

THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS: SUPPORTING FAMILIES THROUGH A DIGITAL DAIRY NUTRITION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT & BACKGROUND

Dairy foods are critical during pregnancy and lactation, providing nutrients essential for neurocognitive development. However, U.S. federal nutrition programs often fall short of recommended dairy servings, have strict income limits, and lack culturally diverse options.

Targeting the first 1,000 days of life to address nutrition security gaps in underserved Latino communities to improve health.

Dairy Council of California partnered with Legacy Health Endowment, federally qualified health centers, Rayle’s, and other local organizations in rural Central California to launch My First 1,000 Days: A Dairy Initiative to address these gaps.

METHODS

Study Design: Mixed-methods evaluation combining quantitative surveys with qualitative feedback.

Participants: 157 families with babies aged 6 months to 2 years, households earning up to 400% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Intervention:

- Monthly \$25 digital dairy vouchers for 6 months.
- Culturally tailored text messaging with nutrition tips and voucher reminders.
- Age-appropriate feeding guidance.

Data Collection: Baseline surveys (January-July 2024), endline surveys, monthly satisfaction surveys, and voucher redemption tracking.



RESULTS

Food Security Impact: Despite expanded eligibility to 400% FPL, 30% still experienced food insecurity (see Table 1).

Cultural Preferences: Participants frequently purchased culturally relevant products like queso fresco.

Text Messaging Success: Participants found nutrition messages helpful, with many sharing photos of purchases and feeding approaches they tried. Satisfaction surveys revealed a positive reception to the program, voucher redemption, and culturally tailored content (see Table 2).

Post-Intervention Improvements: Notable increases in dairy variety and consumption frequency, alongside greater access to culturally preferred dairy products.

EXPANDING DAIRY OPTIONS IN NUTRITION PROGRAMS COULD MEET DIVERSE NEEDS, AS PARTICIPANTS IN A DIGITAL DAIRY VOUCHER PILOT PRIORITIZED CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRODUCTS.



"Thank you very much it is a great help for me and my children as I am mom and dad of 3" - Program Participant

"Our family has greatly benefited from this program, especially in terms of the affordability of dairy products." - Program Participant

YEAR 1 SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT



DAIRY COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA — EST. 1919 —
LHE Legacy Health Endowment
NOB HILL FOODS

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RESULTS

TABLE 1: FOOD SECURITY IMPACT

	Food Did Not Last; Could Not Afford More		Worried Food Would Run Out (30 Days)	
How Often True	n	%	n	%
Never true // Nunca	70	67.3%	57	54.8%
Often true // A menudo	7	6.7%	10	9.6%
Sometimes true // A veces	27	26.0%	37	35.6%
Grand Total	104	100.0%	104	100.0%

Baseline Survey Data Collection (January - July 2024)

TABLE 2: SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

How satisfied are you with the program so far?	n	%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Dissatisfied	4	2.2%
Satisfied	23	12.9%
Very Satisfied	151	84.8%
Grand Total	178	100.0%

How helpful were the text messages you received this month?	n	%
Not Helpful at All	1	0.6%
Somewhat Helpful	147	85.0%
Very Helpful	25	14.5%
Grand Total	173	100.0%

How easy or difficult was it to redeem your offer (voucher)?	n	%
Very difficult	1	0.6%
Difficult	12	6.8%
Easy	44	25%
Very Easy	119	67.6%
Grand Total	176	100.0%

Monthly Satisfaction Survey Data Collection (March - August 2024)

CONCLUSION

To address the significant food insecurity and unmet cultural needs identified in the pilot project, the following actions are recommended:

- Expand Income Eligibility in Nutrition Programs:** WIC and CalFresh should consider raising thresholds beyond current limits, as families at 400% FPL still experience food insecurity.
- Consider Cultural Dairy Preferences:** Federal and state programs should consider offering a broader range of culturally appropriate dairy products, such as queso fresco, kefir, and lactose-free options.
- Digital Innovation:** Provide digital dairy vouchers and leverage text-based nutrition education as an effective model for food-as-medicine initiatives.
- Expand Research to Influence Policy Change:** Engaging stakeholders, policymakers, and nutrition advocates in discussions about expanding program offerings and eligibility criteria can help shift the current system to support food-insecure households.

These findings provide valuable insights for future nutrition security policies and programs targeting early childhood nutrition in similar high-need populations.