

WEBVTT

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Hi, everyone, We'll get started in just a second.

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Okay,

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Hi, everybody. My name is Jessica, and I am one of Spurs public programming associates. Thank you so much for joining us today for this digital discourse. Um! I know some of you are spur members, so thank you for your support, and if you're not a member, I encourage you to join to support Spurs ongoing work and using education, policy, analysis, and advocacy to make for cities and region more prosperous, sustainable, and accurate places to live.

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Your financial support enables us to continue our work, including the hosting of programs like today, and you'll find more information about membership online at Spur Dot Org

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Tomorrow we're hosting our annual silver spur awards for sixty years the prestigious silver Spur awards have recognized civic leaders whose achievements exemplify the highest aspirations of the San Francisco Bay area join Us. As we recognize the outstanding accomplishments of the two thousand and twenty-two silver spear Honorees

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: online registration is now closed. But there are a limited number of walk-up tickets available. Um, so you can learn more at the link that will drop in the chat after the introductions over

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00:01:52.030 --> 00:02:02.789

Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: today's digital discourse is called a stronger safety net. California. The California Department of Social Services and Cdss. Is crucial to the safety net that supports millions of Californians,

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: whether it's with Cal fresh food assistance, Cal works, cash assistance, or through numerous other programs. The agency serves aids and protects needy and vulnerable children and adults throughout the State

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00:02:13.080 --> 00:02:25.050

Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Mit. Ctl. And in the past few years Cdss. With the support of the Legislature and governor have taken steps to broaden and deepen its reach significantly expanding. Who is eligible for programs and the benefits that people receive once enrolled one

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: uh today, We're joined for discussion with the agencies Director Kim Johnson about the successes, challenges, and opportunities for making the safety net Better for California.

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Um. So to introduce director, Kim Johnson. Uh. She was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom as the Director of the California Department of Social Services in July of two thousand and nineteen

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Ms. Johnson has previously been appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to serve as the deputy director of the family engagement and empowerment division, and was responsible for the planning policy, direction, and oversight of services to over four million individuals, children, families, and experiencing poverty through safety, net resources, employment, opportunities, and addressing and inequities and additional engagement strategies. One

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: Ms. Johnson, has over twenty years of experience, working in various family support and Children's programs focused on social justice, equity, and poverty. Disruption in both community based organizations and governments.

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00:03:15.790 --> 00:03:33.320

Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: We're also joined by spurs owned Gracia Marquez nibles, who will be guiding us through our conversation today, dressing as support spurs work to create a bay area where everyone has enough food to lead a healthy life. Prior to Jordan spur she worked with the county of Riverside department of mental health supporting the overall Well, being of young Californians.

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: In addition, she worked at the University of California riverside, implementing emergency support programs that ensures that students had access to food, housing and other basic necessities, while also advocating for policy change which would allow students to qualify for government food assistance programs.

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Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: I like to thank everyone who helped us promote today uh and for nourish California's partnership on this event.

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00:03:53.540 --> 00:04:11.890

Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: And finally, we want this to be interactive conversation and plan on spending as much time as possible, engaging with you all. So as always, I encourage you to use the chat box below to share your thoughts um, or to the side uh excuse me to share your thoughts with each other and the speakers. I encourage you to submit any questions that you have by using the Q A. Function uh below

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00:04:11.900 --> 00:04:24.899

Jessica Peyton / SPUR Public Programs: it, should appear as a button at the bottom of your screen or the top of your screen. If you're on a mobile app. And then within that, within the next few days we'll be sharing a copy of the recording transcript and chat with everyone who registered, and with that I will turn it over to you. Gracia.

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00:04:25.370 --> 00:04:40.009

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Thanks, Jessica. Um, and thank you all for being here. Thank you for setting that up, Jessica, and thank you, Director Johnson, for joining us today. Um! Have us some questions that we're um compelled by our partners at nourish California as well as for staff.

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Um. And again, please submit any questions that you all have audience members through the Q. A function will be keeping tabs on that.

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Um. But to start out um Director Johnson. We had a question um from spur,

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: and

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: that says the past few years have been really difficult for so many Californians. The pandemic and economic upheaval have required that the safety net respond in unprecedented ways.

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00:05:07.280 --> 00:05:18.300

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Could you share some of what Cdss has done in the past three years that you feel especially helped Californians, and how that has informed what you'd like to see Cdss to in the future.

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Kim Johnson: Sure, and thank you so much uh, just for a nurse, California for the invitation to participate this afternoon, and for sure, I appreciate the question and the challenges that have been experienced across our state over the last few years. I am very grateful to serve in this capacity through this time, because we have, in fact, been very intentional on how we're supporting uh those with greatest needs throughout that time. So I want to just give a little bit of context. I'm going to share some of those um investments,

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some of those programs and initiatives. But I just to give a little more context.

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Kim Johnson: Um over the last four years alone. Total funding for the California health and human services programs have grown over forty-five percent. When we look at combining Federal State and local funds just for the department of social services. We've been at fifty billion dollars annually for the last two years. So it's a phenomenal opportunity to strengthen our social safety net and really transform the way that we're serving Californians. These investments have been designed intentionally to collect

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Kim Johnson: and collectively work to lift uh individuals and families out of poverty, with cash assistance, housing related assistance, access to high quality, child care and development services, targeted food resources and health benefits.

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Kim Johnson: Uh, we also have done a lot in terms of working to prevent child abuse and neglect and support and keeping families together. Uh, but again wanna I will speak specifically to social

services, but one that acknowledged the broader set of health and human services, integration and opportunities that we've had.

