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Community Benefits Awareness Presentations

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Abstract

Socioeconomic disadvantage significantly impacts educational outcomes, with 81% of Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) Alternative Education program students facing economic hardships. Serving youth in grades 9-12 and adults in Monterey County, including those within the county jail and juvenile facilities, the MCOE Alternative Education program strives to facilitate high school diploma attainment. This project sought to bridge the knowledge gap surrounding the Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs benefit programs through presentations shared within the MCOE community and partner agencies. A partnership between MCOE and the Monterey County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) was established to further this goal. The anticipated outcome was that at least 50% of participants would demonstrate increased knowledge of benefit programs. Evaluation revealed a significant achievement, with 95% of survey respondents reporting enhanced knowledge. It is recommended that MCOE continues its collaboration with MCDSS, given its substantial benefits, and considers translating presentations into Spanish to better serve the diverse linguistic needs of the community.

Keywords: socioeconomic disadvantage, education, benefit programs, knowledge enhancement, Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs, alternative education

Agency & Communities Served

The Monterey County Office of Education Alternative Education Program is dedicated to fostering success among the diverse student population in Monterey County. By creating a nurturing school environment, the program aims to enhance academic and pro-social behaviors and skills while imparting practical life skills. “The Monterey County Office of Education provides the leadership, support and service excellence needed to prepare the diverse students of Monterey County for success in each step of their educational journey” (Monterey County Office of Education, 2021a, para 1).

The mission of the Alternative Education Program of the Monterey County Office of Education is to prepare our students for future success by providing a supportive school environment that focuses on increasing academic and pro-social behaviors and skills, while providing functional life skills instruction. We respect and value the unique contributions of each of our students and our role in assisting them in becoming responsible, stable, and contributing members of society (Monterey County Office of Education, 2021b, para 1).

The program recognizes its key role in guiding students toward responsibility, stability, and meaningful contributions to society. Through this mission, the Alternative Education Program aligns with the broader vision of the Monterey County Office of Education, emphasizing leadership, support, and service excellence in preparing students for success throughout their educational journeys.

The Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE) Alternative Education program serves youth in grades nine through twelve and adults in Monterey County, working to attain their high school diploma. The MCOE Alternative Education program extends its services to youth and adults within the county jail and juvenile facilities. Three of the MCOE alternative

education schools operate within correctional settings, providing educational support to individuals who are incarcerated. MCOE Alternative Education schools include the Salinas Community School, Silver Star (two locations), Bob Hoover Academy, Wellington Smith School (juvenile hall/youth center), and MCOE Adult Education (three locations).

According to data provided by Community Schools Coordinator, Herminia Cervantes, on April 26, 2023, the program's demographic profile reflects the significant challenges faced by its participants. Approximately 81% of the population served by the agency is socioeconomically disadvantaged, highlighting the prevalence of economic hardships among students.

Socioeconomically disadvantaged students refer to individuals facing economic hardships or financial constraints, resulting in challenges such as food insecurity, difficulty obtaining school supplies/clothing, restricted ability to participate in extracurricular activities; as well as limited housing options, including homelessness. The limited housing options are frequently associated with higher crime rates, increased gang activity, and substance use, contributing to elevated stress levels, heightened physical and mental health problems, and a greater prevalence of abuse and trauma histories. Furthermore, 64% of the students enrolled in the program have disabilities, emphasizing the commitment to inclusive education. A substantial 90% of the population identifies as Hispanic, constituting a significant demographic within the program. Additionally, 60% of the students are adjudicated or involved in the criminal justice system, shedding light on the unique needs and circumstances of this vulnerable group. These statistics highlight the high-needs nature of the student body and emphasize the program's role in providing educational opportunities to those impacted by challenging situations.

Problem Model Background and Literature Review

Problem Statement

The Community Benefits Awareness Presentations project will address the high level of students facing challenges that significantly impact their education. The socioeconomic disadvantage among these students plays a critical role in shaping their educational outcomes, with 81% of MCOE Alternative Education students facing economic hardships. This economic inequality is characterized by households experiencing limited or no income, reduced wages due to lower education levels and job skills; as well as limited housing options, associated with elevated crime rates, and substance use. These circumstances contribute to heightened stress levels, physical and mental health concerns, and a prevailing history of abuse and trauma within both the student and family populations. Per the American Psychological Association (APA) , evidence shows “the link between lower SES [socioeconomic status] and learning disabilities or other negative psychological outcomes that affect academic achievement” (2024, para. 18). Additionally, Mendel's report (2023) points out that state-level data on recidivism consistently reveals increased rates of rearrest, new cases, or convictions; along with re-incarceration among youth released from correctional confinement. The report highlights that incarceration impacts the success of young individuals in education and employment, causing lasting harm to their health and well-being.

