

NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Social Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: October 6, 2020

CONTACT: (916) 657-2268

FOOD BENEFITS AVAILABLE FOR WILDFIRE VICTIMS

Help Offered to Those Who Live or Work in Lake, Monterey, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Yolo Counties; Additional Counties May be Added Soon

SACRAMENTO –The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) today announced that individuals and families impacted by wildfires in six counties may be eligible to receive Disaster CalFresh food benefits as part of continuing disaster recovery efforts.

A family of four with a monthly income up to \$2,893 per month, after taking disaster-related expenses into consideration, may be eligible to receive up to \$646 in food benefits through this program, which is available to those who live or work in Lake, Monterey, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Yolo counties. Additional wildfire-affected counties may be added soon.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, the Disaster CalFresh program will be operated, for the first time, primarily by phone.

“These valuable food benefits are designed to help families in the aftermath of historic wildfires,” said Kim Johnson, CDSS Director. “We’ve made the application process as simple as possible to expedite the issuance of these needed resources.”

WHO CAN APPLY?

Individuals and families who lived or worked in eligible counties on August 14 may be eligible for Disaster CalFresh food benefits if the household experienced at least one of the following between August 14-September 12 as a direct result of the wildfires:

- At least one person in the household was not getting regular CalFresh food benefits
- Money was spent because of the wildfire or related power outage
- Money was lost from work because of the wildfire; or
- Money was spent because of damage to a home or business.

Households already receiving regular CalFresh food benefits are not eligible to receive Disaster CalFresh food benefits.

HOW TO APPLY

Households may pre-register for Disaster CalFresh in the six listed counties from October 7-13 by calling or texting 916-237-1909. Households will provide their contact information, basic household information and may upload required documents in advance to help counties process applications quickly. Pre-registration is optional. Households that complete pre-registration will be called by their local county social services office to finish the application and interview process.

Households that choose not to pre-register may still apply in the six listed counties on weekdays from October 14-22 by calling their local county social services office, submitting a paper application, or submitting an online application. Online applications will be accepted from October 14-22 at <http://www.benefitscal.com/>

In most cases, Disaster CalFresh food benefits will be available to eligible households within three days of the date of interview.

Additional information is available at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/disastercalfresh1>. Clients may also reach their local county social services office by calling 1-877-847-3663 (FOOD) for more information.

Disaster CalFresh food benefits will be provided via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which is like a debit card that can be used to purchase food items at grocery stores and other authorized retailers. If applicants are approved, their county will tell them when and where to pick up their EBT card.

On August 22, 2020, the United States Department of Agriculture approved California's request for Disaster CalFresh food benefits to enhance recovery efforts. The program is known nationally as the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or D-SNAP.

QUESTIONS?

Call your local county social services office:

- Lake: (707) 995-4200
- Monterey: (877) 410-8823
- San Mateo: (800) 223-8383
- Santa Cruz: (888) 421-8080
- Solano: (707) 469-4500
- Yolo: (530) 661-2750

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