

April 2, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER**

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments with information regarding implementation of provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act section 2302(a)(1) pertaining to CalFresh emergency allotments.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
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**GAVIN NEWSOM**  
GOVERNOR

April 2, 2020

**ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER**

**TO:** ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

**FROM:** JENNIFER HERNANDEZ, DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

**SUBJECT:** CALFRESH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAMILIES FIRST  
CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT: CALFRESH EMERGENCY  
ALLOTMENTS

**REFERENCE:** H.R. 6201 FAMILIES FIRSTCORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with information regarding implementation of provisions of the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(the Act\)](#) section 2302(a)(1) pertaining to CalFresh emergency allotments.

California has experienced a rapid increase in the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Extensive public health warnings have been issued statewide to reduce exposure, including orders to practice social distancing when conducting essential business and eliminate group gatherings, and requiring home isolation for vulnerable populations, including all people aged 65 or older. As of March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued a “stay-at-home” order for all Californians that will remain in effect until further notice. These restrictions may be in place for weeks and months to come. Additionally, many non-essential businesses have temporarily closed or reduced staffing, which has resulted in significant and immediate job loss across the state.

To increase food benefits in response to COVID-19 and its effects on the economy, the Act section 2302(a)(2) provides authority for the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide emergency allotments of CalFresh benefits. California has been approved to provide emergency allotments to eligible households for two months, March and April 2020.

Emergency allotments will raise each household's regular monthly CalFresh allotment to the maximum allowable allotment based on household size. Per guidance provided by the Food and Nutrition Service, CalFresh households already receiving the maximum allowable allotment based on household size are not eligible to receive an emergency allotment of CalFresh benefits.

All CalFresh households not already at the maximum allowable allotment based on household size are eligible to receive an emergency allotment, this includes but is not limited to, CalFresh households who are also receiving CalWORKs, Transitional CalFresh households, and households whose March or April benefit was prorated. Household size will be determined based on the number of included household members in March or April.

### **ISSUANCE OF CALFRESH EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS**

For the month of March 2020, emergency allotments will be issued to eligible CalFresh households via an overnight batch process with client availability on April 12, 2020. For the month of April 2020, emergency allotments will be issued to eligible CalFresh households via an overnight batch process with client availability on May 10, 2020.

If an eligible household receives their March or April allotment after the corresponding overnight batch process due to a processing delay, the CWD must issue the emergency allotment manually.

All emergency allotments will be issued on the eligible household's existing electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card.

### **CLIENT COMMUNICATION**

The counties must employ mass change informing practices, including informing households that the emergency allotments will be issued for up to two months. Mass change informing practices may include, but are not limited to, text messaging, robocalling, social media, client facing websites, pre-recorded messages on Interactive Voice Response systems, and other methods as available on a county-by-county basis per [7 CFR 273.12\(e\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#).

Should additional months of emergency allotments be approved during the public health emergency, the CDSS will provide additional information at that time.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact the CalFresh Policy Bureau at (916) 651-8047.