The Problem Model in Figure 1 depicts the diverse challenges faced by students in the MCOE Alternative Education program, encompassing factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage, involvement in the criminal justice system, abuse, trauma, and fear. These challenges contribute to social and emotional impacts, academic difficulties, increased health issues, substance use, and risk of recidivism. The proposed presentations aim to address these

issues by providing information about programs designed to alleviate the identified challenges and empower students to overcome the obstacles impacting their educational success.

The challenges of socioeconomic disadvantage, involvement in the criminal justice system, abuse, trauma, and fear exert profound impacts on the educational journey of children enrolled in the MCOE alternative education program. Socioeconomic disadvantage often manifests in limited access to resources, unstable housing situations, and inadequate healthcare, creating barriers to consistent attendance, engagement, and academic success. Involvement in the criminal justice system can disrupt educational continuity, leading to gaps in learning and exacerbating feelings of alienation and disconnection from academic pursuits. Additionally, experiences of abuse and trauma can significantly impede cognitive and emotional development, resulting in difficulties with concentration, self-regulation, and forming trusting relationships within the educational environment. Moreover, pervasive feelings of fear stemming from various sources, such as community violence or domestic instability, can further hinder students' ability to focus on their studies, perpetuating a cycle of academic underachievement and emotional distress. Collectively, these challenges highlight the urgent need for tailored interventions and holistic support services within the MCOE alternative education program to mitigate the adverse effects and promote the academic well-being of its students.

Figure 1: Problem Model

Contributing Factors	Problem	Consequences
Socioeconomic Disadvantage	High number of students facing challenges/trauma, significantly impacting their school experience.	Health Issues
Involvement in the Criminal Justice System		Substance Use
Abuse, Trauma, Fear		Risk of Recidivism

Contributing Factors

Socioeconomic Disadvantage

Socioeconomic disadvantage can have a profound impact on students and families, affecting various aspects of their lives. According to the American Psychological Association , “the development of fundamental skills of reading acquisition, such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language” (2024, para. 5), is significantly affected in children from low socioeconomic status (SES) families. This publication highlights the challenges faced by students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, shedding light on the crucial connection between SES and the acquisition of foundational literacy skills. The insights from this research are instrumental in my capstone project, providing a framework to identify and address the impacts of low SES on students within our program, guiding the development of targeted interventions. In addition, the American Psychological Association (2010) emphasizes the broader outcomes of SES on human functioning, including physical and mental health. This publication shows the correlation between low SES and lower academic achievement, health challenges, and overall quality of life. By highlighting these connections, it further underlines some of the challenges faced by students in our program, reinforcing the need for comprehensive interventions.

Involvement in the Criminal Justice System

Involvement in the criminal justice system significantly impacts students, influencing various areas of their development and well-being. Terrasi and Crain (2017) discuss in *Trauma and Learning in America’s Classrooms* the diverse ways in which trauma affects children, encompassing physical, social, emotional, and academic dimensions. The stress associated with involvement in the criminal justice system can impede children's trust in relationships and their

environment, ultimately affecting their academic performance and overall development. The journal emphasizes the importance of supportive services for students and families, particularly within the school environment, where children spend a significant portion of their time.

Furthermore, Frieze (2015) delves into *How Trauma Affects Student Learning and Behavior*, exploring the profound impact of trauma on mental health, learning, and behavior. This research provides insights into practical strategies for supporting students through everyday interactions and interventions. The information collected from these journals is invaluable for understanding the challenges that students involved in the criminal justice system face and informing the approach to addressing their unique needs and fostering a supportive learning environment.