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Kim Johnson: So when we look at housing and homelessness, for example,

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Kim Johnson: uh, the department had the privilege to stand up project Room key, which has served over sixty one thousand and sheltered Californians to date by providing emergency housing and hotels and motels and trailers for those that were ill or medically vulnerable for Covid. And so not only did we have the opportunity to work with communities in standing this program up very quickly. Uh, but we did so, recognizing that those that are over fifty, our fastest growing population

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Kim Johnson: the first time homeless individuals, a disproportionate number being black and American Indian were experiencing homelessness. So again we knew who was going to be at highest risk and focused on a strategy to support them,

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00:07:38.330 --> 00:08:08.229

Kim Johnson: and then we didn't stop there. We also further uh resourced housing navigators and case managers to help those transition from this more temporary support to getting permanently housed and using their housing goals. So uh, we've seen uh further further um efforts and innovation with Project Home Key, which is supporting the acquisition of some of those very same hotels and motels that were supported for the temporary relief. But again, looking at expanding our full portfolio

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of affordable housing in the process,

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Kim Johnson: and we also look at again that population and think about the fact that we had our master plan on aging, which continues to outline additional goals and strategies to do more in this space, and

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Kim Johnson: um have the opportunity to uh launch the community care expansion program. That's over eight hundred and five million dollars for the construction acquisition or rehabilitation of projects to preserve and expand uh adult and senior care settings. There's an

additional fifty-five million to provide capitalized operating subsidy reserves to uh support these programs, and especially older adults. To avoid the closure of these settings and increase the acceptance of new qualified residents who receive Ssi,

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Kim Johnson: and then the Department of Social Services has a number of other initiatives that are focused on either supporting those at risk or involved in adult protective services, those who are disabled in experiencing homeless families uh experiencing poverty families involved in our child welfare system. And so we've been able to

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Kim Johnson: that portfolio of programs, and also focus more on prevention which was a significant and critical investment in that space.

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Kim Johnson: And then turning to at economic relief and economic mobility, again want to just give some context when we just look at the first couple of months of the pandemic march in April of two thousand and twenty over two point. Seven million jobs were lost in just those two months.

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Kim Johnson: Um! And again those jobs that were lost were primarily in industries with low average weekly earnings. Black and Latino women were most greatly impacted, and immigrant women experience greater declines and unemployment. So, as we have rebounded, and the good news is that as of September uh California match match, the record low unemployment rate of three point nine percent set in July of this year

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Kim Johnson: we lost so added jobs for the twelfth consecutive month, and have now recovered ninety-nine point, one of those jobs lost to the pandemic recession.

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Kim Johnson: Uh, but again we recognize that uh we have more to do and to be specifically thinking about interventions and supports to target those populations. Who again, we know we're impacted

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Kim Johnson: mit Ctl. And in totality Governor Newsom uh in this administration have implemented a fifty-two billion dollar financial assistance package to help Californians with rising inflation and costs one hundred and fifty

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Kim Johnson: um, and by far that's the most robust and comprehensive uh program in the nation. So for us, at the Department of Social Services, some of these programs and resources looked like the Golden State stimulus. It was a one time six hundred dollars payment

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Kim Johnson: to over three hundred and nine thousand eligible cowworks, households totaling nearly one hundred and eighty-six million dollars, an additional seven hundred million to support over one point, one uh recipients of Ssi and Kappy, or our cash assistance program for immigrants.

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Kim Johnson: We had an additional six hundred and forty one-time payment to over two hundred and ninety two thousand

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Kim Johnson: at cal works households, with our pandemic emergency Assistance fund uh the over four point. Five million individuals across California, receiving Cal fresh, received an average monthly increase of benefits of ninety six dollars through our emergency allotments,

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00:11:24.720 --> 00:11:41.580

Kim Johnson: and we also expanded eligibility for students, and ensured children who were not receiving their free or reduced meals because they were not in in school or child care had additional support through pandemic um udt, which supported over five million children across our States

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00:11:41.740 --> 00:11:59.449

Kim Johnson: mit ctl, and we had additional significant investments in our food banks, both uh in terms of a cash support food support, but also in terms of staffing support. We actually deployed National Guard to support food banks across, and again want to just give a a significant shout out to our partners, who have done so much on the ground. In that space two hundred and fifty,

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Kim Johnson: and while it's not under Cdss as per view, I also just have to uh lift up the fact that California now has universal school meals across. Uh, for all of our student populations across the State,

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Kim Johnson: and we also supported over fifteen thousand youth, ages eighteen to twenty, and ah, former foster youth ages twenty, one to twenty, six, receiving nine hundred dollars or more via a Chaffee act.

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00:12:22.270 --> 00:12:37.970

Kim Johnson: Um, And I also just want to say in all of the economic relief and resources that we provided. We were always looking at applying an equity lens to the work. So even some of those resources I just mentioned were Federal We're federally supported

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Kim Johnson: um, and we recognize that while that was happening there were populations in California that weren't receiving relief, and so we had the great privilege to stand up the one time disaster, relief, assistance for immigrants, or dre, as we call it, to reach one hundred and fifty thousand undocumented immigrants who are excluded from those Federal relief and support. So as we look ahead and we kind of what we're learning from some of these economic and cash assistance supports

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Kim Johnson: uh one is that we want to continue lifting up an integrating our array in California. We have a safety net array that really is like no other state in the nation. Um. And so the ways in which we can help simplify access to that full array and make connections is critical.

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Kim Johnson: Um. We also have, of course, new outreach programs for expanded earned income tax credit, young child tax credit and foster youth tax credit programs that we want to make sure everyone who's eligible can get access to.

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Kim Johnson: We're thrilled to be able to expand our California for your food assistance program, or see if app um, which start currently serves

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Kim Johnson: upwards of thirty-five thousand California residents, and is expanding program eligibility by allowing all non citizens to age. Fifty-five are older regardless of immigration



status to be eligible for this support. So we expect that to get to seventy thousand people annually annually. With that expansion

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Kim Johnson: uh we have increased our maximum aid payment for cowworks uh to as much as one hundred and ninety, four per per month per household.

