



CDSS

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

NEWS RELEASE

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CALIFORNIA ACHIEVES HISTORIC FOOD STAMP ACCURACY RATE

Error Rate at an All-Time Low as \$12.5 Million Federal Penalty is Waived

SACRAMENTO — California continues to experience great success in improving food stamp accuracy rates, Dennis Boyle, director of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), announced today.

The 2004 error rate is the lowest the state has seen since the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) began implementing quality control performance measurements more than 25 years ago. California's food stamp error rate for 2004 stands officially at 6.32 percent, just above the national average of 5.88 percent, according to a recently released report by USDA, which oversees the nation's Food Stamp Program.

"The Schwarzenegger Administration is committed to providing a safety net to the neediest Californians," said Boyle. "California and its counties can be proud of the hard work they've done to achieve the state's best food stamp accuracy rate, which helps ensure food stamps go to those most in need."

As a result of this achievement, California will avoid a sanction penalty. USDA has also agreed to waive \$12.5 million in previous penalties because the state was successful in meeting a target error rate of 7.4 percent established in the Food Stamp Sanction Settlement Agreement between California and the federal government.

"This achievement reflects what can be accomplished when the state and counties work in tandem to ensure low-income Californians receive the benefits they need, efficiently and effectively," said Frank Mecca, director of the California Welfare Director's Association.

CDSS has worked with the federal Food and Nutrition Service to provide multiple best practices seminars and training sessions to assist counties, many of which have implemented some type of error review panel as well as automated data collection systems, in identifying errors.

The Food Stamp Program is essential to ensuring low-income families can purchase the nutritious food needed to maintain healthy lives. Food stamp error rates are calculated by the number of overpayments and underpayments made by states to program recipients. For more information, log on to <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/foodstamps>.

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