

# County of Santa Clara

Social Services Agency

353 West Julian Street  
San Jose, California 95110-2335



**DATE:** April 28, 2021

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

**FROM:** Robert Menicocci, Social Services Agency Director *RM*

**SUBJECT: SSA Off-Agenda Report Regarding CalFresh Enrollment in D5**

During the April 6, 2021 Board of Supervisors meeting, the request was made to provide insight into why eligible county residents in District 5 do not avail of CalFresh benefits at the same rate as eligible county participants do in other Districts. The following table indicates the number of residents enrolled in Public Assistance, in CalFresh, and the percentage of the two by each district, and for Santa Clara County overall.

Over 99% of those enrolled in Public Assistance are enrolled in Medi-Cal. A large number of residents who are enrolled in Medi-Cal could avail of CalFresh. However, as seen in Table 1, the uptake in CalFresh benefits hovers around the 25% mark across districts with District 5 having the lowest percentage (18%) of Public Assistance participants that are enrolled in CalFresh, much lower than other districts. Ideally, the Department of Eligibility & Benefit Services at SSA would like to see enrollment in CalFresh grow across all districts.

Table 1: Breakdown of Public Assistance and CalFresh participants by district

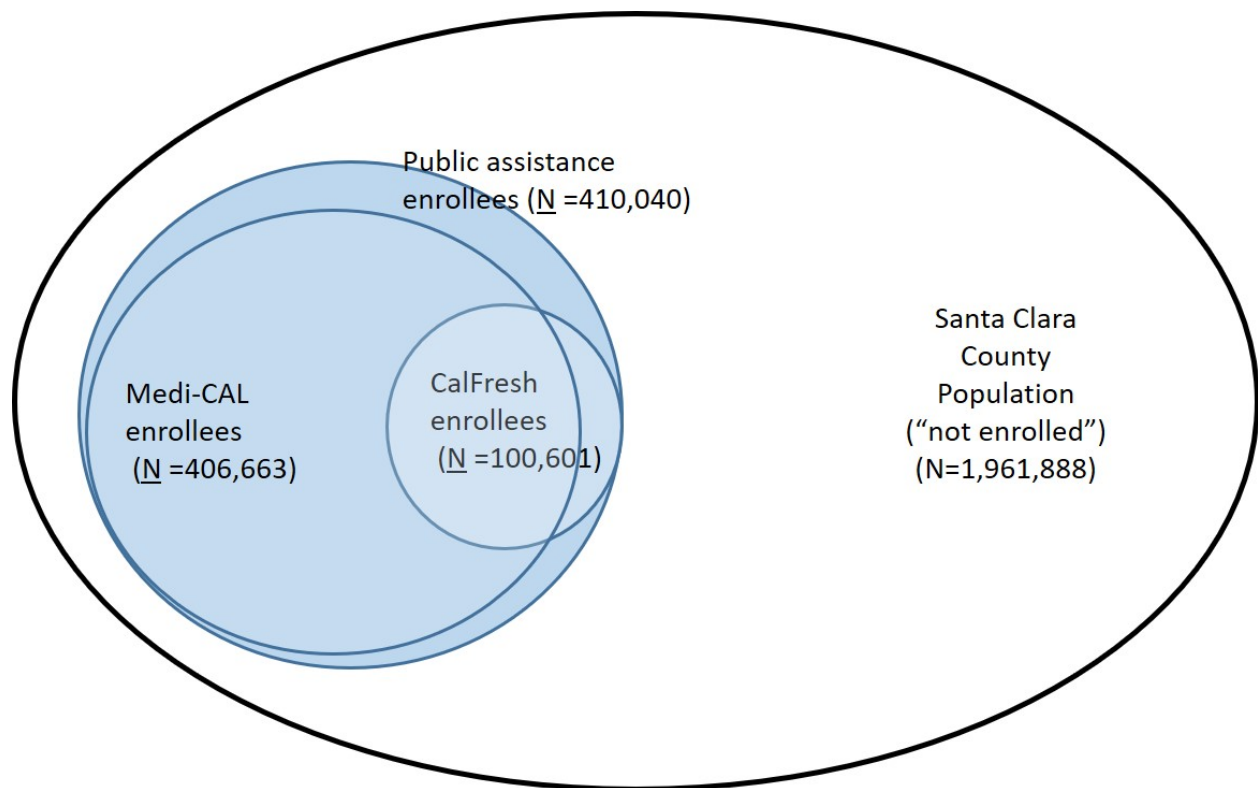
	# enrolled in Public Assistance	# enrolled in CalFresh	% of those enrolled in Public Assistance and CalFresh
District 1	101,466	25,672	25%
District 2	97,844	25,403	26%
District 3	82,915	20,512	25%
District 4	85,498	21,272	25%
District 5	42,345	7,656	18%
Santa Clara County	410,108	100,601	25%