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Kim Johnson: Um! And again, I just want to lift up in our cowork space, we continue to serve well, more uh in in compared to any other state. So if you look at Tan, if as a program federally

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Kim Johnson: mit.

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Kim Johnson: We also have additional new projects that we're launching um Again, learning from what we're doing so we're excited about the opportunity to pilot a thirty-five million dollars investment over five years for guaranteed income pilots,

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Kim Johnson: and we are focused on former foster youth and pregnant individuals as as target populations. But this is really going to increase our ability to understand the short and long term impacts of providing unconditional regular cash payments intended to support the basic needs of individuals and households.

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00:14:58.490 --> 00:15:27.359

Kim Johnson: So again, a lot happening in that space. Uh, for sure, I want to also just highlight. In addition to the housing and homelessness array the economic bill at uh mobility array, and we've done a lot in terms of expanded child care and development access and obviously have some room to uh grow here, as we did lose quite a few programs over the pandemic. So we've had expanded access uh, including additional thirty six thousand childcare subsidies, new families being able to access those subsidies

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00:15:27.370 --> 00:15:44.179

Kim Johnson: in programs, a plan to reach universal transitional, kindergarten and preschool and significant investments in the infrastructure, including the workforce facilities development in more. So a lot happening there, with also a master plan to guide us in our investments going forward,

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Kim Johnson: as it relates, to youth and foster care. We also continue to invest again, like, as I mentioned, keeping families together, especially uh kind of recommitting to our uh uh support for Indian children, while we know lots happening at the Federal level related to the Indian Child Welfare Act. We are continuing to

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Kim Johnson: Uh implement Cal Icwa in California, and have invested in additional um tribal dependency representation first of its kind again in the country to have acts so tribes can have access to legal representation for youth um, and doing our doing a lot in terms of also support for family finding engagement Um, as well. So

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00:16:20.430 --> 00:16:32.930

Kim Johnson: um! I will just say again, another lesson learned that I want to lift up in this space. Um is workforce. Uh? We recognize that workforce is a challenge kind of across the boarding communities, and so we have additional investments in both

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Kim Johnson: Mit, Ctl. And support for our participants, whether they be in Kelworks and Cal fresh employment and training, with real career pathways that support them on their way, but also in sectors like childcare again in home, supportive services with career pathways more for social workers, one hundred and fifty

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Kim Johnson: um, et cetera. So that's another big piece of kind of looking at how we have the people to help us actually implement and go forwards with many of the investments that I mentioned. And so that's just a piece and flavor of what we're doing, and I've been doing it at social services. It doesn't include our agency, wide transformation of children and youth, behavioral health, or increase access to health care for all Californians, or how aim, initiative, et cetera. But it it certainly um gives you a just a a taste of some of the efforts

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Kim Johnson: that we've been again had the privilege to do at social services.

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Absolutely. Thank you, Director Johnson. I know there's um with such limited time. It's so difficult to talk about all of the different aspects of the work that you all are doing. It's important to those of um

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: folks here in California. Um, and thank you, I think specifically for highlighting some of the ways that um Cdss has been looking at the inequities between Who um has been affected with most during the pandemic, especially looking at older adults and people of color, and our immigrant communities who may not have access to all sorts of resources, or maybe,

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00:17:56.780 --> 00:18:15.049

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: and specifically relating to Food Um and the calfish program. So it's the number of Californians participating in Cal fresh. The States version of Federal Snap program, or formerly known as Food Stamps, includes three out of every four people who could participate. Well, California's participation rates

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: um have improved considerably in the past decade. We continue to lag behind many other states with rates that get me to nearly one hundred. Why do you think it's so hard for California to improve that participation rate? And what are some strategies to close the gap?

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Kim Johnson: Yeah, thank you for that question. And again, uh, absolutely a key intentional focus of ours to as we know that as part of our safety net array just provides critical resources that supports uh individuals and families across the State. So

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Kim Johnson: I want to just say a few things. One is that we have to be mindful, as you heard in some of the investments, and even what you just shared around inequities right, we still are a very rich and diverse state, and so the demographics and populations across the state really matter, as we look at this particular

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Kim Johnson: a goal, and so I would say, partly what we why didn't First and foremost, we have been making great progress. And so our recent data shows that we're up and over seventy percent in terms of access that still obviously have more work to do, you know, as a State with a large immigrant population? Certainly the prior Federal administration and the policies, such as the changes in public charge had a significant impact on enrollment,

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Kim Johnson: and uh, also had the effect of not only impacting those who it was targeted to, but even a broader set of populations who, in fact, were eligible for programs like how fresh. So we have a lot of work to do to continue uh building relationship and having

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Kim Johnson: mit ctl and true connections with trusted messengers in community to make sure people who are eligible understand that they can get access to this critical support for food going forward one hundred and fifty.

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Kim Johnson: Um! I also just would say that uh, we have uh continued uh strengthened work around expanding access. So uh looking at ways in which we can further language access. For example, our outreach materials and information, and available in multiple language, Are we intentional about that throughout? It's another way that we're addressing inequities. Um across programs. Simplification. The actual process by which to apply for Cal fresh. Uh, we continue to work on um, and we do have opportunities through it,

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Kim Johnson: and a number of waivers uh through um, the Federal food and nutrition services to do just that with our uh, with our elders, our older populations and simplified applications there, but also kind of across the board. How are we being sure that the access point to cow fresh is as simplified as it can be one hundred and fifty.

