

April 30, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-52**

The purpose of this All County Letter is to provide County Welfare Departments with guidance for the implementation of Assembly Bill 79 (Chapter 11, Section 90, Statutes of 2020), which includes provisions to increase dual enrollment between CalFresh and Medi-Cal.



KIM JOHNSON  
DIRECTOR

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

April 30, 2021

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-52

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

SUBJECT: CALFRESH IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSEMBLY BILL 79  
(CHAPTER 11, SECTION 90, STATUTES OF 2020): INCREASING  
DUAL ENROLLMENT BETWEEN CALFRESH AND MEDI-CAL

REFERENCE: [ASSEMBLY BILL 79 \(CHAPTER 11, SECTION 90, STATUTES OF 2020\); WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE 18918.1, ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 13-103 AND SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW HANDBOOK \(FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE HANDBOOK 310\)](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with guidance regarding the implementation of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 79 \(Chapter 11, Section 90, Statutes of 2020\)](#), which adds section [18918.1](#) to the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) and requires CWDs to implement provisions aimed at increasing dual enrollment between CalFresh and Medi-Cal **no later than January 1, 2022**. Specifically, this letter provides guidance to CWDs on the requirement to train staff who process Medi-Cal applications and renewals to perform CalFresh eligibility screenings and eligibility determinations, and to designate county liaison(s) to expand CalFresh outreach and retention among Medi-Cal applicants and beneficiaries.

## Background

There are many potentially eligible households with low income that are not participating in CalFresh. The Medi-Cal program, which provides health coverage for households with low-income, has significantly higher enrollment than CalFresh and many Medi-Cal applicants and beneficiaries may be potentially eligible for CalFresh but not participating. AB 79 seeks to address this gap by better connecting Medi-Cal applicants and beneficiaries to CalFresh and assisting them through the application process. AB

79 requires additional outreach and CalFresh eligibility screenings to increase dual enrollment between CalFresh and Medi-Cal. These initiatives will contribute to continuing efforts to increase participation in the CalFresh program.

**Effective January 1, 2022,** [WIC 18918.1](#) requires CWDs to implement the following:

- Ensure staff screen for CalFresh by verbally asking Medi-Cal applicants and beneficiaries if they want to apply for CalFresh during in-person, online or telephone Medi-Cal application or renewal processes;
- Provide Medi-Cal applicants and beneficiaries, who are potentially eligible for CalFresh, with the opportunity to apply for CalFresh at the same time their Medi-Cal eligibility is determined;
- Ensure all staff who process Medi-Cal applications or renewals are trained to complete CalFresh screening and eligibility determinations; and
- Designate county liaison(s) to establish CalFresh application referral and communication procedures between counties and community-based organizations (CBOs) that facilitate Medi-Cal enrollment.

Additionally, effective upon certification to the Legislature that the Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) has implemented the necessary automation:

- Provide a prepopulated CalFresh application to all Medi-Cal beneficiaries who appear CalFresh eligible when completing the Medi-Cal renewal process.

### **CalFresh Training for Medi-Cal Workers**

CWDs must ensure staff who process Medi-Cal applications or renewals are cross-trained to perform CalFresh eligibility determinations. The training curriculum for staff must include the following:

- The requirement to verbally ask Medi-Cal applicants and beneficiaries who may be potentially eligible to CalFresh if they are interested in applying for CalFresh;
- The requirement to provide Medi-Cal applicants or beneficiaries the opportunity to apply for CalFresh at the same time they apply for or renew their Medi-Cal eligibility; and
- How to conduct a CalFresh eligibility determination.

In expanding the number of cross trained workers, CWDs are reminded that Medi-Cal and CalFresh have different application processing time standards, and CWD staff are required to follow application processing requirements and deadlines according to the regulations for each program. Additionally, staff who process CalFresh applications must screen every CalFresh application for entitlement to expedited service (ES).

## **CalFresh Screening and Eligibility Determination**

### **In-Person and Telephonic Medi-Cal Applications**

When processing in-person or telephonic Medi-Cal applications, CWD staff must verbally ask all Medi-Cal applicants who are not already receiving CalFresh if they are interested in simultaneously applying for CalFresh. If the Medi-Cal applicant is not interested in applying at the same time, then the CWD must inform the applicant of the online or paper application process for CalFresh.