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Otto Lee, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian  
County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

## Understanding the Low- & Under-Enrollment for CalFresh:

There are two ways to understand CalFresh enrollment. One, as shown in Table 1, is to understand the number of CalFresh enrollees relative to the number of Public Assistance enrollees (called “already enrolled” in following paragraphs). The other is to identify the broader population that might be eligible but do not enroll in any public assistance programs. This latter group (called “not enrolled”) is more difficult to understand. Figure 1 depicts the relationship between these three groups.

Figure 1: Understanding the relationship between Public Assistance & CalFresh enrollees



The reasons for low- and under-enrollment in CalFresh are not entirely known. Some data exist, more anecdotal than objective or systematized.

In the case of those **already enrolled** in Public Assistance programs, we know there is already a willingness to enroll in aid programs, a level of trust in government, and to some level, these individuals have surmounted physical and virtual barriers to apply. Why, then, when they are most likely eligible for CalFresh are they not enrolling? To be able to answer that in a robust way, we

would need to study these populations, conducting outreach through mechanisms that feel safe to them.

Among those **not enrolled** in any Public Assistance programs, it is harder to understand reasons for, and perceived or real barriers to not enrolling. Some of the known and / or anecdotal reasons include lack of understanding of how to apply for public assistance, miseducation, stigma, and even fear of government. In addition, barriers to applying including bureaucracy, paperwork burdens, access to offices, digital divide and other such physical and virtual barriers are potential reasons for low participation rates.

#### Reviewing for trends or anomalies amongst districts

A review of each districts' population enrolled in public assistance but not enrolled in CalFresh by race/ethnicity and age group was conducted. As part of this review Asian and Hispanic populations were disaggregated into census subgroups to look for trends and/or anomalies that were similar or different from other districts. One note was that of the Hispanic subgroups (Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Other Hispanic), 99% of those enrolled in Public Assistance and CalFresh identified as Mexican, thus the Hispanic subgroups were rolled back into one race/ethnic group "Hispanic" for the remainder of the analysis.

The top 10 groups with the largest gap between public assistance enrollment and CalFresh enrollment were identified for each District. Specifically, for District 5 Table 2 below provides the top 10 groups by race/ethnicity and age group that have the largest gap between public assistance enrollment and CalFresh enrollment. Notably, all age groups of those identifying as Hispanic, except 65+, are represented in the top ten in District 5. In addition, this is a like trend in all Districts – those identifying as Hispanic in all age groups rise to the top 10 in all Districts. There were some other similarities amongst all districts with Vietnamese adults and seniors, White/Caucasian adults, and Chinese adults rising to the top 10 in almost all districts. See Appendix D5 CalFresh Enrollment Off Agenda Appendix.

Table 2: Top 10 Largest Gap between Public Assistance and CalFresh number of enrollees by race/ethnicity & age

District 5 Race/Ethnicity by Age Group	# enrolled in Public Assistance	# enrolled in CalFresh	# NOT enrolled in CalFresh	% NOT enrolled in CalFresh
Hispanic Adults (25-64)	6,152	596	5,556	90%
White Adults (25-64)	3,762	645	3,117	83%
Hispanic Children (5-14)	3,539	819	2,720	77%
Chinese Seniors (65+)	2,694	510	2,184	81%
Hispanic Young Adults (18-24)	1,867	166	1,701	91%
Chinese Adults (25-64)	1,705	119	1,586	93%
Hispanic Babies (0-4)	1,378	305	1,073	78%
Asian Indian Seniors (65+)	1,068	76	992	93%
Hispanic Teenagers (15-17)	1,134	201	933	82%
Vietnamese Adults (25-64)	985	161	824	84%

While the table above provides preliminary information there are some shortcomings that need to be noted.