Abuse, Trauma, Fear

Abuse, trauma, and fear can cause profound and lasting impacts on students, influencing their mental health, learning, and behavior. Frieze's (2015) exploration in *How Trauma Affects Student Learning and Behavior* sheds light on the consequences of trauma on students' psychological well-being and academic engagement. The article provides valuable insights into strategies for supporting students through both everyday interactions and targeted interventions. Additionally, Terrasi and Crain's (2017) work in *Trauma and Learning in America's Classrooms* delineates the various ways in which trauma affects children, emphasizing its potential to disrupt physical, social, emotional, and academic development. The stress associated with trauma can lead to difficulties in forming trusting relationships and navigating their environment. Understanding these dynamics is crucial in highlighting the importance of supportive services for students and families, particularly within the school setting where they spend a significant portion of their time. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that due to trauma and fear, students and

families may avoid accessing certain supports that could alleviate their challenges, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and a supportive educational environment.

Consequences

Social & Emotional Impacts

Experiencing educational challenges can have profound social and emotional impacts on students, as highlighted by research findings. Deng et al. (2022) emphasize that chronic stress related to academic difficulties can significantly affect mental health, potentially leading to psychological disorders such as depression. This chronic stress contributes to lower self-esteem, diminished motivation, and a sense of hopelessness among students facing educational challenges. Kamal and Bener (2009) further highlight the consequences of school failure, noting that it can result in a detrimental cycle where students lose self-confidence, become discouraged, decrease effort, and are more susceptible to subsequent failures. The emotional toll of educational challenges may lead to a disconnection from school and foster connections to external negative influences. In the search for validation, students may turn to inappropriate sources, potentially exposing themselves to harm. Recognizing and addressing the social and emotional implications of educational challenges is crucial for providing targeted support, promoting resilience, and a positive learning environment.

Substance Use

Experiencing school failure can significantly impact students, with potential consequences extending to substance use and compromised access to essential supports. Pascoe et al. (2019) emphasize the link between academic-related stress and increased substance use among young people. The study highlights the significance of protective social factors, such as adult social support, in mitigating the effects of academic-related stress. For students facing

school failure, the lack of health insurance or other supportive structures becomes a substantial barrier to accessing necessary resources, including substance treatment. It is crucial to recognize the importance of confidential substance treatment options, ensuring that students feel comfortable seeking help without the necessity of involving parents, especially when parental support is unavailable or poses a barrier to obtaining health insurance coverage.

Crosnoe's (2006) research provides further evidence supporting the link between academic performance and adolescent drinking, shedding light on the connection between the two. The study acknowledges the challenges posed by this association for families and schools alike, recognizing that academic failure and drinking can disrupt the fundamental functioning of both individuals and educational institutions. The research identifies academic failure as a risk factor for adolescent drinking, and equally, the number of classes failed emerges as a stronger predictor of subsequent alcohol use. This highlights the importance of implementing interventions and support systems to assist students in navigating stressors, both within their home environments and at school, which could otherwise contribute to substance use.

Risk of Recidivism

The challenges faced within the school environment can have far-reaching consequences for students, potentially manifesting as behavioral issues that capture the attention of school staff or officers and, in severe instances, result in legal consequences. Elevated stress levels, coupled with inadequate coping mechanisms or substance use, may intensify behavioral challenges, prompting certain students to become involved in criminal activities. Moreover, individuals struggling with poverty or financial hardships may resort to criminal acts for survival, engaging in activities like theft or drug dealing to fulfill essential needs for themselves and their families.

Mayer (2021) underlines the

heightened risk of compromised brain development in children exposed to early life stress, impacting working memory and fostering impulsivity; thereby contributing to learning difficulties at school and acting as "risk factors" for potential involvement in criminal behavior. Folk et al. (2021) emphasize that justice-involved youth often face a disproportionately high incidence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), emphasizing the urgent need for behavioral health interventions and the increased risk of ongoing involvement with the justice system. "Systematic scoping review results demonstrate youth in contact with the juvenile justice system have high rates of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which are associated with greater behavioral health needs and worse legal outcomes" (Folk, 2021). Additionally, research by Hodgkinson et al. (2020) emphasizes that the combination of past trauma and the added stressors within the prison environment for incarcerated individuals can aggravate further traumatization; impeding psychological development, and complicating the journey to adulthood, for youth involved with the criminal justice system.

Project Description and Implementation Process

Project Description

Presentations were created, intended for utilization by MCOE staff, students, families, as well as other community members and service providers through channels such as the Salinas Community School Family Resource Center and beyond. The presentations were created using Microsoft PowerPoint and were provided to MCOE in two formats: editable PowerPoint presentations and PDF files. This dual approach ensures that MCOE has the flexibility to make future updates or modifications as needed. For all other community organizations and community members, the presentations were distributed in PDF format. By sharing them in PDF format, it ensures easy dissemination to anyone in need across our community. Moreover,

distributing the presentations in this way ensures that the information remains accessible and usable even after my tenure with the agency, allowing the files to continue serving the community long-term.

