

April 29, 2019

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 19-41

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with additional policy clarification for implementation of the expansion of CalFresh to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients (previously referred to as the “reversal of SSI Cash Out”), the Supplemental Nutrition Benefit (SNB) Program, and the Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) Program. This letter follows a “question and answer (Q&A)” format and is the third in a series of quarterly Q&A letters that will be released in advance of implementation.



PAT LEARY
ACTING DIRECTOR

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

April 29, 2019

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 19-41

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM CONTACTS
ALL CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANTS
MANAGERS
ALL IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES MANAGERS
ALL QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: EXPANDING CALFRESH TO SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY
INCOME (SSI) RECIPIENTS, SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION
BENEFIT PROGRAM, AND TRANSITIONAL NUTRITION
BENEFIT PROGRAM QUARTERLY QUESTION AND ANSWER
NO. 3

REFERENCE: [ASSEMBLY BILL 1811 \(CHAPTER 35, STATUTES OF 2018\);](#)
[WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(W&IC\) § 12200.01\(b\);](#)
[W&IC § 10980; W&IC § 18900.5-.7; ACL No. 18-90; ACL No. 18-](#)
[90E; ACL No. 18-91; ACL No. 18-92; ACL No. 18-107; ACL No. 18-](#)
[108; ACL No. 18-131; AND ACL No. 19-12.](#)

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with additional policy clarification for implementation of the expansion of CalFresh to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients (previously referred to as the “reversal of SSI Cash Out”), the Supplemental Nutrition Benefit (SNB) Program, and the Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) Program. This letter follows a “question and answer (Q&A)” format and is the third in a series of quarterly Q&A letters that will be released in advance of implementation.

Background

Effective June 1, 2019, individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income and/or California state Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) benefits are eligible for CalFresh, provided all other eligibility criteria are satisfied.

The CWDs will implement the policy change for newly eligible households beginning on June 1, 2019. For ongoing households, CWDs will implement the policy change on a rolling basis at the ongoing household's next periodic report, recertification, or when voluntarily requested by the household on or after June 1, 2019. Hereafter, this rolling implementation date for individual households will be referred to generally as the household effective date.

Policy instructions for implementation and automation of the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients and for the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) grant augmentation were provided via [ACL No.18-90](#) issued on July 31, 2018.

In addition to expanding CalFresh to SSI recipients, [AB 1811](#) creates two state-funded nutrition benefit programs intended to "hold harmless" existing CalFresh households negatively affected by the policy change. The two state-funded programs, known as the SNB Program and the TNB Program, will provide CalFresh households with nutrition benefits to mitigate the reduction of CalFresh benefits or CalFresh ineligibility, respectively.

Policy instructions for implementation and automation of the SNB Program were provided via [ACL No. 18-91](#) and via [ACL No. 18-92](#) for the TNB Program, both issued on July 31, 2018. The SNB Program and TNB Program notices were released via [ACL No. 18-107](#) and [ACL No. 18-108](#), both issued on August 30, 2018.

This letter provides additional policy clarification in the form of Q&A and is the third Q&A letter issued by the Department related to the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients. The first, [ACL No. 18-131](#), was issued on October 31, 2018 and the second, [ACL No. 19-12](#), was issued on January 31, 2019. All three should be read in the context of previously issued policy instructions for the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients, the SNB Program, and the TNB Program.

Q&A Expansion of CalFresh to SSI Recipients

Question 1: Should the removal or addition of a household member due to a sanction result in the implementation of the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients?

Answer 1: No.

Question 2: Similarly, should the removal or addition of a household member due to the member becoming an ineligible member or disqualified member result in the implementation of the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients?

Answer 2: No.

Question 3: An ongoing household's periodic report or recertification is due May 2019, but because of late submission is processed by the CWD in June 2019. If the household had good cause for submitting the report in June 2019, when will the CWD implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients for this household?

Answer 3: As stated in [ACL No. 18-131](#), question two and three, implementation for ongoing households will begin with periodic reports and recertifications due the month of June. Any ongoing households with a periodic report or recertification due in May 2019 will implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients at the household's next periodic report, recertification, or when voluntarily requested, unless the periodic report or recertification is due in May 2019, but because of late submission (i.e. submitted in June 2019) is processed by the CWD in June 2019. Periodic reports and recertifications submitted by the household in June will implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients in June. This applies even if the household had good cause for submitting the periodic report or recertification late.

Question 4: Can the Department please reiterate the instructions for processing May 2019 periodic reports (i.e. SAR 7) and recertifications in the context of implementing the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients beginning on June 1, 2019.

Answer 4: Yes, see the three scenarios outlined below which reflect guidance issued via [ACL No. 19-12](#) question and answer one and two:

Scenario 1: Periodic report or recertification is due in May; the periodic report or recertification is received and processed by the CWD in May.

- The CWD should not implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients. The CWD should implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients at the household's next periodic report, recertification, or at voluntary request on or after June 1, 2019.