- Additional analysis needs to be done to understand if there are eligibility criteria that explain why these specific populations are not enrolled in CalFresh in such high numbers (e.g., all undocumented individuals under 25 who meet other eligibility criteria qualify for Medi-Cal but not CalFresh.)
- The preliminary analyses that resulted in Table 1 relies on Census categories for race/ethnicity, which might result in some sub-groups (e.g., Russian) being rolled up under other categories.

In terms of groups with the highest percentage of those enrolled in public assistance but not enrolled in CalFresh, Asian Indians, Chinese, and Filipinos rose to the top. However, Asian Indians, and Filipinos, with the exception of Asian Indian seniors in District 5, do not rise to the top 10 largest gaps between public assistance enrollment and CalFresh enrollment due to their overall lower total population numbers.

Table 3: Race/Ethnic groups by highest percentage not enrolled in CalFresh

Race/Ethnicity	Santa Clara County			District 5		
	# enrolled in Public Assistance	# not enrolled in CalFresh	% NOT enrolled in CalFresh	# enrolled in Public Assistance	# not enrolled in CalFresh	% NOT enrolled in CalFresh
Asian Indian	11,690	10,916	91%	2,258	2,109	93%
Chinese	20,388	17,148	84%	5,458	4,769	87%
Filipino	13,684	11,299	83%	1,080	916	85%
Hispanic	188,099	147,942	79%	14,992	12,724	85%
Other Asians	9,299	7,199	76%	1,426	1,189	83%
White/Caucasian	40,055	30,032	75%	6,441	5,217	81%
Vietnamese	56,651	38,867	69%	2,090	1,567	75%
Black/African American	11,407	7,266	64%	1,020	688	67%

For the immediate goal of raising District 5 to the level of the other Districts in numbers of public assistance participants enrolled in CalFresh, the recommended approach would be to implement the pilot project with the larger populations with the large gaps between numbers enrolled in public assistance and numbers enrolled in CalFresh. The anticipation is the proposed pilot project would report back at a 6 month and 1 year milestone and successes would be replicated in iteration with subsequent target populations and additional districts across the county.

Exploring cultural humility as an outreach strategy for the “already enrolled” population

What the above analysis provides is preliminary data validating the potential for success to pilot an outreach strategy ***based in cultural humility***. DEBS has demonstrated success via outreach leveraging trusted CBOs in the communities, and social media in Vietnamese (7.2% click thru rate vs industry standard of 1.9% click thru rate). DEBS proposes building upon that success by partnering with District 5 to pilot targeted outreach customized to specific race/ethnic groups by age as selected by the analysis of the groups with the highest gap between public assistance and CalFresh enrollment.

We would like to understand the safety net resources available to the target populations that currently exist in District 5 and continue to partner with those. But

further understand and design an outreach strategy around the channels of communication that the selected pilot target populations go to, feels safe with, trusts and readily leverages for resources. In particular, there are differences in trusted channels between the 1<sup>st</sup> generation population (foreign born) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation population (American born with foreign born parents). With cultural humility at the core of this pilot outreach project, we would like to 1) assess what are the most effective outreach channels for identified target populations based on direct input, 2) implement based on this assessment, 3) measure impact, 4) assess lessons learned and replicate successes countywide to all districts to positively impact the CalFresh participation rate countywide.

The pilot project proposal would be to select 1-2 race/ethnic groups to ensure manageability of pilot project scope. Based on the makeup of the top 10 groups in District 5 (see Table 2), one potential proposal could include Hispanic families and Chinese seniors and adults. Of the almost 18,500 people enrolled in public assistance in these two groups, almost 15,000 are **not** enrolled in CalFresh. Not all of these individuals will be eligible for CalFresh. However, if just 20% of these individuals (just over 3,000 individuals) enrolled in CalFresh, this would close the gap between District 5 and the trend in the other four districts. This amounts to an estimated 700 Hispanic Families, and approximately 700 Chinese Adult & Senior households.