### **In-Person and Telephonic Medi-Cal Renewals**

When processing in-person and telephonic Medi-Cal renewals, CWD staff must utilize prior income eligibility to verbally ask Medi-Cal beneficiaries if they are interested in applying for CalFresh, this includes but is not limited to Medi-Cal beneficiaries with Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) Medi-Cal income less than or equal to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), Non-MAGI income less than or equal to 200% FPL, and Non-MAGI Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) FPL less than or equal to 138%. Beneficiaries in these Medi-Cal programs may be potentially eligible to CalFresh and must be given the opportunity to simultaneously apply for CalFresh at the same time they submit information to renew their Medi-Cal renewal process. If the Medi-Cal beneficiary is not interested in applying at the same time, then the CWD must inform the beneficiary of the online or paper application process for CalFresh.

This requirement must be integrated into the CWD's business process for in-person and telephonic Medi-Cal applications and renewals even after the automation of the prepopulated CalFresh application for Medi-Cal applicants or beneficiaries is complete. The CWD may utilize existing business process for adding a program to the case when the Medi-Cal applicant or beneficiary wants to simultaneously apply for CalFresh.

### **Online Medi-Cal Applications and Renewals**

The SAWS portals provide applicants the opportunity to apply online for multiple benefit programs, including CalFresh, and households are also provided an opportunity to apply for CalFresh during the online Medi-Cal renewal process. The California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment and Retention System (CalHEERS) and SAWS are also interfaced, and an applicant who has MAGI Medi-Cal income less than or equal to 200% FPL is asked if they would be interested in applying for CalFresh on the CalHEERS "Additional Benefits Options" page ([ACL 13-103](#) issued December 18, 2013). Therefore, the current online application and renewal portals fulfill the CalFresh screening requirement and CWD staff are not required to verbally ask Medi-Cal applicants or beneficiaries who have completed the application or renewal process online if they are interested in simultaneously applying for CalFresh.

As a recommended best practice, if CWD staff must engage with customers over the phone or in-person, at any point during the online Medi-Cal application or renewal processes, CWD staff are highly encouraged to verbally ask all Medi-Cal applicants or beneficiaries if they are interested in applying for CalFresh, regardless of whether the Medi-Cal application or renewal was submitted online.

### **CalFresh Staff Liaison(s)**

CWDs must designate one or more CalFresh liaison(s) to work with CBOs facilitating Medi-Cal enrollment, to do the following:

- Establish CalFresh application referral procedures, and
- Establish communication procedures for CalFresh outreach activities aimed at increasing CalFresh enrollment among Medi-Cal applicants or beneficiaries.

CWDs must provide the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) with the contact information of the CalFresh liaison(s) and must provide the CDSS with updated contact information if the designated liaison changes. CWDs must submit the CalFresh liaison(s) contact information to [CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov) no later than **January 1, 2022** and include the following information:

- County
- Full Name
- Title
- E-mail
- Phone Number

### **Implementation Timeframe**

Following the release of this ACL, CWDs must begin preparing for the implementation of AB 79 Section 90. CWDs must complete all training, designate a liaison(s) to work with CBOs that facilitate Medi-Cal enrollment, and provide the CDSS with the liaison(s) contact information by **January 1, 2022**.

CDSS will collaborate with the Department of Health Care Services and the SAWS to implement the necessary automation changes to effectively prepopulate CalFresh applications for Medi-Cal beneficiaries. As soon as additional information is available, a separate ACL with an automation implementation plan will be issued.

### **Quality Control (QC) Reviews**

The new state requirements and procedures outlined in this letter are not subject to QC review procedures. However, CWDs are reminded to screen all CalFresh applications for entitlement to ES. This includes CalFresh applications submitted under the new state requirements and procedures outlined in this letter. Timeliness standards for submitted CalFresh applications are subject to the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Quality Control Review Handbook \(Food and Nutrition Service Handbook 310\)](#).

This ACL, and other CDSS Letters and Notices, are available online at:  
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/letters-and-notices>.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding this letter, please contact the CalFresh Policy and Employment Bureau at [CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

### ***Original Document Signed By***

ALEXIS FERNÁNDEZ, Chief  
CalFresh and Nutrition Branch  
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division