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Kim Johnson: Um! I also just note that we continue, as I mentioned, that the trusted messengers we have a number of new kind of core partners. Our network of outreach partners is tremendous, and again, many of you might be on this call this afternoon. I want to thank you for that partnership, but we have new, permanently funded outreach partners, like the Department of Aging, to support us again, and connecting older adults facing food and security

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Kim Johnson: mit ctl, and we have a number of additional agencies like rescue agency providing targeted marketing and messaging campaigns to people providing uh facing food, insecurity, and in commercials that some of you may have seen in that space two hundred and fifty

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Kim Johnson: uh. But again, I think we're gonna continue um building on some focus uh population, student population and enrolled in higher education is another space that we'll be looking to uh doing some more targeted statewide outreach and work there uh those being released from our incarceration, and seeing what we can do to pre enroll individuals to make

them more successful as they reenter into communities. Um. And also just again looking at this integration, you'll hear this thing over and over for me. So, for example, we have for the first time

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Kim Johnson: uh additional funding and resources to do outreach in our cowworks program, where we've kind of built that out to have a statewide outreach advisory roundtable. Learning from what we know has worked uh in count fresh, but being more broad in terms of our ability to connect again individuals to the full array,

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Kim Johnson: we have a lot of lessons learned again through the pandemic. So, for example, when individuals were transitioning off of some of those additional unemployment benefits, we made direct connections to to count fresh, so that as they were getting into their their uh data and their information trying to understand when their benefits were going to expire. We were linking them immediately to

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Kim Johnson: uh cow fresh for those that uh, uh, we're eligible. We have more to do here on data sharing um. And so, for example, really making sure everyone who's enrolled in the women, infants and children are with program that we can do the data matching. So we know who's on with, but not on cow fresh, and do targeted outreach to those individuals.

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Kim Johnson: Um. So again, just being very intentional about using kind of our full uh set of tools. Uh, in terms of getting people access, and being mindful of who is eligible, that who we are not reaching, and have done a lot in this work in terms of data dashboards that are publicly available and publicly facing to be able to share that information and then be targeted in the space. So

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00:22:58.740 --> 00:23:16.639

Kim Johnson: um very much looking forward to our ability to further um uh, really implement and and deploy some of these strategies again building on lessons learned like we did with our uh Cal fresh uh Ssi population when the biggest expansions of Cal fresh in the last decades um

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Kim Johnson: where we were able to successfully enroll hundreds of thousands of new recipients. So we wanted to get build on best practices. What's working Well, um as we're looking to further uh increase the uptake of this particular social safety net and benefit for for individuals.

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Absolutely. Thank you. And building off with that last question. I think you've touched on a lot of strategies. Um, that may answer this question as well. But

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: um! One of the things that we've heard is that there are participation rates at Vary County by county quite a bit, with some counties reaching participation rates of um nineties and others logging significantly below the state average. Um! What Do you see as the state's role in supporting counties that are not performing as well?

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Kim Johnson: Yeah, thank you for that question. And and again, I'm: In J. As I mentioned, the data dashboard helps for those who might not be aware give you a sense of of where those areas are. I think we have to both recognize again the demographics and the unique populations that are being served to be again intentional, and how we're focused on that. But how the social Social Services department kind of works with the local counties in this space is really through technical assistance. So we actually have

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Kim Johnson: uh account, fresh technical assistance team that can work individually with counties to help them address any specific challenges and help improve access. We also meet with county leadership and analyze their kind of business processes and flow

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Kim Johnson: mit

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Kim Johnson: um. So we do create a roundtable intentional space to share some of those best practices with each other uh going forward. So i'll also just uh note that this last budget uh included investment from the Governor and Legislature to look um at at both one time funding for administrative support for for the counties. The counties are not

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00:25:11.910 --> 00:25:30.319

Kim Johnson: uh exempt from those workforce challenges that that we're all experiencing again um everywhere. But we also will continue to work with them. On looking at our kind of funding methodology, uh, in a longer term going forward. So that's also part of our overall ways in which we're supporting counties and helping them increase their uptake.

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00:25:30.770 --> 00:25:46.159

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Absolutely. Thank you so much for that. Um. Now shifting here is a little bit Still, I think, in one similar space of um calf and programs like it a a project that both spur and nourish California are tracking closely is the California fruit and vegetable Ebt Pilot Project.

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Because this is this: This is testing a scalable technology for programs that would provide matching dollars when calfish participants

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00:25:54.400 --> 00:25:57.150

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: uh buy fruits and vegetables. Um.

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Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: This was shown to reduce hunger, improve health and support California's Agricultural economy.

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00:26:02.850 --> 00:26:12.819

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Um, With the first pilots needed to start at about ninety retail locations across the State in just a few months. What's your vision for where this program can go after the pilot?

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00:26:13.270 --> 00:26:19.629

Kim Johnson: Let me, first and foremost thank you for the support and partnership from California. I'm getting this pilot

104

00:26:19.640 --> 00:26:49.599

Kim Johnson: uh going and up, up and running and on the ground, and uh really do uh share the goal and intent to further reduce hunger and get more healthy food to California families. We are excited about this opportunity to partner and really learn about also how these additional supplemental food benefits can be uh used in, and as as as long as they're needed uh, but for again uh the purpose of supporting the goals of this effort. So uh, again, we're excited. It is launching it as a pilot. So I think our our biggest thing is just as it

105

00:26:49.610 --> 00:27:15.389

Kim Johnson: it commences. We want to pay close attention to the outcomes uh the data we're receiving from the retailers from uh individuals to inform our next steps. So um, I would say a little bit of Tbd here, but I think, based on the concept of what we're in to achieve. Again, we're

excited about this ability to to partner. There's been so many great things that we've had this opportunity to pilot that we haven't been able to bring to scale at larger at a larger um

106

00:27:15.400 --> 00:27:21.440

Kim Johnson: uh reach. And so again we'll look forward to seeing the outcomes and results of this one in terms of being able to do just that

107

00:27:21.770 --> 00:27:30.770

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: absolutely. And thank you and um all of the Cds for that partnership as well. And um, I think we're very excited to see where that goes in the next couple of months as it launches

108

00:27:30.850 --> 00:27:55.490

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: um. Alright, so this time switching gears a little bit as well. Um, One of the most helpful pandemic interventions has been the provision of calfish emergency Allotments that boost benefits amounts significantly. Um with the Governor's declaration that the States public health emergency will end in February. What plans are underway to mitigate the benefit cliff that households will face at the end of emergency allotments?

