



CalFresh + COVID-19

What CalFresh Advocates and Outreach Workers need to know

April 9th, 2020



Welcome!

Goal: share updates and information about new and pending changes to CalFresh due to COVID-19.

Ask questions! Use the chat box on right of screen to ask questions at any time.

Topics for Today

- Expansion of food benefits during COVID-19:
 - Emergency Allotments
 - Pandemic-EBT
- CalFresh/SNAP rule changes during COVID-19:
 - Suspension of ABAWD rule
 - Recertifications/SAR-7's waived
 - Interviews waived at intake
 - Telephonic signatures at intake
- Other CalFresh issues:
 - Online purchasing
 - Restaurant Meals Program
 - CalFresh + Federal stimulus checks
 - Reporting & Student rules
 - ROI
- Outreach partnerships: Code for America & SD 211
- Resources
- Q&A

Expansion of Food Benefits due to COVID-19

Emergency Allotments

What is it?

- Authorized in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201). It allows states to provide an "emergency allotment" for households who are already on SNAP.

What's the status of it?

- [USDA approved CA's request on March 30th.](#)
- [CDSS issued guidance on April 2nd.](#)

Emergency Allotments

Who's it for?

- It's for households that are already on SNAP, who are not currently receiving the maximum allotment for their household size.

When will households get it?

- Currently CA is approved to provide emergency allotments for March + April:
 - April 12th (for March recipients)
 - May 10th (for April recipients)

Emergency Allotments

How much will people get?

- Households will be brought up to the maximum allotment for their household size.

Will people have to do something in order to get it?

- No! It will be automatic.

SNAP Benefits by Household Size

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Benefit, Fiscal Year 2020
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1,018
8	\$1,164
Each additional person	\$146

Emergency Allotments

Is there a factsheet?

- [2 page factsheet for advocates.](#)
- 1 page factsheet for clients, in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Pandemic-EBT

What is it?

- Authorized in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201). It's an electronic benefit for kids and families who's schools were impacted by COVID-19.

What's the status of it?

- CDSS hasn't submitted a plan to USDA yet! After it's submitted, it will need to get approved.
- There isn't an ACL yet.

Pandemic-EBT

Who's it for?

- It's for children who normally receive free/reduced price lunch, and are enrolled in a school that was closed for 5+ days due to COVID-19.
- It doesn't matter if they submitted a free or reduced price lunch application or not – what matters is that they are eligible to receive free/reduced price lunch.
- It doesn't matter if they are already on CalFresh or not. This is a separate benefit from CalFresh.
- Immigration status doesn't matter – just like it doesn't matter for free/reduced price lunch.

Pandemic-EBT

When will people get it?

- We don't know yet!

How much will people get?

- We don't know yet!
- What we DO know, is that they will get it on an EBT card that looks different from the CalFresh EBT card.

Pandemic-EBT

Will people have to do something in order to get it?

- If the child is already on CalFresh or Medi-Cal:
 - They will receive it automatically without having to submit additional information.
- If the child is NOT already on CalFresh or Medi-Cal:
 - They will have to submit a short application.

Pandemic-EBT

Is there a factsheet?

- Not yet!

When will you know more information?

- Probably in the next week or two. Sign up for the 4/16 webinar!

Disaster-CalFresh

WE DO NOT HAVE D-CALFRESH!

- Usually 3 criteria have to be met:
 - A Presidential Declaration for Individual Assistance (this hasn't happened as of 4/9).
 - Channels of food distribution have been disrupted and then restored.
 - The State of California is then approved to operate D-CalFresh.
- If D-CalFresh was approved, we would want to make sure the interview requirement is waived, and Senator Harris' Pandemic Assistance Disaster Act would do that.

CalFresh Rule Changes

Suspension of ABAWD Rule

- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201) includes a provision (Title III - Sec. 2301) that the ABAWD Time Limit shall not apply during the Public Health Emergency.
- This means that NO COUNTIES are currently implementing the ABAWD Time Limit rule in California (or any other state).
- [USDA issued guidance about the ABAWD rule on March 20th.](#)

SAR-7/Recertifications Waived

What is it?

- Governor Newsom issued an executive order on 3/17 waiving Recertification and SAR-7 reporting for March/April/May. Benefits will continue to be granted and people will not be terminated from benefits for lack of submitting their Recertification or SAR-7.

What's the status of it?

- [CDSS issued guidance on March 27th.](#)

SAR-7/Recertifications Waived

If a Household had a SAR-7 due in March/April/May what will happen?