This is just one example of a potential pilot project scope and the final selection of target population(s) would be chosen in partnership with District 5.

Table 4: Proposed plan for culturally-focused targeted outreach to expand CalFresh

Potential Target Groups for Customized Outreach Strategy	# enrolled in CalFresh	# NOT enrolled in CalFresh	20% of those not enrolled in CalFresh (Enrollment Target)
Hispanic Adults (25-64)	596	5,556	1,111
Hispanic Young Adults (18-24)	166	1,701	340
Hispanic Teenagers (15-17)	201	933	187
Hispanic Children (5-14)	819	2,720	544
Hispanic Babies (0-4)	305	1,073	215
Chinese Seniors (65+)	510	2,184	437
Chinese Adults (25-64)	119	1,586	317
TOTALS	2,483	14,442	3,151

If 20% or more in these target groups enrolled in CalFresh, the result would be 25% or more of those enrolled in public assistance in District 5 also being enrolled in CalFresh, in alignment with the trend in the other 4 districts (see Table 5).

Table 5: Targeted enrollment for District 5, post outreach

	# enrolled in Public Assistance	# enrolled in CalFresh	+ Outreach Enrollment Target Goal	Would Results in % of those enrolled in Public Assistance that are enrolled in CalFresh
District 5	42,345	7,656	3,151	25.5%

### **Proposed Outreach Strategy**

DEBS proposes to develop a customized outreach in District 5 to increase CalFresh enrollment. Some features of this outreach will include:

- Conducting outreach through culturally and linguistically trusted and relevant practices, and in partnership with trusted community partners
- Establish baseline metrics (e.g., current enrollment) for CalFresh after additional analysis of the data
- collect data points on lessons learned, report back, and then expand what works to other populations and districts to improve the CalFresh participation rate overall across the county.

### **Proposed Timeline**

- May/June 2021
  - Identify and hire staff/contractor
  - Record and launch educational videos in multiple languages (Bridge to Recovery initiative partnership)
  - Partner with District 5 on focus groups with community members
- June/July 2021
  - Launch social media campaign
- July/August 2021
  - Launch Traditional Media Campaign/CBOs/Other
- July 2021 – December 2021
  - Implement Monthly Data Report/dashboard
- December 2021
  - Preliminary Report Back
- July 2022
  - 1 year report back – metrics, lesson learned

- Roll out to other districts/countywide

Some next steps include:

- Identifying resource centers, faith based, health centers, and other physical and virtual places of community connection to 1<sup>st</sup> generation and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation
- Identifying social media outlets that are utilized by 1<sup>st</sup> generation and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (example - Facebook, Instagram, Twitter vs WeChat or Line – WeChat is the Facebook/Instagram for Chinese, and Line for Taiwanese)
- Identifying community leaders and influencers of trust to 1<sup>st</sup> generation and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation such as Promotoras in the Spanish speaking community
- Leveraging native language newspaper and TV media which is heavily trusted and the primary source of news for 1<sup>st</sup> generation seniors
- Continuing to partner with CBOs serving the target population
- Developing and socializing design strategy with community members and partners with lived experience

### **Required Resources**

- Funding for contractor or staff for design and execution of outreach strategy, social media campaign, and newspaper and/or TV\*
- Language support (Chinese, Spanish, and/or other appropriate languages)
- Partnership with County PIO office for newspaper and/or TV media campaign
- Funding for videos for social media and/or TV, as well as social media ads and newspaper or TV ads\*\*

\*Funding for contractor or staff for outreach campaign is reimbursable by fed/state allocations

\*\*Some potential options for funding for social media campaigns or videos may be partnerships with Public Health or nonprofits such as SPUR, Bridge to Recovery Initiative, as well as an ask from General Fund.

