

February 6, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 20-10

This letter provides County Welfare Departments with guidance regarding a new federal requirement to inform all CalFresh work registrants with no earned income reported at initial certification, their last recertification, or required report, of the availability of local employment services, including CalFresh Employment and Training when applicable.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

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

February 6, 2020

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 20-10

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY CALFRESH COORDINATORS
ALL CONSORTIA PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: ADVISING CALFRESH WORK REGISTRANTS OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

REFERENCE: [ACL 18-08; Title 7 OF THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(CFR\) SECTIONS 273.7, 273.12; SECTION 4005 OF THE AGRICULTURE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2018](#)

This All County Letter (ACL) provides County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with guidance regarding a new federal requirement to inform all CalFresh work registrants with no earned income reported at initial certification, their last recertification, or required report, of the availability of local employment services, including CalFresh Employment & Training (E&T) when applicable. The new informing requirement outlined in this letter is effective immediately.

Background

Regulations at [Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 273.7](#) establish general work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as CalFresh in California. The general CalFresh work requirements are referred to as “work registration” and individuals subject to the general CalFresh work requirements are commonly referred to as “work registrants”. All CalFresh recipients are subject to work registration unless they qualify for an exemption.

Work Registration Requirements

Regulations at [Title 7 CFR 273.7\(a\)](#) establish the following requirements for work registrants. All work registrants must:

- Register for work or be registered by the CWD at the time of application and every 12 months thereafter;
- Participate in mandatory CalFresh E&T, if assigned by the CWD (CalFresh E&T is currently a voluntary program in all participating CWDs);
- Provide enough information to determine employment status or availability for work;
- Report to an employer when referred by the CWD or its designee;
- Accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment; and
- Not voluntarily quit a job of 30 or more hours a week or reduce work hours to fewer than 30 hours a week in accordance with regulations at [Title 7 CFR 273.7\(i\)](#).

The CWDs assume responsibility for the work registration process. As part of the initial application and recertification interview, CWDs must determine which individuals in the household are work registrants. This information must be noted in the case record. CalFresh recipients themselves are not required to take additional steps in the application or recertification process to complete the work registration process. Once the work registration process is complete, the individual is considered registered for work for the remainder of the certification period.

In California, work registrants are not required to participate in mandatory CalFresh E&T or other employment opportunities as a condition of CalFresh eligibility. Work registrants may remain eligible for CalFresh provided they do not voluntarily quit a job or reduce hours worked to less than 30 in a month. Work registration sanctions are applicable in limited circumstances. Additional information on work registration and sanctions will be released under separate cover.

Although work registrants are not required to participate in mandatory CalFresh E&T or other employment opportunities as a condition of CalFresh eligibility, they are still considered work registrants and must be tracked as such.

Work Registration Exemptions

As mentioned, all CalFresh recipients are subject to work registration unless they qualify for an exemption. Regulations at [Title 7 CFR 273.7\(b\)](#) establish work registration exemptions. Individuals are exempt from work registration if they are:

- Under 16 or over 59 years of age (Note: a person age 16 or 17 who is not the head of household, or who is attending school, or enrolled in an employment training program on at least a half-time basis is also exempt);

- Physically or mentally unfit for employment;
- Subject to and complying with any work requirement under Title IV of the Social Security Act, including California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids programs;
- A parent of or responsible for the care of a dependent child under age six (Note: the child does not have to be a CalFresh member or living in the home);
- Responsible for the care of an incapacitated person (Note: the incapacitated person does not have to be a CalFresh household member or living in the home);
- Has applied for or is receiving unemployment insurance benefits;
- A regular participant in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program;
- Employed or self-employed at least 30 hours per week or receiving weekly earnings at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours; or
- Enrolled in a school, training program or institution of higher education on at least a half time basis.

Changes in Work Registration Exemption Status

As mentioned, work registration status must be determined at initial application and every 12 months thereafter. In addition, during the certification period, households may experience a change in circumstances that cause an individual to no longer qualify for an exemption from work registration. When an individual no longer qualifies for an exemption from work registration due to a change in circumstance(s) which is subject to Semi-Annual Reporting requirements at [Title 7 CFR 273.12](#), they must be registered for work at the time the change is reported, unless the individual qualifies for another exemption.

Individuals who experience a change in circumstances that may impact their exemption from work registration but who are not required to report that change during the certification period, must have their work registration status redetermined 12 months after initial work registration (i.e. at the household's next recertification.)

New Requirement: Advising Work Registrants of Available Employment Services

[The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018](#), enacted on December 20, 2018, requires CWDs to inform CalFresh work registrants with no earned income reported at initial certification, their last recertification, or required report of the availability of local employment services. This new informing requirement is effective immediately.

All work registrants with no earned income reported at initial certification, their last recertification, or required report must be informed of the availability of local employment services through methods including, but not limited to:

- Paper flyers;
- Online resources;
- Text-messaging;

- Verbal informing; or
- Employment partner referrals.

The CWDs are reminded that local employment services are not limited to CalFresh E&T. In addition to CalFresh E&T, local employment services may include, but are not limited to, state or local programs such as the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, community-service programs, programs under section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974, American Job Centers, and those offered by community based organizations.

Once a work registrant has been informed of the availability of local employment services, the eligibility worker must narrate how and when the information was provided in the individual's case record.

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

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

JENNIFER HERNANDEZ
Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division