

June 14, 2024

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-42

The purpose of this All County Letter is to release of the *CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script*. The County Welfare Department may use this script to meet the requirements to provide an oral explanation of CalFresh work rules to all work registrants, as mandated by the Employment and Training Opportunities in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Final Rule published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, on January 5, 2021.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

June 14, 2024

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 24-42

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

SUBJECT: CALFRESH WORK RULES ORAL SCRIPT

REFERENCE: [EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FINAL RULE \(FINAL RULE\)](#); [ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 21-48](#); [ACL NO. 22-74](#); [ACL NO. 23-107](#); [TITLE 7 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(CFR\) 273.7\(C\)\(1\)](#); [FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 2023](#); [7 CFR 273.7](#); [7 CFR 273.7\(D\)\(4\)](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to release the *CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script*. The County Welfare Department (CWD) may use this script to meet the requirements to provide an oral explanation of the CalFresh work rules to all work registrants, as mandated by the [Employment And Training Opportunities In The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Final Rule](#) (the Final Rule) published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA, FNS) published on January 5, 2021.

BACKGROUND

The CWD is required to provide a written notice and oral explanation of the applicable CalFresh work rules to all households where at least one member is subject to a CalFresh work rule as referenced in [ACL No. 21-48](#) dated April 23, 2021. To assist in meeting the oral explanation requirement, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) developed the *CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script*. The use of this script is not required when providing the oral explanation along with the CalFresh Notice of Work Rules (CF 886), however CDSS strongly recommends CWDs adopt the *CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script* for statewide consistency.

For more information about the CF 886, please reference [ACL No. 22-74](#) dated September 2, 2022, and [ACL No. 23-107](#) dated December 19, 2023.

CALFRESH WORK RULES ORAL EXPLANATION

The CWD must verbally inform at least one CalFresh household member or authorized representative of the applicable work rule(s) using the CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script, or a similar script developed by the county. This comprehensive oral explanation must be provided to households in simple and user-friendly language at initial application, recertification, and any time a household member becomes a mandatory work registrant in accordance with [Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 273.7\(c\)\(1\)](#). Per USDA, FNS guidance, the oral explanation must not be pre-recorded.

If a household member becomes a mandatory work registrant during the certification period, the CWD must make a good faith effort to reach the household and provide the comprehensive oral explanation of CalFresh work rules. An example of a “good faith” effort is making a minimum of two attempts to contact the household to provide the comprehensive oral explanation. The CWD must document in the case file the number of attempts made to reach the household and if the comprehensive oral explanation was successfully provided. As a reminder, the CWD must provide the CF 886 even if there was no successful household contact made to provide the oral explanation.

OVERVIEW OF THE CALFRESH WORK RULES ORAL SCRIPT

The CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script is divided into the following sections:

- Instructions for CWDs
- Introduction
- General CalFresh Work Rules (Work Registration)
- Work Requirement for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)
- CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T)
- Additional Questions and Answers

Instructions for County Welfare Departments

This section provides instructions on how the CWD may use this oral script. The CWD must:

- Adapt the script according to the specific needs of the household,
- Update the eligibility system when additional information regarding exemption eligibility is provided, and
- Remind the individual to read and follow the information in the CF 886 when received.

Section 1 – Introduction

This section provides information on CalFresh work rules, which may vary by household, and the importance of reviewing the CF 886 once received.

Section 2 – General CalFresh Work Rules (Work Registration)

This section should be read to the household only if the household contains a work registrant. This section communicates general CalFresh work rules and what to do to receive CalFresh benefits. The CWD must clearly communicate the requirements for work registrants, work registration exemptions, consequences for failure to comply with the rules, and good cause for not meeting the general CalFresh work rules in accordance with [7 CFR 273.7](#). Following the communication of these rules and requirements, the CWD should allocate time for questions.

Section 3 – Work Requirement for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

This section should be read to the household only if the household contains an ABAWD. As a reminder, regardless of whether a county has an ABAWD time limit waiver in place, counties are required to identify ABAWDs, screen for exemptions, and inform households of ABAWD time limit rules.