- The SAR-7 will not be collected/processed. The next report for the household will be their Recertification at the time when it is normally due for them

If a Household had a Recertification due in March/April/May what will happen?

- The household will be assigned a NEW Recertification date, 6 months from when it was originally due.

Intake Interviews Waived

What is it?

- The county can waive the interview requirement for people who applied for CalFresh as of 3/27 if applicant identity is verified and all mandatory verifications are received.
- Households eligible for Expedited Service can receive expedited benefits once identity is verified and submit mandatory verifications later.
- For households whose interviews cannot be waived, a telephone interview can be conducted even if a household requests a face-to-face interview.

Intake Interviews Waived

What's the status of it?

- [CDSS issued guidance on April 2nd.](#)
- Effective March 27 - May 31, 2020

How can applicants verify identity?

- The county “must accept any readily available documentary evidence” that establishes the applicant’s identity. If no document is available, identity can be verified through a collateral contact.

Intake Interviews Waived

What verifications are mandatory?

1. Identity
2. Residency
3. Immigration status of non-U.S. citizen members applying
4. Income
5. Child support payments

Verification of job loss is NOT mandatory verification.

Telephonic Signatures

What is it?

- People can apply for CalFresh entirely over the phone, and not need to physically sign documents at initial application. Eligibility Workers will document in the case record that the client verbally attested to the information provided on the application.

What's the status of it?

- [CDSS issued guidance on April 2nd.](#)

Other CalFresh info

Online Purchasing

Context: there are currently 6 states piloting online purchasing for EBT card users.

- CA submitted EBT Online Purchasing plan to USDA, and this plan was approved (announced by USDA 4/8).
- CDSS is working on how to implement this and will be announcing a launch date soon – likely May.
- CDSS will develop client-facing materials, but **PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT THIS WITH CLIENTS YET!**
- Stay tuned!

Restaurant Meals Program

Context: there are 10 counties in CA that give people who are 60+, disabled, or homeless the ability to buy prepared meals with CalFresh.

- CA submitted a waiver request to USDA to expand RMP, and we are awaiting a response.
- If approved, it would allow for to-go, take-out, drive-through etc. food to be purchased with an EBT card in all counties.
- Stay tuned!

CalFresh + COVID Tax Relief Rebate

- Federal stimulus checks will NOT be counted as income for CalFresh benefit calculation.

Reporting & Student Rules

CalFresh recipients are only required to report certain things outside of their SAR7 and Recertification.

This includes situations:

- When their income exceeds their Income Reporting Threshold (IRT)
- When they are not planning to return to the county
- When their immigration status changes
- When there are changes to student work /exemption status (advocates are working on changing this)

Source: [ACL 12-25](#)

Reporting & Student Rules

Student status is reported at application & recertification. Change in student status is NOT a mandatory mid-period reporting requirement.

Source: [ACIN I-89-15](#)

This means that students do not have to report changes to their student status until their next SAR7 or Recertification.

Reporting & Student Rules

CalFresh recipients are NOT required to report changes of address mid-period.

Source: [ACIN I-58-13](#)

This means that students do not have to report that they have a change of address until their next SAR7 or Recertification.

Reporting & Student Rules

CalFresh recipients are NOT required to report **changes in household composition** mid-period.

- If a household reports a new member and
 - It will result in **increased** benefits, the county will issue benefits for the new member starting the first of the next month.
 - It would result in a **decrease** in benefits, the change is “held” until their next SAR7 or Recertification.
- The household doesn’t have to report that someone has left the household until the next SAR7 or Recertification.

Source: [ACL 12-25](#), [MPP 63-509\(f\)](#)

Release of Information

- Submitting a Release of Information with the CalFresh application is **OPTIONAL**.
- The form can be submitted at any time.
- As always, CalFresh applications should be submitted as soon as possible and **NOT** be held due to lack of Release of Information.

Outreach Partnerships

- Collaborating with Code for America and 2-1-1 San Diego
- CAFB partners are redirecting their CalFresh outreach efforts to provide remote support to GetCalFresh.org and 2-1-1 San Diego applicants

Interested? Let us know!

- Email stephanie@cafoodbanks.org and edith@cafoodbanks.org

Resources

CAFB CalFresh + COVID-19 Page:

<http://www.cafoodbanks.org/calfresh-advocates>

Next Webinar: April 16th @ 10am

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6780330172625493772>

Q&A

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