109

00:27:55.640 --> 00:28:18.889

Kim Johnson: Well, first and foremost, let me uh Echo, that this has been a tremendous benefit. I mentioned in the earlier comments, you know, averaging ninety-five dollars per month uh per recipient. That's huge. And so just as we've seen, just from the initial beginning of this resource, from March of twenty twenty to to September of this year, approximately eleven point four billion dollars

110

00:28:18.900 --> 00:28:48.879

Kim Johnson: and allotments have been issued across California, impacting over two point, one cow, fresh households, or four point nine million individuals and recipients. So it is a tremendous tremendous resource, and we're grateful for the partnership with the Federal Government in this space. So we uh have a plan to continue cal fresh emergency allotments as long as the Federal emergency declaration is in place, we know exactly how a beneficial to support and resource has been, and so what we know is that while yes, it

111

00:28:48.890 --> 00:29:03.510

Kim Johnson: mit ctl. And it is true that in February the State emergency declaration ends as long as the Federal declaration um hasn't ended. We're able to essentially month to month, apply to the Federal Government to continue this, and we plan to do just that as long as that one hundred and fifty



112

00:29:03.520 --> 00:29:33.500

Kim Johnson: Federal declarations in place. There's also a kind of month transition, so people again will get that communication, and heads up about any change in benefit amounts as early as we can, when we know that that this particular resource is a transitioning and ending. So we're going to be doing a lot on communication. So people understand and and understand. As soon as we know in terms of that uh opportunity and potential. So, again, tremendous support, we will be doing what we can. We have the ability to

113

00:29:33.510 --> 00:29:54.709

Kim Johnson: essentially put forward to the Federal Government an additional declaration that allows us to continue at this support as long as again the Federal declarations in place. That is our plan at this point to continue, and again, just for any any listeners, and making sure that message is clear. We are still continuing at these allotments, and we'll be at uh providing that request to the Federal Government again as long as we can.

114

00:29:55.130 --> 00:30:10.819

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Absolutely thank you for that um clarification, I think, as someone who's working very closely with the community currently, that's something that's come up quite a bit in terms of um questions of what that looks like, and timelines so super helpful. Um:

115

00:30:11.100 --> 00:30:13.240

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Yeah. So. And I think,

116

00:30:13.380 --> 00:30:30.920

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: um, as all of us live in California now, California is a very expensive state, and um Federal benefits can fail to meet the needs of people living in some of our highest cost of living areas. Um, What policies your legislation would you like to see implemented to help people make ends across State of California?

117

00:30:31.630 --> 00:30:49.630

Kim Johnson: Yeah, thank you. And and uh, and certainly recognize that a lot of what you heard me Reference kind of at at the top of this call is is intended to focus on that. It's how we're thinking about the safety net in whole, that how we're thinking about how the housing expense and the child care, expense, and the cash and the food supports

118

00:30:49.640 --> 00:31:19.629

Kim Johnson: uh the health, et cetera, how these things fit together. And so I think again, the the focus on integration is a big piece of this. I think we are thrilled to see policies that have come from the Federal Government like categorical eligibility for the family who's enrolled in head

start that can get connected to cal fresh. I mean seeing, seeing additional ways in which we make that as seamless and and as easy for for individuals and families to access is critical. So we'd love to see more um in that space going forward. I think that again. Uh being clear

119

00:31:19.640 --> 00:31:21.949

about what we know works.

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00:31:21.960 --> 00:31:51.589

Kim Johnson: Um, I would also just lift up uh the impact of the Federal uh child tax, child tax credit, and what we saw in terms of that um success, and really reducing poverty um across our state. So I think again, uh, while absolutely we have additional work and efforts at the State level to be intentional in the space and be thinking about the the various costs of living across our State. We also very much will need more, and continue partnership with the Federal Government to be able to do more, and in

121

00:31:51.600 --> 00:31:56.219

Kim Johnson: again have been such a part of our ability to respond in the ways that we have.

122

00:31:56.230 --> 00:32:19.339

Kim Johnson: Um, I wouldn't dare get in front of the governor, so I guess I would say, stay tuned for more. Imagine ten budget coming! But um again, the the goal is absolutely to be mindful and thoughtful, and and recognize how we can, what our levers are to change, you know, and look at income, eligibility limits locally, but also how we can work together to make sure those are represented at the Federal level. We have flexibilities in those spaces as well,

123

00:32:19.810 --> 00:32:21.070

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: absolutely.

124

00:32:22.140 --> 00:32:41.019

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: And this is the last question we had prepared. We had some questions in the chat as well, so um in a recent statewide survey that nourish California fielded nearly one in four respondents that they face some type of discrimination when applying for public benefits. We know that this is something that you and your department never intend as a client experience.

125

00:32:41.030 --> 00:32:52.630

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Um! What is Cdss doing to address this issue of applicants and clients feeling discriminated against? And what is Cdss doing internally and externally to advance its goals related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

126

00:32:53.420 --> 00:33:11.700

Kim Johnson: So absolutely Uh, no, uh, uh, you know, support or any in any way, shape or form for discrimination. We want to ensure that. Um, we really are um supporting uh people experiencing poverty in our State, and the most strength based

127

00:33:11.710 --> 00:33:32.890

Kim Johnson: uh supportive way that we can, and that is absolutely our goal. We've been doing a lot for us at the Department. Uh: we have, uh, for example, expanded our civil rights uh unit and work and those civil and our team works. Then, again, with the local Uh county, civil rights uh components. So we're tracking and looking at kind of that experience over time.