This approach ensured that the knowledge and resources provided in the presentations had a broader impact, benefiting both the immediate MCOE community and the larger community network served by the Salinas Community School Family Resource Center, as well as other partnering community service providers. Specifically, these presentations centered around the Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs programs. Medi-Cal is California's Medicaid program, providing health coverage to eligible low-income individuals and families. CalFresh is California's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), offering nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families. CalWORKs is California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, a public assistance program providing cash aid and services to eligible families with children.

The primary objective of this project was to equip MCOE staff – and partner agencies – with the necessary knowledge and resources to guide families through the application process of these programs. The presentations encompassed an overview of each program, detailing eligibility requirements, how to prepare for the application, program benefits, and providing answers to frequently asked questions. Additional resource information was also provided to assist individuals who may not qualify for these programs or require additional supportive services from other agencies. This inclusive approach ensures that everyone, regardless of eligibility, has access to alternative support sources, preventing individuals from being left without assistance.

Project Justification & Benefits

The goal of this project was to empower MCOE staff with the awareness and knowledge necessary to effectively assist families seeking support from the Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs programs. With the recent opening of the Salinas Community School Family Resource Center (SCS FRC), a valuable resource is now available to serve students attending MCOE schools, their families, and the broader community. The SCS FRC is now positioned to assist individuals in applying for these benefit assistance programs. The presentations did and will continue to play a key role in educating SCS FRC staff about the program requirements, and the application process, enabling them to guide and assist those in need effectively.

Additionally, by extending the reach of these presentations to other community service providers, the agency aims to create a network of informed professionals capable of identifying opportunities to support clients and community members through these programs. Recognizing that not all MCOE students or families will access support through the SCS FRC, making these presentations widely available ensures consistent and accurate information for everyone. The project's broader impact includes dispelling misinformation, addressing the unique needs of the undocumented community, and connecting youth with essential services related to health, substance treatment, and mental well-being. By sharing information about available programs, the agency aspires to reduce the impact of socioeconomic disadvantages, supporting students and their families directly or indirectly through collaborative efforts with other community agencies. Ultimately, the project aims to alleviate suffering, reduce the percentage of students impacted by poverty and homelessness, and contribute to a more resilient and thriving community.

The project aligns with the best practice standards outlined by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Standards for School Social Work Services (2012). The project

demonstrates adherence to the standard of assessment by systematically addressing the needs of the MCOE community and identifying areas of socioeconomic disadvantage. Through the development of presentations, it meets the intervention and professional development standards by providing a targeted and comprehensive approach to equipping MCOE staff with the knowledge, enhanced skills, and resources needed to guide families through the assistance programs. Cultural competence is upheld by recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of the community, as highlighted in the NASW standards. The project aligns with advocacy standards by promoting access to vital resources for all community members. Additionally, the commitment to interdisciplinary leadership and collaboration is shown in the collaborative efforts with the SCS FRC and other community agencies. Overall, the proposed project exemplifies a comprehensive and multidimensional approach in line with the *NASW Standards for School Social Work Services*, ensuring effective support and advocacy for the MCOE and broader community.

The project is aimed at yielding a multitude of benefits, fostering positive impacts for both the agency and the diverse individuals and communities it serves. Undocumented students, families, and community members will gain awareness of potential benefits available to them through the Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, and CalFresh programs. This increased knowledge will contribute to a reduction in fear associated with seeking services, as a clearer understanding of these programs will be provided. Particularly for teens, this initiative provides a critical avenue for learning about available benefits without needing parental involvement, addressing vital areas such as sexual health, mental health, pregnancy-related services, substance treatment, and food assistance for homeless youth. Tackling these challenges at their roots has the potential to mitigate numerous escalated problems, including crime, homelessness, food insecurity,

incarceration, self-harm, teen parenting, and various health issues. Victims of domestic violence or trauma will gain access to information about the Medi-Cal health program, offering them a pathway to apply for essential services such as medical care, dental care, mental health care, and substance treatment. Families facing food insecurity can transition to having access to nutritious meals. By supporting parents in navigating and accessing these beneficial programs, the project aims to reduce the negative impacts of challenging circumstances on families, thereby fostering a healthier environment for students, positively influencing their learning and overall well-being.

