

California Department of Aging

Brown Bag Program Narrative

Program / Element / Component -- 40.90.30

Description

The Brown Bag Program is a State-funded program that provides surplus and donated edible fruits, vegetables, and other food products to low-income individuals 60 years of age and older. Food products are distributed at various locations throughout the State. The types of food distributed vary depending on the season, weather, and other factors that impact availability. Volunteers, the majority of whom are older individuals, help provide the time and energy needed to clean, sort, and distribute these food items. There is no fee charged to participants, although voluntary contributions can be made.

Benefits

Surplus and donated edible fruits, vegetables, and other food products are distributed to supplement the nutritional needs of low-income older individuals.

Many senior volunteers donate hours to the Program thereby gaining an increased sense of purpose and satisfaction in helping others.

Eligibility

Participant income must not exceed 100 percent of the California State Supplementary Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) rate for a blind applicant. Local Brown Bag Programs have the option to serve those with an income up to 125 percent of the SSI/SSP rate for the blind, contingent upon the availability of surplus food and within the limits of available funds.

Access

Information on the Brown Bag Program can be obtained by calling the statewide toll free line at **1-800-510-2020**, the local AAA listed in the blue bordered pages of the Community Services Section of the telephone book under Senior Information and Referral/Assistance, or access the California Department of Aging website at www.aging.ca.gov.

Background

The Brown Bag Program began as a three-year demonstration project, under the authority of CH 1345/80 (Statham), to provide state funding to insufficiently funded local Brown Bag projects through which senior citizens would collect and distribute food to low-income persons 60 years of age and older.

The success of the Program was recognized by removal of the sunset date by CH 269/83 (Statham), Welfare and Institutions Code, Sections 9600-9607.

AB 2800, the Mello-Grandlund Older Californians Act (chapter 1097, Statutes of 1996), integrated seven distinct Community-Based Services Programs into one Community-Based Services Network and transferred responsibility for related contract administration from the California Department of Aging (CDA) to the Area Agencies on Aging. The Brown Bag Program is one of these seven programs.

Funds for CDA oversight of the Brown Bag Program were eliminated during the Governor's budget reductions in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003/2004. Budget reductions in FY 2003/2004 redirected program funds to participating Brown Bag Program Planning and Service Areas. As a result of budget reductions, minimum administrative functions and oversight are performed by the Department.