

October 26, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-131

The purpose of this letter is to notify County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of the changes to the Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) Program as introduced by [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 135](#) and of the pause on all TNB recertifications beginning November 2021.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

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

October 26, 2021

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-131

TO: ALL CALWORKS PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALIST
ALL CONSORTIA PROJECT MANAGERS
ALL QUALITY CONTROL PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: CALFRESH IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSEMBLY BILL 135
TRANSITIONAL NUTRITION BENEFIT (TNB) PROGRAM
RECERTIFICATION EXTENSION AND PAUSE

REFERENCE: [ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\) 1811 \(CHAPTER 35, STATUTES OF 2018\)](#);
[ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\) 135 \(CHAPTER 85, STATUTES OF 2021\)](#);
[ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) NO. 18-92](#);

The purpose of this letter is to notify County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of the changes to the Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) Program as introduced by [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 135 \(Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021\)](#) and of the pause on all TNB recertifications beginning November 2021.

Background

[Assembly Bill \(AB\) 1811](#) (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2018) reversed the CalFresh eligibility policy known as cash-out, under which Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) recipients were ineligible for CalFresh. [AB 1811](#) also created the TNB program which provides CalFresh households with nutrition benefits to mitigate the negative impacts of CalFresh ineligibility.

[All County Letter \(ACL\) No. 18-92](#), issued on July 31, 2018, provided policy instructions for the TNB Program including eligibility, benefit amount, continuing eligibility requirements, and administration. Households eligible for the TNB Program were initially certified for one 12-month period. Eligible households were then recertified for additional six-month periods.

Previous policy requires that if a household loses TNB Program eligibility for failure to provide the documentation or information required to determine continuing eligibility, TNB Program eligibility may be restored without proration back to the original date of discontinuance, if all documentation and information required to determine continuing eligibility is provided to the county within 30 days of the discontinuance from the TNB Program.

TNB Policy Changes

TNB Recertification & Restoration Period Extensions

[AB 135](#) extends the TNB Program recertification period to 12 months and increases the TNB restoration period to 90 days. Beginning November 2023 (or when automation is complete, whichever is later) a TNB Program eligible household may be recertified for additional 12-month periods through a recertification. TNB-eligible households will not be required to report mid-period or complete a periodic report for the purpose of maintaining TNB Program eligibility. A forthcoming letter will provide further instruction on this change.

Additionally, effective with the release of this letter, TNB Program eligibility may be restored without proration back to the original date of discontinuance, if all documentation and information required to determine continuing eligibility is provided to the county within 90 days of the discontinuance from the TNB Program. Households who are still within the 90 days of their discontinuance date should be encouraged to submit their TNB recertification. We strongly encourage counties to reach out to all TNB households who were discontinued within the last 90 days upon release of this letter. If the household submits their required documentation or information within the 90-day restoration period, their TNB Program eligibility may be restored without proration back to the original date of discontinuance.

TNB Recertification Pause

In order to allow time for the automation of the extension of the TNB restoration period, recertifications for all TNB households will be paused beginning November 2021. The TNB recertification pause will be automated. The pause applies to all households who receive TNB benefits for the November benefit month, including those who were discontinued prior to November and the discontinuance is later rescinded due to program compliance (new 90-day rescind period) or as a result of an Administrative Hearing compliance. Households with recertifications due in October 2021 will not be impacted by the TNB recertification pause even if the October 2021 recertification is pending in November 2021.

If a household whose recertification is due in November 2021 loses TNB Program eligibility for failure to provide the documentation or information required to determine

continuing eligibility prior to November, CWDs must rescind the discontinuance of TNB program eligibility for the household. During the pause, TNB-eligible households will not be required to complete a recertification to maintain TNB Program eligibility. The pause will continue for two years, or until the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) can perform the necessary automation to implement the TNB policy changes, whichever date is later. After the pause, recertifications will commence on a staggered basis depending on the TNB household's original recertification due date.

County Action

The TNB recertification pause will be fully automated. During the pause, CWDs must not manually generate the recertification packet for TNB households. All TNB households must remain active for the pause period unless the TNB recipient requests to leave the program or one of the few reasons for discontinuance provided in [ACL No. 18-92](#) occur. If a reason for discontinuance occurs, the CWD will need to manually discontinue the TNB after the pause begins.

CWDs must publicize this change using mass change information practices, such as but not limited to, news or media outlet, posters in certification offices, issuance locations, or other sites frequented by certified households; or mass change notices mailed to households. CWDs should consider including a message like the following on their websites, social media, Interactive Voice Response Systems, and other client communication tools, as soon as possible:

To: All Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) Recipients

You are getting this message because your EBT food benefits is funded by the State of California and is called TNB. A new law was passed that pauses TNB recertifications for two years beginning in November 2021. This means you can skip your TNB recertification (form number TNB 4) if it is due in November 2021 and you will still get your benefits. Your TNB benefits will continue for 2 years beginning November 2021. Recertifications will start again in November 2023. You can still apply for regular CalFresh at any time if there are changes in your household or income.

Your next TNB 4 recertification form will be sent to you between November 2023 and October 2024 depending on your renewal month. Please contact your county office if you have any questions.

Automation

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Effective October 10, 2021, the SAWS will turn off the packet generation job for the Notice of Recertification for the Transitional Nutrition Benefit Program (TNB 4) due in November 2021. In early November 2021, the Recertification Reminder Notice for the Transitional Nutrition Benefit Program (TNB 5) and the recertification discontinue sweep jobs will be turned off. SAWS will implement the TNB recertification pause before October 10th for recertifications effective November 2021.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter please contact the CalFresh Policy Bureau at CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

Jennifer Hernandez
Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division