Scenario 2: Periodic report or recertification is due in May; the periodic report or recertification is received in May and processed by the CWD in June.

- The CWD should not implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients. The CWD should implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients at the household's next periodic report, recertification, or at voluntary request on or after June 1, 2019.

Scenario 3: Periodic report or recertification is due in May; the periodic report or recertification is received in June and processed by the CWD in June.

- Periodic report:

- The CWD should implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients even if the household has good cause for submitting the periodic report late. Depending on the outcome* the household may be eligible for SNB Program for July (regardless of whether or not CalFresh benefits are prorated for the month of June):
 - Increase or no change in benefits: add the SSI recipient member for June. The household is not eligible for SNB Program or TNB Program benefits.
 - Decrease in benefits: add the SSI recipient member for July and provide timely and adequate notice; the household may be eligible for SNB Program benefits in July.
 - Ineligible to CalFresh: add the SSI recipient for June; if the household is found ineligible for June benefits, the household is not eligible for TNB Program benefits as they were not eligible for and receiving CalFresh benefits as of June 1, 2019.
- Recertification:
 - The CWD should implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients even if the household has good cause for submitting the recertification late. Add the SSI recipient member for June which is the first month of the new certification period (regardless of whether or not CalFresh benefits are prorated for the month of June).
 - Depending on the outcome*, the household may be eligible for SNB Program for June.
 - Increase or no change in benefits: The household is not eligible for SNB Program or TNB Program benefits.
 - Decrease in benefits: the household may be eligible for SNB Program benefits in June.
 - Ineligible to CalFresh: the household is not eligible for TNB Program benefits as they were not eligible for and receiving CalFresh benefits as of June 1, 2019.

**If benefit proration is applied in the implementation month and the CWD is determining eligibility for the SNB Program, the CWD should compare the household's full month allotment the month before implementation with what would have been the household's full month allotment for the implementation month before proration is applied.*

Question 5: Given the response to question number four earlier in this letter, can the Department please clarify how to apply the instructions provided on page 4 of ACL No. 18-91 with regards to pending CalFresh applications and SNB Program eligibility.

Answer 5: The guidance on page four of [ACL No. 18-91](#) is limited to CalFresh applications for households that include an excluded SSI/SSP recipient that are pending on the implementation date and request to implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipients before the application is processed in June. This applies only if the household has a beginning date of aid in May, but voluntarily requests to implement the expansion of CalFresh to SSI recipient's benefits on or after June 1, 2019, but before the date the application is processed.

Q&A: Transitional Nutrition Benefit Program

Question 6: What CalFresh application should be sent with the *Notice of Recertification for the Transitional Nutrition Benefit Program* (TNB 4)?

Answer 6: [ACL No. 18-92](#) does not specify which CalFresh application must be sent with the TNB 4. That said, the *Application for CalFresh Benefits* (CF 285) is recommended since it is a relatively short CalFresh-only application.

Question 7: If a TNB Program household submits a complete TNB 4 with no changes reported and also submits a CalFresh application, what should the CWD do?

Answer 7: The CWD must process both the TNB 4 and the CalFresh application. Per [ACL No. 18-92](#) page nine, "upon receipt of a complete TNB 4 with no changes reported by the household, the CWD will determine continuing TNB Program eligibility". That said, because a CalFresh application was received the CWD must also process the CalFresh application and determine CalFresh eligibility.

If the household is found CalFresh eligible within the last month of the TNB Program certification period, the CWD will certify CalFresh benefit eligibility and discontinue TNB Program benefits. If the household is found to remain ineligible for CalFresh within the last month of the TNB Program certification period, the CWD will determine whether the household continues to be eligible for the TNB Program and will issue TNB Program benefits for the first month of the new TNB Program certification period.

If the household reports no changes on the TNB 4 and the CWD is unable to process the CalFresh application and determine eligibility within the TNB Program certification period, the CWD will not delay issuance of the household's TNB Program benefits for the first month of the new TNB Program certification period. The CWD will issue TNB Program benefits for the first month of the new TNB Program certification period and will complete processing the CalFresh application and determine CalFresh eligibility as soon as possible. Depending on the outcome of the eligibility determination, the CWD will either continue TNB Program benefits or issue CalFresh benefits and discontinue TNB Program benefits.

Program Integrity for Supplemental Nutrition Benefit or Transitional Nutrition Benefit Program

Question 8: Can the CWD refer SNB Program or TNB Program cases for investigation when fraud is suspected?

Answer 8: Yes. Recipients of SNB Program benefits and TNB Program benefits are subject to [W&IC 10980](#). As such, counties may choose to investigate suspected criminal activities relating to those cases.

This ACL, and other [CDSS Letter and Notices](#), are available online at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Letter-and-Notices>.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact the CalFresh Policy Bureau at (916) 651-8047.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

KIM JOHNSON
Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division