Expected Outcomes & Assessment Plan

One measurable expected outcome for this project was that upon completion of the presentations, it was anticipated that at least 50% of participants would demonstrate increased knowledge of the Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs programs. The assessment of this project primarily concentrated on evaluating the increased knowledge of the benefit programs among MCOE staff and other community agencies. The goal was that increased knowledge would translate into enhanced skills for MCOE staff and other service providers, allowing them to better assist those they serve. To assess the effectiveness of the presentations and determine the level of increased knowledge, a survey was administered to MCOE staff and other agency providers. This survey served as a valuable tool in measuring the success of the project in achieving its educational objectives and contributing to the overall well-being of the individuals and families served.

For the assessment of the presentations' effectiveness, a post-test survey was provided to participants. This survey included questions designed to gauge various aspects of participants' knowledge and perceptions both before and after obtaining the presented information. Rather than conducting separate pre and posttests, I opted to combine the two to streamline the

assessment process and minimize participant burden. The survey inquired about participants' prior access to comprehensive information regarding the benefit programs, if the presentations enhanced their understanding of eligibility criteria and program benefits, and whether the presentations increased their confidence and knowledge in guiding others through the application process. Additionally, participants were asked if they believe the presentations would benefit community members in navigating and accessing these assistance programs. Furthermore, participants were asked to provide information about the agency, organization, school, or school district, etc. they represent. This data would help in understanding the reach of the presentation content and identifying areas of need within the served communities.

Implementation Process

The implementation process of the project began with the completion of the research and development phase for the Medi-Cal presentation in Spring 2023, followed by the CalFresh presentation in Fall 2023, and concluding with the CalWORKs presentation by Spring 2024. Each presentation was carefully designed to address the workings of the benefit assistance program. The design process for each presentation was driven by feedback gathered from various stakeholders including community members, clients, community agency partners, colleagues, and others. This input was instrumental in determining the information to be included, ensuring relevance and effectiveness. Additionally, I conducted extensive reviews of policies at both the state and county levels, as well as eligibility criteria from neighboring counties to provide comprehensive coverage. Collaboration with staff from the Monterey County Department of Social Services eligibility department was vital, as their review and expertise helped ensure the accuracy of the presentations amidst frequent policy changes. For instance, revisions were necessary for the Medi-Cal presentation completed in Spring 2023 due to updates in program

policies in 2024, highlighting the importance of ongoing review and adaptation to maintain accuracy and relevance.

Following the completion of the presentation development, the assessment survey was designed, aimed at assessing the outcomes of the project. The final step involved the sharing of both the presentations and surveys with MCOE staff and community organizations to deliver the presentations and then measure the effectiveness of the presentations in enhancing knowledge and skills among participants. In an effort to expedite information dissemination to agencies and enhance accessibility, the presentations were distributed as presentations for attendees to view at their own convenience, accommodating their varied schedules and ensuring easier access to the valuable content. For a detailed breakdown of activities, timelines and participants, refer to the Project Implementation Plan Table provided in Appendix A.

Project Results

The expected outcome for this project was that upon review of the presentations, at least 50% of participants, including MCOE staff and other community agency partners, would demonstrate increased knowledge of the Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs programs. This heightened understanding would equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to better assist those they serve by raising awareness about the programs, sharing essential information, and guiding individuals through the application process. Ultimately, the aim was to empower participants to effectively support community members in accessing vital benefits and resources, thereby enhancing their overall well-being and socio-economic stability.

The measures used to assess the success of the project included evaluating the level of increased knowledge among participants regarding the Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs programs, as well as examining the effectiveness of the established collaboration between

MCOE and the Monterey County Department of Social Services' (MCDSS) Monterey County Children's Health Outreach for Insurance, Care and Enrollment (MC-CHOICE) outreach department in addressing community needs. Evidence of the project's success and contributions to the agency was gathered through various methods. Firstly, surveys were administered to MCOE staff and other community agency partners to measure their increased knowledge after obtaining the presentations. Additionally, feedback from participants regarding the clarity and comprehensiveness of the presentations provided insight into their effectiveness.

