CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments with guidance regarding the treatment of Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation payments authorized under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the purposes of CalFresh.
April 21, 2020

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JENNIFER HERNANDEZ, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: CALFRESH TREATMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE UNDER THE CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT

REFERENCE: H.R. 748 (Public Law 116-136 (3/27/20)) CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT.

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with guidance regarding the treatment of Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC), Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) payments authorized under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the purposes of CalFresh.

Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC)

Section 2104 of the CARES Act created the PUC program, which provides an additional $600 in Federal unemployment compensation to every weekly unemployment benefit, effective until July 31, 2020.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

Section 2102 of the CARES Act created the PUA program, which expands unemployment coverage to individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits (UIB) and are unable to work due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, such as self-employed workers (including gig workers and independent contractors), part-time workers, and those with limited work histories. Up to 39 weeks of PUA are available to eligible workers. The program will expire on December 31, 2020, unless otherwise extended.
Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)

Section 2107 of the CARES Act created the PEUC program, which provides an additional 13 weeks of federally-funded unemployment compensation to individuals who have exhausted their state UIB, effective through December 31, 2020.

CalFresh Treatment of PUC, PUA, and PEUC

Per the US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service’s Questions and Answers, COVID-19, Set #1, issued on April 11, 2020, PUC, PUA, and PEUC payments authorized under the CARES Act must be considered unearned income for the purposes of determining a household’s CalFresh eligibility and benefit amount. These payments must be treated consistently with non-pandemic unemployment benefits.

Policy guidance regarding pandemic unemployment benefits and the CalWORKs program will be issued as soon as administratively feasible.

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