NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Social Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 24, 2017

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CALFRESH FOOD BENEFITS AVAILABLE FOR CALIFORNIA FIRE VICTIMS

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) today announced that individuals and families impacted by California's recent wildfires may be eligible to receive one month of food assistance through California's Disaster CalFresh program.

The United States Department of Agriculture approved California's request for Disaster CalFresh assistance in response to the multiple wildfires burning throughout Northern California earlier this month. Sonoma, Napa, Butte, Lake, Mendocino, Nevada and Yuba Counties will administer the disaster food assistance through California's CalFresh program to individuals and families affected by the wildfires.

"Individuals or families negatively impacted by the wildfires who resided or worked in any of the seven impacted counties before the disaster may be eligible to receive Disaster CalFresh food assistance," said CDSS Director Will Lightbourne. "A family of four with a monthly income up to $2755 per month is eligible to receive up to $640 in food assistance."

Disaster CalFresh benefits will be provided via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which is a debit-like card that can be used to purchase food items at grocery stores and other authorized retailers. Additionally, Disaster CalFresh and CalFresh may be used to purchase hot foods at participating retailers in the disaster region.

Individuals and families may be eligible for Disaster CalFresh if the household experienced at least one of the following as a direct result of the wildfires:

- Damage to or destruction of the home or self-employment business;
- Loss or inaccessibility of income including a reduction or termination of income or a significant delay in receiving income due to disaster related problems; or
- Disaster-related expenses (home or business repairs, temporary shelter, evacuation, etc.) that are not expected to be reimbursed during the disaster benefit period.

Most Disaster CalFresh benefits will be available within three days of the date of application.

Individuals and families seeking assistance, regardless of immigration status, may apply beginning Wednesday, October 25, 2017, through Wednesday, November 1, 2017. When applying online, applicants will also need to visit a local office in person to provide verifications.

In addition, individuals or families with new needs for assistance due to the fires may always apply for ongoing CalFresh benefits and CalWORKs cash aid at their local county human or social services agency at www.benefitscal.com.

How to Apply

Individuals and families affected by the wildfires may apply for Disaster CalFresh online at www.benefitscal.com or by visiting any of the 58 county human or social services agencies across the state. A list of county social services agencies in all 58 counties can be found at www.cdss.ca.gov/County-Offices.

In addition, individuals or families with new needs for assistance due to the fires may always apply for ongoing CalFresh benefits and CalWORKs cash aid at their local county social services agency or at www.benefitscal.com.

For more information about local assistance centers and other public assistance and services available to individuals and families impacted by the October 2017 wildfires go to www.cdss.ca.gov/Media-Center/October-2017-Wildfires.

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