Attachment: Appendix A – D5 CF Enrollment

c: Chief Board Aides  
Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer  
James R. Williams, County Counsel  
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board



AGE GROUPS BY DISTRICTS BY SELECTED ETHNICITY

Yellow highlighted cells indicate top 10 largest gaps between # enrolled in PA and # enrolled in CF in each district

OTHER ASIAN												
AGE GROUPS	District 1			District 2			District 3			District 4		
	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap
04 and Younger	56	12	44	68	15	53	83	21	62	72	12	60
05-14 Years of Age	176	42	134	207	54	152	245	61	184	247	64	183
15-17 Years of Age	53	11	42	62	11	51	71	18	53	77	12	65
18-24 Years of Age	157	21	136	169	28	141	159	21	138	175	25	150
25-64 Years of Age	794	138	656	915	184	731	955	174	781	1,070	187	883
65 and Older	408	161	247	483	206	276	525	215	310	647	254	393
Total	1,645	386	1,259	1,903	499	1,404	2,038	511	1,527	2,287	554	1,734

% OTHER ASIAN PA ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
22%	22%	26%	17%	22%
24%	26%	25%	26%	15%
21%	18%	26%	15%	17%
13%	17%	13%	14%	12%
17%	20%	18%	18%	12%
39%	43%	41%	39%	27%
23%	26%	25%	24%	17%

% OTHER ASIAN PA NOT ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
78%	78%	74%	83%	78%
76%	74%	75%	74%	85%
79%	82%	74%	85%	83%
87%	83%	87%	86%	88%
83%	80%	82%	82%	88%
61%	57%	59%	61%	73%
77%	74%	75%	76%	83%

ASIAN INDIAN												
AGE GROUPS	District 1			District 2			District 3			District 4		
	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap
04 and Younger	50	5	45	59	6	52	98	11	87	102	10	92
05-14 Years of Age	158	12	147	179	18	162	277	35	242	267	31	236
15-17 Years of Age	62	4	58	70	6	64	81	7	75	104	9	96
18-24 Years of Age	139	7	132	154	10	144	184	10	173	205	14	191
25-64 Years of Age	759	52	707	819	61	758	1,109	85	1,024	1,203	96	1,108
65 and Older	709	78	631	781	94	688	951	115	836	912	122	791
Total	1,878	158	1,720	2,062	194	1,867	2,699	262	2,437	2,794	280	2,513

% ASIAN INDIAN PA ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
9%	10%	11%	10%	12%
7%	10%	12%	11%	9%
7%	9%	8%	8%	5%
5%	7%	6%	7%	6%
7%	7%	8%	8%	5%
11%	12%	12%	13%	7%
8%	9%	10%	10%	7%

% ASIAN INDIAN PA NOT ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
91%	90%	89%	90%	88%
93%	90%	88%	89%	91%
93%	91%	92%	92%	95%
95%	93%	94%	93%	94%
93%	93%	92%	92%	95%
89%	88%	88%	87%	93%
92%	91%	90%	90%	93%

CHINESE												
AGE GROUPS	District 1			District 2			District 3			District 4		
	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap
04 and Younger	97	9	88	103	12	91	193	21	172	95	9	86
05-14 Years of Age	251	30	221	277	34	243	473	50	423	261	26	235
15-17 Years of Age	91	10	81	103	13	90	153	14	139	87	10	77
18-24 Years of Age	224	15	209	245	21	224	338	19	319	219	17	202
25-64 Years of Age	1,223	97	1,126	1,323	129	1,193	1,882	164	1,719	1,257	105	1,152
65 and Older	1,110	314	797	1,419	415	1,003	2,085	609	1,476	1,420	409	1,012
Total	2,997	475	2,521	3,470	624	2,846	5,124	876	4,248	3,339	575	2,764

% CHINESE PA ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
10%	11%	11%	9%	12%
12%	12%	11%	10%	5%
11%	13%	9%	11%	3%
7%	8%	6%	8%	5%
8%	10%	9%	8%	7%
28%	29%	29%	29%	19%
16%	18%	17%	17%	13%

% CHINESE PA NOT ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
90%	89%	89%	91%	88%
88%	88%	89%	90%	95%
89%	87%	91%	89%	97%
93%	92%	94%	92%	95%
92%	90%	91%	92%	93%
72%	71%	71%	71%	81%
84%	82%	83%	83%	87%

