

October 24, 2022

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

This letter provides County Welfare Departments an Electronic Benefit Transfer card skimming and benefit theft Public Service Announcement video to share with cash and food benefit recipients.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

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GOVERNOR

October 24, 2022

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: RYAN GILLETTE
Chief Data Officer, Deputy Director
Research Automation and Data Division

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES EBT CARD
SKIMMING AND BENEFIT THEFT PUBLIC SERVICE
ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEO

This All County Welfare Directors Letter serves as a notification to the County Welfare Departments (CWDs) of a Public Service Announcement (PSA) video to address Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card skimming and benefit theft in the cash and food assistance programs. This includes, but is not limited to, the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), CalFresh, Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP), the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI), and the Trafficking and Crime Victims Assistance Program (TCVAP). The PSA can be found on our [California Department of Social Services \(CDSS\) YouTube channel](#) and the CDSS [homepage](#).

BACKGROUND

Due to the growing increase in theft of California cash and food benefits from EBT cards via skimming and phishing, the CDSS is addressing this issue in several ways, including but not limited to:

- Improving card security, inclusive of short and long-term options;
- Utilizing EBT transaction data to identify known theft patterns to quickly find skimmers and perpetrators;
- Collaboration with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies; and
- Recipient education on how to avoid becoming a victim of EBT theft.

To address recipient education, this letter provides CWDs a PSA video developed by the CDSS Data Stewardship and Integrity Bureau to educate applicants and recipients on ways they can protect themselves from EBT card skimming/phishing and benefits theft. A series of letters will be forthcoming to address other ways the Department is combatting theft and fraud in the cash and food programs. For more information about EBT theft reimbursement processes, see All County Letters [13-67](#), [18-148](#), and [21-133](#).

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT CONTENT

The PSA video outlines how public assistance benefits can be stolen from EBT cards utilizing text message and phone scams, card skimming technology, and fake websites. It also provides suggestions on what recipients can watch out for when using their EBT cards to make every day purchases, tips on how to protect their personal and EBT card information, and what to do if they think they have been a victim of EBT or benefit theft.

WHERE TO FIND THE PSA VIDEO

This PSA video will be featured on the [CDSS website](#), the [CDSS YouTube channel](#), and on the [CDSS Facebook page](#). The CDSS also encourages counties to play this PSA video in county office lobbies and post on their own county websites and social media channels. Please note, a separate Spanish version of the PSA video is being finalized and will be released soon. In the meantime, YouTube has closed captioning available that can translate into a viewer's preferred language.

OTHER EFFORTS TO EDUCATE RECIPIENTS

In addition to the PSA video, a flyer is being developed to educate cardholders about EBT theft and consumer protection which will be shared under a separate cover. These flyers are also planned for distribution in new and replacement EBT card envelopes.

Another option for CWDs to share the video with recipients is to print the below QR code that will link to the PSA video on YouTube. This code can be added to flyers or displayed on lobby walls, counters, or anywhere the county determines best.



Please email FraudCoordinator.DSIB@dss.ca.gov for a digital copy of the QR code or if you have any questions regarding the information in this letter.