128

00:33:32.900 --> 00:33:51.970

Kim Johnson: Um! And certainly again, what other training resources at the State level that we can do to address uh any any issues that we're seeing in that experience. We also have, uh, through the Governor and legislature, had the great fortune of having additional investments and things like racial equity and implicit bias training for county staff, and so that will be rolling out

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00:33:51.980 --> 00:34:01.289

Kim Johnson: uh in the coming months as well to again making sure we're having that strength based approach that we're mindful and intentional about applying a race equity lens to our work.

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00:34:01.400 --> 00:34:13.470

Kim Johnson: We've been doing a number of partnerships with counties on even just doing um things like making their lobbies and county offices more family, friendly and supportive as people are going forward. I want to.

131

00:34:13.480 --> 00:34:22.049

Kim Johnson: I appreciate part of uh the way in which we've been working through this last few years has really about, uh, really about the engaging community.

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00:34:22.219 --> 00:34:41.169

Kim Johnson: And when I say that, uh, we're actually talking about engaging with those that we have the privilege to serve and helping them uh be able to sit with us and fully be uh kind of with us at the table, and how we're setting policy, how we're designing program uh for me. I simply say that is about shifting power back to community.

133

00:34:41.179 --> 00:34:57.019

Kim Johnson: Um! And so, uh, we absolutely will continue that approach to make sure that we are reaching that goal of being strength based and supportive. I know our counties are with us with that work, so we will always, uh continue on this charge and make sure both at the individual level. But at

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00:34:57.030 --> 00:35:05.680

Kim Johnson: the larger um systems level. It's feeling like a supportive connection that really is going to help uh individuals and families become more stable and successful

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00:35:05.800 --> 00:35:22.400

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: absolutely. And as someone who came from mental health field, I think, looking at that strength base, really speaks to me. And and really this connections with community um I've seen are so important, so wonderful, to hear you speak on that. Um. So I have a couple of questions here from folks in the chat we're participating. We have a question here.

136

00:35:22.410 --> 00:35:32.729

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Um! It says, how much time does it take for participating Californians to apply for and comply with benefit programs every year? Um! How is this trending?

137

00:35:33.460 --> 00:35:35.509

Kim Johnson: How much time is that? What? The question was,

138

00:35:35.540 --> 00:35:38.489

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: how much time to to apply for, and

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00:35:38.720 --> 00:35:45.129

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: which i'm assuming means, you know, if there's any things we need to do to

140

00:35:45.140 --> 00:36:15.130

Kim Johnson: sure. I mean, I think partly it's going to depend on the programs. Um, for which an individual is applying for. So again, we do have, for example, one application that connects to Cal fresh and medic account, and Cal works and child care, you know. So we are looking to continue in that space of making sure that there's not multiple steps or kind of entry points. Um for individuals to have to do to comply on the on the component around um staying on, helping avoid churn

141

00:36:15.140 --> 00:36:39.830

Kim Johnson: uh and and keeping people who are eligible on the program. Uh, we are, uh, we have initiatives like our verification hub, which is essentially a way in which the data systems can talk together. So if i'm a recipient, and I'm putting forward my pay stubs that show that I've continued to be eligible for the programs that there is on the back end the ability to share that information with whatever case worker for whatever program right, and it needs to have it and

142

00:36:39.840 --> 00:36:55.500

Kim Johnson: mit

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00:36:55.510 --> 00:37:07.029

Kim Johnson: um uh, especially for the uh individual who's applying and maintaining their program. I will say that it's a particularly challenging time for communications. Right? We do have.

144

00:37:07.040 --> 00:37:24.120

Kim Johnson: We've had a lot of flexibilities that change our rules. So we were allowing for electronic signatures, and we were allowing for longer periods before you had to re-verify and demonstrate. Your information. So with all of that, I would just say that we're doing our very, very best

145

00:37:24.130 --> 00:37:38.730

Kim Johnson: to be very clear about now that some of those um flexibilities have transitioned. Um, that we are. People understand and know that. Yes, it really is a time to um demonstrate that you're still eligible, and submit the the documentation to help support that.

146

00:37:38.740 --> 00:37:50.360

Kim Johnson: Um! But again. The more that we can do that once and have that have the back end. Um, uh kind of share that information across the other programs we we are aiming to simplify that process going forward

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00:37:50.890 --> 00:37:52.129

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: absolutely.

148

00:37:53.410 --> 00:38:17.299

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: And so with this next question, I think you've spoken a little bit to this in terms of building connections with um partner organizations to reach out to communities. Um. But this question says, How can we lift up the conversation of no wrong door and better coordination and collaboration in communities. We have. Community partners have been around

for over forty five years that are in the space to work with families, provide some coordination of services, but can do more.

149

00:38:17.350 --> 00:38:27.600

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Many already support immigration populations, but are not included in a real way in the exciting expansion efforts. Um. In many instances we are all hoping to support the same families,

150

00:38:27.900 --> 00:38:56.330

Kim Johnson: just completely appreciate that uh question and comment there. And I actually myself, I come from working in community based organizations prior to joining the States. So I really appreciate. I I can't say enough how much uh the State is appreciative of our community based organizations and partners. We relied and counted on you in A, in a combination with our county social service agencies. So much, uh, in the last several years in terms of being able to get all all those economic relief supports out into community. So thank you. Um,

151

00:38:56.430 --> 00:39:24.580

Kim Johnson: I think there's a few things I would just lift up specific. So, for example, we have uh funded additional dollars for prevention uh in county social service agencies, kind of in a in a broader child welfare space. And so right now, counties are charged with developing prevention, plans and communities, and absolutely having community based pathways. Um are part of those overall strategies. And so I would say, Please, please, please engage with your counties on that effort. We actually have a

152

00:39:24.590 --> 00:39:34.520

Kim Johnson: a specific webinar coming up in December that i'll make sure you can share out specific to the the the actual integration of community based partners in those prevention efforts.