FILIPINO												
AGE GROUPS	District 1			District 2			District 3			District 4		
	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap
04 and Younger	104	20	84	130	28	102	179	37	142	120	25	95
05-14 Years of Age	327	53	274	380	67	313	545	85	460	374	58	316
15-17 Years of Age	117	12	105	146	18	128	209	20	190	148	22	127
18-24 Years of Age	237	17	221	286	21	265	351	24	326	269	16	253
25-64 Years of Age	1,056	140	916	1,240	180	1,060	1,595	220	1,374	1,191	163	1,028
65 and Older	747	197	550	892	252	640	1,112	316	796	849	230	619
Total	2,589	440	2,149	3,073	566	2,508	3,991	702	3,289	2,951	514	2,438

% FILIPINO PA ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
20%	22%	20%	21%	17%
16%	18%	16%	16%	17%
10%	12%	9%	15%	8%
7%	7%	7%	6%	4%
13%	14%	14%	14%	12%
26%	28%	28%	27%	24%
17%	18%	18%	17%	15%

% FILIPINO PA NOT ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
80%	78%	80%	79%	83%
84%	82%	84%	84%	83%
90%	88%	91%	85%	92%
93%	93%	93%	94%	96%
87%	86%	86%	86%	88%
74%	72%	72%	73%	76%
83%	82%	82%	83%	85%

VIETNAMESE												
AGE GROUPS	District 1			District 2			District 3			District 4		
	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap
04 and Younger	420	103	317	634	164	470	463	119	344	423	107	316
05-14 Years of Age	1,435	365	1,070	2,115	571	1,544	1,652	411	1,241	1,429	363	1,066
15-17 Years of Age	580	144	436	848	223	625	712	175	537	569	145	424
18-24 Years of Age	1,206	150	1,056	1,721	234	1,487	1,377	172	1,205	1,173	161	1,012
25-64 Years of Age	5,121	1,048	4,073	7,434	1,632	5,802	5,740	1,239	4,501	5,104	1,092	4,012
65 and Older	3,044	1,819	1,225	4,573	2,776	1,797	3,678	2,199	1,479	3,111	1,848	1,263
Total	11,806	3,629	8,177	17,325	5,600	11,725	13,622	4,315	9,307	11,809	3,717	8,092

% VIETNAMESE PA ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
25%	26%	26%	25%	18%
25%	27%	25%	25%	23%
25%	26%	25%	26%	21%
12%	14%	12%	14%	11%
20%	22%	22%	21%	16%
60%	61%	60%	59%	52%
31%	32%	32%	31%	25%

% VIETNAMESE PA NOT ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
75%	74%	74%	75%	82%
75%	73%	75%	75%	77%
75%	74%	75%	74%	79%
88%	86%	88%	86%	89%
80%	78%	78%	79%	84%
40%	39%	40%	41%	48%
69%	68%	68%	69%	75%

BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN												
AGE GROUPS	District 1			District 2			District 3			District 4		
	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap	PA	CF	Gap
04 and Younger	140	60	79	163	68	95	134	58	75	162	61	101
05-14 Years of Age	465	193	272	480	198	282	408	179	229	476	185	291
15-17 Years of Age	146	49	98	151	55	95	134	54	79	155	56	99
18-24 Years of Age	295	78	217	316	89	227	259	70	189	325	74	251
25-64 Years of Age	1,221	450	771	1,487	564	923	1,183	440	743	1,403	482	921
65 and Older	223	85	139	241	96	145	198	80	118	225	83	141
Total	2,490	915	1,575	2,837	1,070	1,767	2,315	883	1,433	2,745	941	1,804

% BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN PA ENROLLED IN CF				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
43%	42%	44%	37%	37%
42%	41%	44%	39%	30%
33%	37%	41%	36%	31%
26%	28%	27%	23%	24%
37%	38%	37%	34%	34%
38%	40%	41%	37%	36%
37%	38%	38%	34%	33%

% BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN PA NOT ENROLLED				
District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
CF	CF	CF	CF	CF
57%	58%	56%	63%	63%
58%	59%	56%	61%	70%
67%	63%	59%	64%	69%
74%	72%	73%	77%	76%
63%	62%	63%	66%	66%
62%	60%	59%	63%	64%
63%	62%	62%	66%	67%