA’s national Senior SNAP/CalFresh Enrollment Initiative, which is working to find and enroll more eligible seniors into CalFresh. Based on this work, NCOA has developed a *Seniors & SNAP Best Practices Handbook* that outlines effective enrollment strategies. The handbook is available to download at ncoa.org/SNAPHandbook.

“Unfortunately, some of our senior neighbors don’t know help is available or that they don’t HAVE to live without enough to eat,” said FIND Food Bank CEO Lisa Houston. “In addition to keeping the conversation going so more older adults learn about CalFresh and SNAP benefits, we also want to encourage people to self-identify and give us a call. It worked for Lydia – she saw a story about our food bank in the paper and followed up with an e-mail. Sharing her story will hopefully inspire others to learn more.”



To find a CalFresh application, please visit BenefitsCheckUp.org/getSNAP. Or to get personal, one-on-one help applying for CalFresh, please contact FIND Food Bank at **888-449-0613** or **760-775-3663** and ask for a CalFresh outreach staff member.

To help spread the word about seniors and SNAP during Hunger Action Month in September, please use the hashtag **#getSNAP** on social media.

For more information on NCOA's senior hunger initiative, visit <http://www.ncoa.org/SeniorHunger>.

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About National Council on Aging:

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is a respected national leader and trusted partner to help people aged 60+ meet the challenges of aging. Our mission is to improve the lives of millions of older adults, especially those who are struggling. Through innovative community programs and services, online help, and advocacy, NCOA is partnering with nonprofit organizations, government, and business to improve the health and economic security of 10 million older adults by 2020. Learn more at ncoa.org and [@NCOAging](https://twitter.com/NCOAging)

About FIND Food Bank:

FIND Food Bank is the regional food bank serving eastern Riverside County, from Whitewater Pass to Blythe, from Joshua Tree to the Salton Sea. Founded in 1983, FIND (Food In Need of Distribution) is dedicated to relieving hunger, the causes of hunger, and problems associated with hunger by building awareness and mobilizing resources and the community to take action to end hunger. Our network of community-based partners distributes 10+ million pounds of food assistance annually to an average 90,000+ people each month across our service area. FIND is a member of Feeding America and the California Association of Food Banks. To learn more about hunger and how you can help, please call FIND at 760-775-3663 or visit FINDFoodBank.org or facebook.com/FINDFoodBank