153

00:39:34.530 --> 00:40:04.510

Kim Johnson: I'd also just lift up a work that I know. The California Department of Aging is leading across our agency around no wrong door to support support our older adults and those with disabilities as part of our master plan. So thinking through whether people are coming through the areas of on aging or a county social service, if that's not the same organization. How, again, are we connecting people to the full and whole array? So there's going to be a lot of focused conversation, especially as it relates to that population as well. So some very specific efforts that i'm glad to make sure

154

00:40:04.520 --> 00:40:07.769

Kim Johnson: we can share out to participants in that space.

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00:40:07.980 --> 00:40:13.640

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Absolutely. Um: Yeah, if you could send that to us, I'm: sure we could find a way to share that with participants.

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00:40:13.660 --> 00:40:27.589

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Um. So this next question says, Um, can you discuss the impact of Governor Newsom's recent announcement to withhold uh one billion uh in funding for homelessness alleviation services and its ramifications for Cdss:

157

00:40:27.960 --> 00:40:36.609

Kim Johnson: sure I we just actually on last Thursday last week, the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, which I have the privilege to sit on.

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00:40:36.620 --> 00:40:53.130

Kim Johnson: I met we had a little bit of that conversation in that space. It is that it is that that that group, that body, that that that works with the business consumer services, housing, uh to uh, essentially uh release and share out that funding that was held in. And I think overarching what I would say. The intent

159

00:40:53.140 --> 00:41:22.960

Kim Johnson: um is really uh from the Governor is to say that when we're putting out these levels of investments in resources, we're wanting to be clear about wanting to move the needle on outcomes. And so it's the delivery. It's the delivery of outcomes that um is key. And so, as those plans were being submitted, kind of the overall outcome uh impact uh was was much less than we had hoped for at the State level, and the the governor was aiming for, so the intent is to bring quickly, by the way. Uh bring together

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00:41:22.970 --> 00:41:33.989

Kim Johnson: uh the the partners and stakeholders related to this effort to get clear uh around what those outcomes might be in ways in which we can support uh meeting those outcomes.

161

00:41:34.000 --> 00:41:46.989

Kim Johnson: For so it's not as a direct fund source that the Department of Social Service administers. I mentioned some of our programs again at the top of the call. Um, but certainly in terms of the ability which we are asking for is blending and braiding

162

00:41:47.000 --> 00:41:58.930

Kim Johnson: these spend streams. It's part of it. So that's the other thing that I think we want to ultimately stress is that you know again for social services. We have a lot of uh housing and homelessness programs that are population specific.

163

00:41:58.940 --> 00:42:28.159

Kim Johnson: How is that blended in rating with the net with other offense sources like hap uh, like those that are administered by the housing community Development W. Those administered by the Department of Health Care services. How are these things uh coming together to leverage and and serve the overall need for communities. How are the various partners in local communities sitting down together to intentionally plan and in bloom braid. We've been doing a lot of things like creating tools like the financing guide where we're we're sharing at the state level. Our intent about how these things fit together.

164

00:42:28.270 --> 00:42:41.690

Kim Johnson: Um! But again, we are very much wanting to see kind of all of the local stakeholders come together to make that plan successful, and to demonstrate the outcomes that we know we have to do better on. So that's again, I think the intent

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00:42:41.700 --> 00:42:51.290

Kim Johnson: um at the of the governor's announcement, and how the State agencies will support communities, and and both getting that investment out in community. But how it's going to be fitting within the larger whole.

166

00:42:52.520 --> 00:42:53.600

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Thank you.

167

00:42:56.920 --> 00:43:09.330

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: So we have one more question here. It says. On one hand, categorical eligibility reduces administrative burdens; on the other. It exasperates benefit cliffs. How do you weigh these effects?

168

00:43:09.990 --> 00:43:12.849

Kim Johnson: It's it's a great, it's a great question,

169

00:43:12.860 --> 00:43:31.309

Kim Johnson: I mean, I think. Again, um benefit cliffs. And again, the experience we're having of having some resources change. These are real. We recognize the real impacts um to households, families, individuals across the State. And so I think we have to continue to think about that and look at it. I'll. I'll use some examples like how works, for example, and



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00:43:31.320 --> 00:43:53.939

Kim Johnson: uh in cowworks. We've looked at um the benefit. Cl. She, Cliff, issue and assets. There's been policy over the last several years in Cal works where we have exempted, uh additional income and assets from counting against you. In other words, you have a greater ability as a family on Cal Works to get stable before the program where you have to exit the program. And so I think

171

00:43:53.950 --> 00:44:11.579

Kim Johnson: um thinking through those policy designs and any of our programs, what is actually Um Again, how does the array connect based on where you are falling in terms of your own um income and stability. I think we've continue to look at that across time again, using Cal works as an example. But we'll have to do that.

172

00:44:11.590 --> 00:44:41.400

Kim Johnson: Um uh, all the way all the way across the board. And so all of our programs don't have exactly the same income, eligibility, criteria to enter or um to maintain. And so I think um to to the, to the questioner's comment, Um, having them connected to get in together, but also understand, and maybe even think about, especially where it relates to Federal policy levers what we can do more to make sure there's stability before any of the uh participants have to exit is something that we're very much interested in continuing to explore.

173

00:44:42.200 --> 00:44:43.430

Absolutely.

174

00:44:43.880 --> 00:45:02.060

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Thank you so much. And um. We're getting close to the end of time here. But I did have um a follow up question. I know you've gone to touch a little bit on some of the prevention work that Css. Is doing, especially around safety net you mentioned, especially with children. I'd love to hear a little bit more about some of that prevention work.

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00:45:02.070 --> 00:45:30.570

Kim Johnson: Yes, uh we are. We are thrilled and excited. We have uh a lot of phenomenal prevention work that's been happening Um, in our programs for for a lot a long time, but we've been able to further that with uh, different policy changes like family first at the Federal level, where there's even more focus on prevention, et cetera. I'll also just again lift up um a few things uh again in the Cal workspace. So we have added to our array a voluntary home visiting initiative.

