

May 5, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER**

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance to County Welfare Departments regarding additional CalFresh emergency allotments issued under section 2302(a)(1) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.



**KIM JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

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

May 5, 2021

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

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

SUBJECT: CALFRESH EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS FOR MAY 2021

REFERENCE: [H.R. 6201 FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT;](#)  
[ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER FEBRUARY 25,](#)  
[2021; ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-11-21; FOOD AND](#)  
[NUTRITION SERVICE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION](#)  
[ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EMERGENCY ALLOTMENT MEMO](#)

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with guidance regarding additional CalFresh emergency allotments issued under section 2302(a)(1) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the Act).

**Background**

To increase food benefits in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) and its effects on the economy, section 2302(a)(1) of the Act provides authority for the California Department of Social Services (the Department) to provide CalFresh emergency allotments.

Since March 2020, emergency allotments have raised each household's regular monthly CalFresh allotment to the maximum allowable allotment based on household size. Previous guidance provided by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) specified that CalFresh households already receiving the maximum allowable allotment based on household size were not eligible to receive an emergency allotment of CalFresh benefits. This guidance has recently been updated as described below. All CalFresh households are now eligible to receive an emergency allotment.

On April 2, 2020, the Department communicated to counties via [letter](#) that California was approved to provide CalFresh emergency allotments to eligible households for two

months, March and April 2020. Since then, the Department has issued a monthly letter confirming the continued approval of emergency allotments. The Department will continue to issue a monthly letter confirming the approval of and issuance date for each month's emergency allotment.

The [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#), signed by President Trump on December 27, 2020, includes a provision to increase all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit allotments by 15 percent effective January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021. The SNAP benefit increase will be implemented in addition to emergency allotments. More information on the temporary benefit increase can be found in [All County Information Notice \(ACIN\) I-11-21](#) issued on January 27, 2021.

### **New Emergency Allotment Guidance**

FNS released a memo on April 1, 2021, [SNAP – Emergency Allotments](#), stating they have reviewed previous emergency allotment guidance and determined that a new approach to emergency allotments will provide greater equity for households most in need. This new guidance is effective beginning with the April 2021 benefit month and is reflected in the May 2021 issuance month.

Under this new policy, all CalFresh households will receive a minimum emergency allotment of \$95 per month. This new minimum emergency allotment applies regardless of household size. Households eligible to receive the maximum allowable allotment based on household size are now eligible to receive an emergency allotment of \$95 per month. Households who are not eligible to receive the maximum allowable allotment based on household size, but whose emergency allotment is less than \$95 per month under the previous model, will receive additional CalFresh benefits to raise their emergency allotment to the new \$95 minimum. Households who were eligible to receive more than \$95 per month under the previous model will continue to receive that amount.

### **Emergency Allotment Extension**

Emergency allotments are approved on a month-by-month basis. The option to issue emergency allotments on a month-by-month basis will continue until the Secretary for Health and Human Services (HHS) rescinds the federal public health emergency declaration that was issued on January 27, 2020, under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act or the State-issued emergency or disaster declaration expires.

The FNS has provided guidance allowing for a one-month emergency allotment phase-out upon expiration of the State-issued emergency or disaster declaration. States may request emergency allotment approval for one additional issuance month if the Secretary for HHS public health emergency declaration under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act remains in place, **and** the State-issued emergency or disaster

declaration has expired or will expire in the current month. The Department will release county guidance via letter if the phase-out emergency allotment is implemented.

### **May 2021 Emergency Allotments**

California has requested and been approved to issue CalFresh emergency allotments for the month of May 2021. May emergency allotments will have a client availability date of Sunday, June 13, 2021. May emergency allotments available on June 13, 2021 will reflect the new guidance. All eligible CalFresh households will receive a minimum emergency allotment of \$95 for the month of May.

Each eligible household will only receive one emergency allotment per benefit month that emergency allotments are approved. That said, because the emergency allotment issuance process will be completed via batch process and because of potential processing delays caused by the recent increase in CalFresh application volume, California will run three issuances for each approved emergency allotment. This will ensure that all eligible households receive an emergency allotment for each benefit month that emergency allotments are approved.

It is important to note that an emergency allotment may be issued manually using benefit type CF03 in the limited circumstance that a household should have received an emergency allotment but was not issued an emergency allotment through the three batch processes scheduled for each emergency allotment benefit month.

Please refer to the following calendar for information regarding March 2020 through May 2021 emergency allotments.

| <b>Benefit Month</b> | <b>First Issuance</b> | <b>Second Issuance</b> | <b>Third Issuance</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| March                | April 12              | May 10                 | June 14               |
| April                | May 10                | June 14                | July 12               |
| May                  | June 14               | July 12                | August 16             |
| June                 | July 12               | August 16              | September 13          |
| July                 | August 16             | September 13           | October 18            |
| August               | September 13          | October 18             | November 15           |
| September            | October 18            | November 15            | December 20           |
| October              | November 15           | December 20            | January 10            |
| November             | December 20           | January 10             | February 14           |
| December             | January 10            | February 14            | March 7               |
| January              | February 14           | March 7                | April 18              |
| February             | March 7               | April 18               | May 16                |
| March                | April 18              | May 16                 | June 13               |
| April                | May 16                | June 13                | TBD                   |
| May                  | June 13               | TBD                    | TBD                   |

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As a reminder, the issuance dates in this calendar reflect the date that emergency allotments are available to clients.

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