

CalFresh Response to COVID-19

Last Updated: April 07, 2020

CalFresh Food Benefits

CalFresh food benefits are available to individuals and families who have been impacted by COVID-19. CalFresh provides monthly food benefits based on household income and expenses at the time of application. Even if temporary, individuals and families who have experienced a change in their circumstances may apply for CalFresh through one of California's 58 counties. Californians can visit GetCalFresh.org to apply or call 1-877-847-3663 (FOOD) to be connected to their local county social service office.

As part of the CalFresh COVID-19 response, we have enacted several measures to ensure individuals and families are able to continue meeting their nutritional needs: additional food benefits, administrative flexibilities, and emergency food support.

Additional Food Benefits

Emergency CalFresh Allotments

Existing CalFresh recipients will receive a supplemental payment to bring their benefits up to the maximum amount based on household size. Households already at the maximum amount will not receive an emergency allotment. Emergency allotments will be issued April 12 and May 10.

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

Families with children eligible for free or reduced-priced meals whose school facilities are closed will be eligible to receive P-EBT benefits. P-EBT benefits will be issued on EBT cards and can be used to buy groceries, just like CalFresh food benefits. Implementation date TBD.

Administrative Flexibilities

Report Waiver and Extended Certification Periods

Existing CalFresh recipients do not need to complete their March, April, or May periodic renewal to continue receiving benefits.

Interview Waiver

New CalFresh applicants do not need to complete an interview if they provide identity verification and other required proof, including proof of earnings if applicable, with their application.

Telephonic Signature

CalFresh has been granted flexibility to more easily accept signatures from CalFresh applicants over the phone.

EBT Online Purchasing Statewide

CalFresh recipients will be allowed to use their EBT cards to make online purchases and request grocery delivery at approved retailers statewide (currently Amazon and Walmart). Implementation date TBD.

Emergency Food

Emergency Food resources are available at local food banks and pantries throughout California. Find a [local food bank](http://www.cafoodbanks.org/find-food-bank) at <http://www.cafoodbanks.org/find-food-bank>.

State-funded food boxes are being provided to feed more than 900,000 families statewide in April and May and are available for pickup at any of CDSS' contracted food bank partners.

Federally Funded Emergency Food - California's Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) providers will receive additional federal funding to support operations, including an immediate \$12M in additional administrative support funding and \$36M in additional food support by July. Additional federal TEFAP funding is provided through the CARES Act and estimated to total ~\$54M for California's food banks.



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