

September 4, 2020

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER**

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter is to provide Performance Measurement Counties with guidance regarding the option to suspend CalFresh State Quality Control reviews of active cases for the sample months of June, July, August, and September 2020 in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic emergency.



KIM JOHNSON  
DIRECTOR

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

September 4, 2020

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: ALEXIS FERNANDEZ, CHIEF  
CALFRESH AND NUTRITION BRANCH  
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: CALFRESH SUSPENSION OF QUALITY CONTROL REVIEWS  
FOR STATE ACTIVE CASES ENCOMPASSING THE SAMPLE  
MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2020  
DUE TO COVID-19

REFERENCE: FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (HR 6201);  
TITLE 7 OF THE CODE OF REGULATIONS (CFR) SECTIONS  
272.3; 7 CFR 275.11(B)(1); 7 CFR 275.11(B)(2); 7 CFR 275.12;  
AND 7 CFR 275.13; CALIFORNIA OPERATIONS MANUAL OF  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (MPP) DIVISION 15; MPP  
SECTION 15-101.1; MPP SECTION 15-101.2; MPP SECTION 15-  
310.1; MPP SECTION 15-310.11; MPP SECTION 15-310.12; MPP  
SECTION 15-310.3; AND MPP SECTION 15-621.1

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide the Performance Measurement Counties (PMCs) with guidance regarding the option to suspend CalFresh State active Quality Control (QC) reviews for the sample months of June, July, August, and September 2020 in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic emergency. **All federal active cases must continue to be reviewed and completed by the PMCs.**

California has experienced a rapid increase in the spread of COVID-19. As the number of COVID-19 cases continue to increase, extensive public health warnings have been issued to reduce exposure, including orders to implement social distancing when

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conducting essential business. In order to protect applicants, recipients, the CalFresh workforce, and to provide workload relief for the PMC QC teams, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is making state active QC reviews optional for the sample months of June, July, August, and September 2020. Suspension of the requirement to conduct state active QC reviews also provides the PMCs flexibility needed to effectively operate under CalFresh eligibility waivers granted by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in response to the pandemic emergency. The CDSS recognizes that these waivers have made normal QC procedures difficult to apply.

**To opt in, a request must be submitted by close of business on September 15, 2020**, via email to [CFUReviews@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CFUReviews@dss.ca.gov) with the Subject Line "State QC Sample Suspension."

During this temporary suspension, the CDSS recommends that the PMCs consider the following priorities:

1. Revisit and complete Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 federal and state active cases dropped as "incomplete" for the sample months of October 2019 through February 2020.
2. Complete Quality Assurance (QA) related activities, such as using the state active QC sample for June, July, August, and September as a QA review completed by PMC QC staff in order to identify QC type error trends sooner and to prevent future errors heading into FFY 2021. Additional instructions will be provided via a QC transmittal for the PMCs that wish to use the State QC sample in this manner.
3. Complete FFY 2020 Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) cases.
4. Pilot the video conferencing option for QC interviews.
5. Upon release of QC transmittals and QC tools, such as the QC Documentation Guide and QC Interview Checklist, incorporate the information from the QC transmittals and QC tools in your QC team's review process.

### **State QC Sample Suspension Details**

State active case reviews are identified with the letter "M" for primary and "N" for secondary. State sampled cases are completed by 18 of the 19 PMCs as part of California's commitment to maintain a statistically valid sample size upon which to base any fiscal penalties assessed because of the payment error rate. The PMCs affected by this suspension are: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Merced, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Solano, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Ventura.

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If opting in, county QC reviewers must drop state active case reviews as Not Subject to Review (NSTR). State active case reviews will resume for FFY 2021 beginning with the sample month of October 2020. Instructions on how to drop and code NSTR cases, including any informing notices required, are forthcoming via a QC transmittal.

**Impact on Combined Error Rate**

State active case review results are combined with the results of federal active case reviews. This combination is called the "County Performance Sample," and it is used to pass-on a portion of any FNS QC fiscal sanction to each of the PMCs based on the county's error rate. For the purpose of calculating the FFY 2020 combined payment error rate, only five months of state active case reviews will be used to calculate the combined error rate instead of the standard 12 months. It should be noted that the combined error rate is only used to calculate a sanction pass-on.

If you have any questions about the suspension of state active case reviews, please submit your question with "State QC Sample Suspension" in the Subject Line to [CFUReviews@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CFUReviews@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By***

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