



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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STUDENTS, COUNTY PARTNER TO HELP LOW-INCOME FAMILIES *Tax Assistance and Food Stamp Screenings Offered*

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) continues to enroll more qualified individuals in the food stamp program thanks to a new partnership with San Diego State University and California State University-San Marcos. *Thrive San Diego* is a new initiative through which college students screen low-income families for food stamps and prepare their tax returns at no cost through the Earned Income Tax Credit campaign (EITC).

Tax preparation is offered at about 75 sites throughout the county. Of those sites, nine also offer food stamp screening. Two of the locations are completely managed by students.

"I am delighted to see San Diego State University and California State University San Marcos join the County's efforts to get more people to claim their Earned Income Tax Credit and enroll in the food stamps program," said Supervisor Ron Roberts at a news conference to announce the new partnership.

Roberts, Supervisor Greg Cox, SDSU President Stephen L. Weber, CSUSM President Karen S. Haynes, HHSA Director Nick Macchione, student interns and volunteers and representatives from other institutions, agencies and organizations participated in the announcement today of the *Thrive San Diego* partnership.

"*Thrive San Diego* will give families an opportunity to thrive, and not just survive, this tough economy," said Supervisor Greg Cox. "With this initiative, we are providing a one-stop shop for low-income families to receive free tax preparation and food-stamp screening from students to help put nutritious food on their table."

"The EITC campaign and *Thrive San Diego* are two great efforts that benefit low-income families and individuals," said Macchione. "All of the people and agencies involved in these initiatives care about the well-being of children and families in need."

About 70 student interns and volunteers from CSUSM and SDSU participate in the *Thrive San Diego* campaign, which runs until April 15. The students have been distributing EITC and food stamp materials at schools, businesses, community centers, churches, and local grocery stores.

"SDSU's involvement as a major partner in *Thrive San Diego* is an example of how San Diego State, together with our students and faculty, can play a key role addressing community issues," said SDSU President Weber.

"As a university fully engaged in our community, we are pleased to partner with the County to provide our students with hands-on learning opportunities while simultaneously delivering valuable services to those in need," said CSUSM President Haynes.

Nearly 20 institutions, agencies and organizations participate in the *Thrive San Diego* initiative. For the nearest tax preparation and food stamp screening site, call 2-1-1.

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