

February 2, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with guidance regarding the end of CalFresh emergency allotments, issued under section 2302(a)(1) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. The [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#), terminates emergency allotments after the issuance of February 2023 benefits. This letter also includes reminders for CWDs on deductions that can assist CalFresh households to maximize their CalFresh benefits during this transition period.



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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

February 2, 2023

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JENNIFER TROIA, CHIEF DEPUTY DIRECTOR
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: CALFRESH EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2023
AND END OF EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS

REFERENCE: [H.R. 6201 FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT](#);
[AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT, 2021](#);
[CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021](#);
[CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023](#);
[FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE \(FNS\) SUPPLEMENTAL
NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM \(SNAP\) EMERGENCY
ALLOTMENT MEMO, 2021](#);
[FNS MEMO: SNAP EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS PROVISION IN
THE CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023](#);
[TITLE 7 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(CFR\)
273.12\(e\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#);
[MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\) 63-502.32](#);
[MPP 63-503.413](#); [MPP 63-504.39](#); [MPP 63-1101.2](#);
[ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 06-31](#); [ACL 20-135](#); [ACL 21-117](#);
[ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE \(ACIN\) I-60-22](#);
[ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER \(ACWDL\) APRIL
2, 2020](#); [ACWDL JANUARY 10, 2023](#)

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with guidance regarding the end of CalFresh emergency allotments, issued under section 2302(a)(1) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (the Act). The [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#), terminates emergency allotments after the issuance of February 2023 benefits. This letter also includes reminders for CWDs on deductions that can assist CalFresh households to maximize their CalFresh benefits during this transition period.

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 and the Department has issued a monthly letter confirming the continued approval of emergency allotments. After revised guidance issued by FNS on April 1, 2021, all CalFresh households have been eligible to receive an emergency allotment.

Under the current policy, all CalFresh households receive a minimum emergency allotment of \$95 per month. This minimum emergency allotment applies regardless of household size. Households eligible to receive the maximum allowable allotment based on household size are eligible to receive an emergency allotment of \$95 per month.

End of Emergency Allotment Extension

Emergency allotments were approved on a month-by-month basis. The [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#), Division HH, Title IV, Section 503(b), ends emergency allotments provided by Section 2302(a)(1) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act after the issuance of February 2023 benefits. Therefore, the last benefit month of emergency allotments is February 2023.

The 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act supersedes the guidance issued by FNS on [April 1, 2021](#) and [December 14, 2021](#), which allowed State agencies to issue emergency allotments for one phase-out month after the expiration of the national Public Health Emergency or state-level emergency declaration. Under the new authority, State agencies cannot issue emergency allotments for a phase-out month after benefit month February 2023. In other words, states are not allowed to issue emergency allotments for benefit month March 2023, or later, under any circumstance.

February 2023 Emergency Allotment

California was approved to issue CalFresh emergency allotments for the month of February 2023. February emergency allotments will have a client availability date of March 26, 2023. All eligible CalFresh households will receive a minimum emergency allotment of \$95 for the month of February. This will be the last CalFresh emergency allotment benefit month.

Each eligible household will only receive one emergency allotment per approved benefit month. That said, because the emergency allotment issuance process is completed via batch process and 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 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. Manual actions must not include benefit months beyond February 2023 as that is the final approved emergency allotment benefit month.

Please refer to the following calendar for information regarding November 2022 through February 2023 emergency allotments.

Benefit Month	First Issuance	Second Issuance	Third Issuance
November	December 18	January 8 (CalSAWS) January 14 (CalWIN)	February 5 (CalSAWS) February 12 (CalWIN)
December	January 8 (CalSAWS) January 14 (CalWIN)	February 5 (CalSAWS) February 12 (CalWIN)	March 26
January	February 5 (CalSAWS) February 12 (CalWIN)	March 26	April 16
February	March 26	April 16	May 7 (CalSAWS) May 20 (CalWIN)

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

Reminders on Maximizing Household Benefits

CWDs are reminded of the following CalFresh policies on deductions, allowances and exclusions that may help maximize household allotments while minimizing the impact of the end of emergency allotments. A household can report expenses at any time during the certification period. These deductions include:

- **Earned Income Deduction** – The Earned Income Deduction is deducted from households with earned income. Per [Manual of Policies and Procedures \(MPP\) 63-1101.2](#), the earned income deduction is 20 percent. Refer to [MPP 63-502.32](#) for more information on the earned income deduction.