Section three communicates the work requirements for ABAWDs subject to the time limit and includes exemptions, consequences for failure to comply with the rules, good cause, and the process to regain CalFresh benefits within the three year period.

Section three accounts for the gradual increase of the ABAWD age range, as required by the [Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023](#). For more information about ABAWDs, refer to [ACL No. 19-93](#) issued on September 12, 2019 and [ACL No. 23-80](#) issued on September 21, 2023.

Section 4 – CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T)

This section should be read to the household only if the county provides an E&T program.

Section four provides information about the CalFresh E&T voluntary program and must be introduced by the CWD with the name(s) of all household members considered work registrants. This oral explanation must be provided along with the CF 886 in all counties that offer CalFresh E&T.

The CWD must explain the participant reimbursements available through the county's E&T program. All entities responsible for the administration of a CalFresh E&T program are required to provide reimbursement to voluntary participants for expenses that are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to participation in the CalFresh E&T program, in accordance with [7 CFR 273.7\(d\)\(4\)](#).

Section 5 – Additional Questions and Answers

This section is included to emphasize that questions raised during the oral explanation must be addressed by staff to ensure the household fully understands the CalFresh work rules.

PROVISIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALFRESH WORK RULES ORAL SCRIPT

An oral explanation must be provided to all households that include at least one work registrant and must be implemented upon completion of CF 886 automation. The requirement applies statewide and pre-recorded content is not allowed. The CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script is included in this letter as an attachment and will be available for use in SAWS upon CF 886 automation. The CWDs are strongly encouraged to use the attached script. However, if the county does not use the attached script, it is the county's responsibility to develop and use a similar script.

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

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

ALEXIS FERNÁNDEZ GARCIA
Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division

Attachment

CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script

Instructions for County Welfare Departments

Eligibility staff may use this script when providing the mandatory oral explanation of work rules to households with work registrants. The CalFresh work rules include work registration, the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) time limit, and CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) when offered by the household's county of residence. County Welfare Departments (CWDs) must:

- Adapt the script according to the specific needs of each household.
- Update the eligibility system when additional information regarding exemption eligibility is provided.
- Remind the individual to read and follow the information in the *CalFresh Notice of Work Rules (CF 886)* when received.

Staff are not required to provide an oral explanation of the work rules to all household members. However, at a minimum, the oral explanation must be provided to a responsible household member or a representative authorized to act on behalf of the household in the application process. As appropriate, staff must insert the names of all applicable household members into the script.

The **red text inside the brackets** throughout the script must be customized according to the household's circumstances before you begin. Special notes and instructions are also included in each section for reference.

Reference [All County Letter \(ACL\) No. 22-74](#) for additional information and instructions.

Introduction

Note: Name each work registrant in the household and explain the following:

Hello, _____. Today, we will spend some time talking about the CalFresh Work Rules. You will get a notice **[in the mail/online/printed today]** with all the information we talk about today. It is very important that you and individuals in your household read that notice carefully to understand the steps your household will need to take to keep your CalFresh benefits.

CalFresh has work rules that **[you and/or other members of your household]** must follow to keep **[your/their]** benefits. Some of these rules have to do with the number of hours you work and job-related activities. Today, I will review the specific **work rules** that apply to **[you and/or other members in the household]**.

General CalFresh Work Rules (Work Registration)

Note: Identify household members who are work registrants. Staff must explain what is applicable based on each individual's specific circumstances.

First, we will talk about the general CalFresh work rules, also known as work registration. These are general rules that _____, _____, and

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_____ will need to follow to make sure your household's CalFresh benefits are not decreased or are not stopped. [You/they] were automatically registered for work by signing the CalFresh application. If [you/they] are working at least 30 hours a week, [you/they] must not quit or reduce [your/their] hours to less than 30 hours a week unless [you/they] have a good reason. A good reason may be if [you/they] are sick, caring for a child younger than 12 years old, working in unreasonable conditions, or you can't physically do the job.