Furthermore, the establishment of a collaboration between MCOE and MCDSS, resulting in MCOE staff obtaining a Community Based Organization (CBO) account to take benefit applications at their site, served as tangible evidence of the project's impact. The collaboration also involved training sessions conducted by MCDSS for MCOE staff on utilizing the CBO account and understanding benefit programs, further solidifying the project's contributions. Making the presentations available to MCOE staff as soon as they were completed ensured timely access to valuable information, facilitating their preparation to assist community members with benefit applications. This proactive approach was found to be beneficial during the process of MCOE becoming a site for benefit applications, demonstrating the practical impact of the project on agency efforts to address community needs.

The results of the project's evaluation indicate a significant achievement in meeting and surpassing the expected outcomes. The survey participants, including staff from MCOE and 11 other community agencies along with 1 childcare center, totaling 13 different entities serving the community, provided valuable feedback. Notably, 60% of participants indicated that they had not previously had access to information about the Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs programs, highlighting the importance of the project in filling this knowledge gap. Furthermore,

an overwhelming majority of 95% expressed that the presentations had increased their knowledge about the benefit programs, with the remaining responses being due to misunderstandings rather than lack of effectiveness. Similarly, 95% of participants reported that the presentations equipped them with increased knowledge and confidence in assisting others with the application process for these programs. Additionally, 95% believed that the benefit presentations would also be beneficial to community members, further underlining the project's impact on broader outreach and education efforts. Feedback from optional questions further reinforced the positive impact of the project, with respondents expressing gratitude for the resources provided and feeling better equipped to support those they serve. Overall, the results demonstrate that the project not only met, but exceeded the expected outcome of 50% of participants demonstrating increased knowledge. This success underscores the critical need for such initiatives in the community and emphasizes the importance of continued availability of information and resources regarding benefit programs. Moving forward, it is evident that efforts should be sustained to ensure ongoing access to essential information for community members and service providers alike.

Please refer to Table 1: Survey Results in Appendix B for detailed survey results and Table 2: Participants in Appendix C for participant information. Participants included individuals serving community members in various sectors including education, substance treatment, child welfare/family well-being, health, probation, homelessness/housing needs, domestic violence, family supports, child care, and more.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Based on the results of the project, it is evident that addressing socioeconomic disadvantage through increased awareness of benefit programs and fostering collaborations has

been highly effective. The project successfully extended its reach from initially focusing on MCOE to engaging numerous community organizations, entities, and community members. By creating a collaboration with MCDSS, additional support was gained for MCOE families, enhancing the project's impact. Furthermore, the widespread interest from agencies requesting presentations on benefit programs highlights the value and relevance of the information provided. The initiative not only served as intervention and professional development, but also facilitated connections and resource-sharing beyond initial expectations. Recognizing the importance and growing demand for community connections and resources, I took an additional step to address the broader community's needs by establishing an Instagram social media page called @marlenes_community_connections. This platform offers public accessibility and serves as a hub for various resources, including a community resource guide and downloadable files such as the presentations on benefit programs. Overall, the project surpassed its intended positive impact on addressing socioeconomic disadvantage, demonstrating the importance and effectiveness of proactive measures in addressing community needs.

Based on the findings of the project, I would recommend that MCOE continues its ongoing collaboration with MCDSS, as it has proven to be highly beneficial for the agency and those it serves. This collaboration ensures ongoing support and access to updated information on benefit programs, which is essential given the frequent policy changes. I suggest that these presentations be frequently reviewed/updated, and working closely with MC-CHOICE can facilitate that process. Additionally, considering the diverse linguistic needs of the community, I recommend translating the presentations into Spanish to ensure accessibility for Spanish-speaking individuals. While the initial presentations were created in English, I encourage the agency to prioritize translation efforts to reach a wider audience. Moreover, I invite MCOE and

other interested agencies to follow the @marlenes_community_connections Instagram page for access to additional resources and potential collaborations. If feasible, I am committed to translating the presentations myself and making them available through this platform to enhance accessibility for all community members.

