

# My First 1,000 Days: A Dairy Initiative SUMMARY



## Introduction and Background

My First 1,000 Days: A Dairy Initiative was a one-year pilot project launched in Gustine, Newman, Santa Nella and Crows Landing, California, by Dairy Council of California and funded by Legacy Health Endowment. This digital initiative supported the health and nutrition of families with children under 2 years of age by providing nutrient-dense and culturally familiar dairy foods for six months during the crucial first 1,000 days of life. Participants received a \$25 digital offer, similar to a coupon, which was redeemable for age-appropriate dairy products, emphasizing the importance of dairy for cognitive and physical development.

The enrollment process was streamlined and available in both English and Spanish. Additionally, the program was not income-based, allowing families with incomes up to 400% of the federal poverty level to self-identify their needs. Project partners included Raley's, Federally Qualified Health Centers and various community organizations.

## Key Milestones

- Enrolled 104 families in the pilot study; an additional 53 families with children over the age of 2 received services but were not part of the study
- Distributed \$15,000 as 600 digital offers of \$25 for milk and dairy foods through Raley's Something Extra digital loyalty program
- Maintained an average 65% offer redemption rate
- Conducted over 300 customer service support calls
- Attended 52 community outreach events
- Hosted a kickoff event and a media event and established five new partnerships
- Received acceptance to present project findings at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and the World Dairy Summit

## Impact

The following information is part of the baseline surveys collected from families of the pilot study.

### Food Security



The project directly addressed food security, with 30% of participants reporting concerns about running out of food in the prior 30 days. The \$25 monthly digital offers ensured families had access to nutrient-dense milk and dairy foods.

### Nutrient-Dense Foods



In all, 99% of participants agreed that dairy is essential for their children's health and growth, and 72% provide dairy products to their children because it is a traditional food. The most-purchased items included whole milk, cheese and yogurt, critical for early childhood development.



## Participant Experience



Overall, 85% of participants expressed high satisfaction with the program, indicating its success.

Participants received regular text messages and digital \$25 dairy offers throughout the six-month intervention.

Twelve nutrition text messages educated and empowered families to adopt healthier eating patterns. Participants were also encouraged to respond to these text messages with questions, comments and photos. For more testimonials and pictures, [click here](#).

“ One participant said, "So grateful for this program because it has allowed my two children to consume much more dairy foods.”

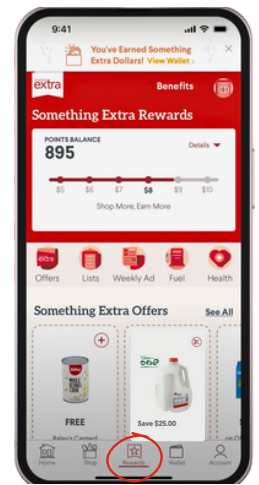
## Collaboration and Partnership



Collaborations with health care centers and community organizations supported outreach, recruitment and referrals. Dairy Council of California fostered strong new partnerships within Merced and Stanislaus counties.



The partnership with Raley's enabled the seamless integration of \$25 dairy offers into participants' accounts through the Something Extra program. Families could easily access these monthly benefits through their accounts using the Raley's app or website.



## Conclusion



My First 1,000 Days: A Dairy Initiative aims to model ways to improve food security, nutritional knowledge and dietary behaviors in underserved communities. A project evaluation is underway, with endline surveys concluding in February 2025. A final report, including outcome data, is expected in Summer 2025.



The project successfully connected families with vital nutrition resources, and participants valued a wider variety of culturally relevant dairy products, including queso fresco.



The project demonstrated that food insecurity affects families with incomes above the poverty threshold to qualify for state or federal nutrition assistance programs.



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