You can also be excused from these work rules if you are under 16 years old or over 60 years old, taking care of a child that is under 6 years old or a person with a disability, working at least 30 hours per week, getting or applying for unemployment or disability benefits, disabled, going to school or a training program, meeting work rules for another program like CalWORKs, or in a drug or alcohol abuse treatment program.

Do any of these apply to [you and/or any other household member]? You can let me know now or call us later at [insert contact number].

If [you/they] do not meet these work rules without having a good reason, [you/they] may lose [your/their] CalFresh benefits for one month the first time. If a second time, [your/their] CalFresh benefits will be stopped for three months. If a third time, [your/their] CalFresh benefits will be stopped for six months. If your household's benefits stop for not meeting the work rule, [you/they] will have to reapply and meet or be excused from the work rules to get the CalFresh benefits again.

Work Requirement for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD)

Note: This section is only for households with an ABAWD. If the household has no ABAWDs, skip this section. If the household has individuals subject to the ABAWD work requirement, identify the individual(s) and explain the following. If the county is under an ABAWD waiver, the county must also read the text in red below to the household.

Next, we will talk about the work requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents, also known as ABAWD.

[Currently, you are living in a county where the ABAWD time limit is waived, which means you do not have to meet the ABAWD work requirement. We will let you know when the waiver ends and when you will have to follow the ABAWD work requirement. These are the rules that will apply to _____, _____, and _____ if/when the waiver ends.]

These ABAWD work requirements apply to _____, _____, and _____ because they are between the ages of 18 and [52], don't live with children under 18 years old, and considered physically and mentally able to work. [You/They] will need to follow these ABAWD work requirements to keep [your/their] CalFresh benefits for longer than three months in a three-year period. To make sure your CalFresh benefits do not stop, [you/they] will need to work, volunteer, or participate in certain employment and training activities for at least 20 hours per week or 80 hours

CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script

per month. Some work activities may be a job, workfare, community service, volunteer work, or joining an employment and training program. If [you/they] start working below 20 hours per week or less than 80 hours per month, you must let the county know within 10 days.

[You/They] may not have to follow the ABAWD work requirements if [you/they] have physical or mental health issues, are experiencing homelessness, struggle with a drug or alcohol problem, a victim of domestic violence, live with a child under 18, are pregnant, a veteran, or under 25 years old and were in foster care on [your/their] 18th birthday.

Do any of these apply to [you and/or any other household member]? You can let me know now or call us later at [insert contact number].

If [you/they] do not meet the ABAWD work requirements without having a good reason, [you/they] may lose [your/their] CalFresh benefits. When we have counted three full months of [you/they] not meeting the ABAWD work requirements, [you/they] will lose [your/their] CalFresh benefits until the end of the 3-year period. To get CalFresh benefits again, [you/they] will have to reapply and meet or be excused from the ABAWD work requirements.

CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T)

Note: The CalFresh E&T program is voluntary. Individuals are not required to participate in this program to keep their CalFresh benefits. This section is only applicable for counties offering CalFresh E&T. If the county does not offer CalFresh E&T, skip this section.

Lastly, we will talk about the CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) program. [County Name] currently offers a voluntary CalFresh E&T program that may help [you/them] find a job or train for a job. Our program can also help [you/them] cover costs like [transportation, childcare, tools, books, uniforms, and personal safety items or equipment]. _____, _____, and _____ may be eligible for the CalFresh E&T program.

As a reminder, the CalFresh E&T program is voluntary and may have specific eligibility criteria. [You/They] are not required to participate in this program to keep your CalFresh benefits.

Additional Questions and Answers

Note: Stop and allow the individual to ask questions.

We have covered a lot of information today. Please remember that you will get a notice [in the mail/online/printed today] with all the information we just talked about. It is very important that you read that notice carefully to understand the steps your household will need to follow to keep your CalFresh benefits. Do you have any questions for me?