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Appendix A

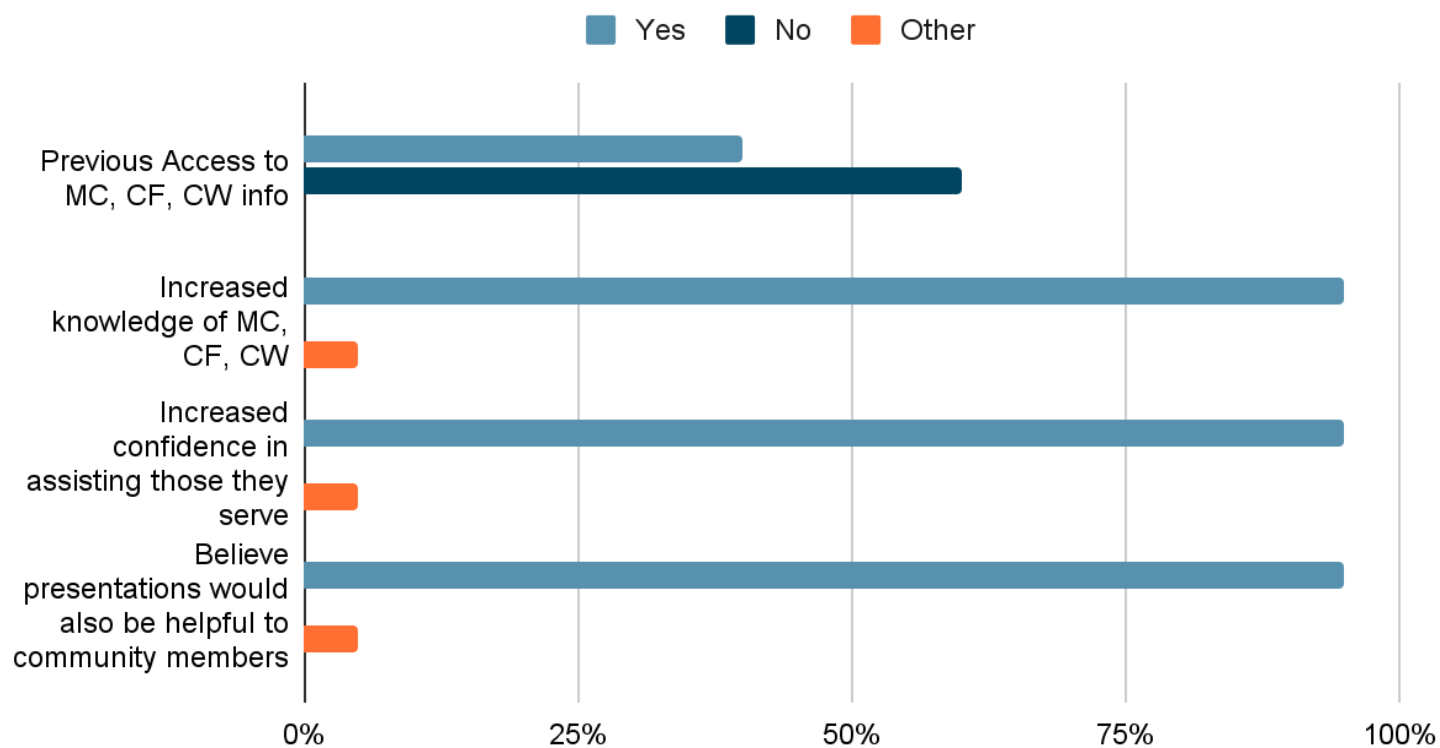
Project Implementation Plan

Tasks	Timeline/ Deadlines	Parties Involved	Supporting Staff	Deliverables
Research and development of Medi-Cal presentation	May 12, 2023	Student	Herminia Cervantes	Medi-Cal PowerPoint
Research and development of CalFresh presentation	December 15, 2023	Student	Herminia Cervantes	CalFresh PowerPoint
Research and development of CalWORKs presentation	March 29, 2024	Student	Herminia Cervantes	CalWORKs PowerPoint
Create surveys	March 29, 2024	Student	Herminia Cervantes	Survey
Share presentations and surveys with MCOE/community organizations for feedback	April 1st, 2024	Student, Mentor, SCS FRC/MCOE staff, community agencies	Herminia Cervantes	Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs PowerPoints and survey
Obtain survey responses	April 5th, 2024	Student, Mentor, SCS FRC/MCOE staff, community agencies	Herminia Cervantes	Survey responses

Appendix B

Table 1: Survey Results

Community Benefits Awareness Presentations



Appendix C

Table 2 : Participants

Survey Participants
Monterey County Office of Education
Family and Children's Services/Monterey County Dept. of Social Services
Monterey County Probation
Hartnell College
Monterey Peninsula College
Door to Hope
Sun Street Centers
YWCA
Community Homeless Solutions
Public Health Department
City of Seaside/Family & Community Support Program
Dorothy's Place
Laura's Barn Preschool and Childcare Center