176

00:45:30.580 --> 00:46:00.540

Kim Johnson: Um, and that, of course, uh, I always uh speak. And this is again, from personal experience as a former recipient on Wick, and having a home visitor come in my first week of having my first child, now over twenty years ago. Uh, just to just a tremendous experience. I'll never forget right. I remember it to this day of what it what it felt like to have someone um there to connect and support to services, and we have really um created our home visiting initiative in ways that we are thoughtful about who our California community

177

00:46:00.550 --> 00:46:23.490

Kim Johnson: these are. So we have uh components around um. Again, the Department has the great fortune to have an immigrant integration branch where we are also funding community based organizations to support legal service providers to help individuals with the immigration remedy and a change in status. So how are we connecting that resource through home visiting Uh, in in the families in the households.

178

00:46:23.500 --> 00:46:52.279

Kim Johnson: Um, we have, uh, in our home visiting uh array also the ability to the home visitor to have additional resources immediately to address an immediate need. Maybe the refrigerator is broken, or there isn't one right? Um. So I think it's just a way in which we're again. We're using a strength based approach to say, Uh, there's significant difference of having absence of resource and then getting connected to them in terms of the experience and in being more stable and getting out of poverty,

179

00:46:52.290 --> 00:47:05.619

Kim Johnson: and and we have to be thoughtful and mindful about those um relationships. And and again, the home visitors, uh certainly are just great uh connectors in terms of developing those relationships with families to get them connected to the whole. So one

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00:47:05.630 --> 00:47:15.810

Kim Johnson: that's a huge piece of our our prevention effort, and we know that there are many different models that are being used across the State to support and ultimately reach that goal as Well, so.

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00:47:15.820 --> 00:47:45.760

Kim Johnson: Um, I I think again, the counties are right now, developing their prevention plans. The state uh will be um submitting its uh uh prevention plan related to families first this month, so we're happy to also share that and post that out um as well. But again, it's it is connection to the right. You can get here, and you say it over and over again. But it's It's really that connection to the full array that we know. That makes all the difference in terms of stability. Uh for for individuals and families. There's been a lot of other uh investments across the health and human services for early,

182

00:47:45.770 --> 00:48:10.630

Kim Johnson: the intervention resources having developmental screenings earlier. Um, Again, all that health access and the Cal a work um is is all as part of our initiative. The children and youth. Behavioral initiative is also going to be focused in the space it's. It's really helping people get connected to those resources that we have in the state. So we're very much looking forward to expanding and launching many of these across the board, for for anyone who needs it

183

00:48:10.850 --> 00:48:22.749

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: absolutely, and I think Um, you speak so well to the the ways that those connections really affect the families as a whole, and really being connected to those resources, affects the health and outcomes of folks. Um,

184

00:48:23.150 --> 00:48:35.510

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: because all those are so interconnected. So thank you so much. Um. So I guess I would love to give you a little time. If there's anything that you would like to highlight, or that you haven't gone to speak to, to speak on that before um we close out.

185

00:48:35.790 --> 00:48:56.259

Kim Johnson: Thank you for that opportunity. I would just again. Uh, we are grateful um for partnerships across the board. No matter if it's community based organization, a County Social Service Agency, or anyone else in the broad ray. We're also, uh, you know. Just again, on this community engagement, priority and principle of ours. Uh, we are,

186

00:48:56.270 --> 00:49:22.649

Kim Johnson: recognize the opportunities I am grateful. Um, for all the opportunities I have to meet directly with those that we have the privilege to serve, to share their story, to share what's working for them, to share what's not, and how That, again is part of the way that we do business, how it's embedded into our process as government. So we have a commitment to continue. And further, that work. And I think that makes all the difference in the world of our ability to address in equities. Uh I I would I.

187

00:49:22.660 --> 00:49:41.910

Kim Johnson: We remiss to not mention that the Governor himself issued an executive order in September around how the States are are mandated to address inequities across their programs, that we do not want as a person zip code, that they that they are reward into to dictate their life outcomes. And so we're. We're really committed to this school,

188

00:49:41.920 --> 00:50:01.330

Kim Johnson: and I would say so much of what you heard me speak to in terms of the way the governor in the legislature invested in community during this really challenging time was because we listened and engaged uh with community and use that data that we knew would drive the outcomes that work. So we are grateful for all partnerships across the board. The collaboration

189

00:50:01.340 --> 00:50:14.950

Kim Johnson: and having this robust array of safety net services in California. There's absolutely more for us to do. Uh, but I am confident that we are going to do it together. Um! So i'm just grateful for the partnerships across the board, and this opportunity to talk with you this afternoon.

190

00:50:15.120 --> 00:50:34.870

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Thank you so much. And how can attendees follow your work or follow up on any of these things you've mentioned. Cdfs. After this, please do uh visit our website, which is updated frequently. Ww. Dot cdss C. A. Gov.

191

00:50:34.880 --> 00:50:50.139

Kim Johnson: Uh, please reach out to us. There's There's always to do that through the website and otherwise. Um in terms of any uh any resources you're looking for um, et cetera. So we're we're glad to be a support and in service to community with you.

192

00:50:50.270 --> 00:51:07.700

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Wonderful! Thank you again for your incredible insight for joining us today, and thank you folks in the audience as well for joining us. Um! Again to echo with Jessica mentioned in the next figure to the for teams going to be sending out email uh with the link of today's recording and other resources to share. Um, But thank you again, Director Johnson for joining us.

193

00:51:07.710 --> 00:51:10.369

Kim Johnson: Thank you for the invitation. I appreciate the opportunity.

194

00:51:10.480 --> 00:51:11.490

Grecia Marquez-Nieblas: Have a good afternoon,