- Self-Employment Deduction - The self-employed individual must choose either actual costs of producing self-employment income or a standard deduction of 40 percent of their gross self-employment income. Refer to [MPP 63-503.413](#) for more information.
- Standard Deduction – The amount of the Standard Deduction varies on the number of household members. Refer to [ACIN I-60-22](#) issued September 16, 2022, for the latest guidance on the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 standard deduction by household size.
- Excess Shelter Deduction – The Excess Shelter Deduction is monthly shelter costs in excess of 50 percent of the household's income after all other applicable deductions. The deduction must not exceed the current maximum excess shelter deduction, unless the household contains a member who is elderly or disabled. Refer to [ACIN I-60-22](#) for the latest guidance on the FFY 2023 excess shelter deduction. Households which are homeless may opt to receive a homeless deduction instead of actual shelter costs.
- Homeless Shelter Deduction – The Homeless Shelter Deduction can be deducted for homeless households that incur or expect to incur some expenses for shelter during a month. No verification is required unless the household wants to claim a higher shelter deduction than the standard Homeless Shelter Deduction. Refer to [ACIN I-60-22](#) for the latest guidance on the FFY 2023 Homeless Shelter Deduction.
- Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) – The SUA is a non-prorated fixed amount adjusted annually for households that have heating or cooling costs separate from their housing payments. Refer to [ACIN I-60-22](#) for the latest guidance on the FFY 2023 SUA amounts. Households which are otherwise not eligible for the SUA, are not already receiving the maximum CalFresh allotment for their household size, are not already receiving the maximum shelter deduction, or are receiving an increased allotment due to the Homeless Shelter Deduction are eligible to receive an annual \$20.01 State Utility Assistance Subsidy (SUAS) payment. Those households then are eligible to receive the SUA.
- Limited Utility Allowance (LUA) – The LUA is an allowance for households that are not eligible for the SUA but at least two other separate types of utility expenses, not including cooling and heating. Other types of utility expenses for which the household can claim the LUA are telephone, water, sewerage, and trash collection. Refer to [ACIN I-60-22](#) for the latest guidance on the FFY 2023 LUA amounts.

- Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA) – A household not eligible for either the SUA or LUA but have telephone expenses can claim the TUA. Refer to [ACIN I-60-22](#) for the latest guidance on the FFY 2023 TUA amounts.
- Dependent Care Deduction – The Dependent Care Deduction can be deducted for actual costs that a household pays for dependent care in order for a household member to accept or continue to work, comply with the CalFresh Employment and Training program, or attend training or education that prepares a person for work. There is no cap amount for this deduction, and it does not require the household to provide verification, unless questionable. Refer to [All County Letter \(ACL\) 20-135](#) issued December 15, 2020 for the latest guidance on Dependent Care Deduction.
- Standard Medical Deduction – The Medical Expense Deduction is for households which include at least one elderly and/or disabled household member. These households can receive a standard deduction of \$120 if the elderly and/or disabled individual has non-reimbursed medical costs over \$35 a month. Refer to [ACL 21-117](#) dated September 30, 2021 for further guidance on the standard medical expense deduction.
- Excess Medical Expense Deduction – The Excess Medical Expense deduction is intended for households that include at least one elderly and/or disabled household member and incur non-reimbursed medical expenses in the amount of \$155.01 or more. This deduction allows for actual expenses. Refer to [ACL 21-117](#) for further guidance on the excess medical expense deduction.
- Child Support Exclusion – The Child Support Income Exclusion is intended for households that are legally obligated to pay child support to a non-household member. The legally obligated child support payments are treated as income exclusions. Refer to [ACL 06-31](#) dated August 16, 2006, for further guidance on the treatment of legally obligated child support income exclusion.

It is critical to ensure that households are receiving all eligible deductions to help during this transition.

Emergency Allotments Informing Notice

The Notice to All CalFresh Recipients – End of CalFresh Emergency Allotments (CF 502) was created to inform all CalFresh households that the temporary CalFresh emergency allotments authorized under the Act are ending. The CF 502 also informs households that March 2023 is the last month in which CalFresh emergency allotments will be issued. Beginning April 2023, CalFresh benefits will return to the regular amount listed on the most recent notice of action. The CF 502 is not an adverse notice of action. The end of emergency allotments is a mass change that affects all CalFresh

households in California due to federal regulations and is not considered a reduction to the approved regular CalFresh benefit amount. A state hearing judge cannot order payment of emergency allotments beyond February 2023, the final approved emergency allotment benefit month.

The CF 502 will be mailed to all active CalFresh households starting on January 17, 2023 for CalWIN counties, and January 26, 2023 for CalSAWS counties. CalFresh applications approved after this timeframe will require CWDs to mail the CF 502 manually.

In accordance with [MPP 63-504.39](#), CWDs must employ mass change informing practices to notify all households of the ending of the temporary emergency allotments. Mass change informing practices may include, but are not limited to, text messaging, robocalling, social media, client facing websites, posters in lobbies and other locations frequented by CalFresh households, pre-recorded messages on Interactive Voice Response systems, and other methods as available on a county-by-county basis per [7 CFR 273.12\(e\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#).

The CDSS is implementing a communications campaign to inform CalFresh participants on the ending of the CalFresh emergency allotments, which includes the:

- Mass voice messaging robocalling campaign to all CalFresh households.
- Mass text messaging campaign to all CalFresh households that opt-in to text messaging.
- Creation and distribution of a flyer, frequently asked questions document, and social media post.
- Updating of the [CalFresh Food](#) webpage with a link to the [CalFresh COVID19 landing page](#).

Copies and Translations

Forms referenced in this letter are available on the [CDSS Forms/Brochures](#) webpage. When CDSS completes all translations of a form, they are posted on the [Translated Forms and Publications](#) webpage. When made available by CDSS, forms translated into an individual's preferred language must be provided to the individual pursuant to [Manual of Policies and Procedures \(MPP\) Section 21-115.2](#). For questions on translated materials, please contact Language Services at (916) 651-8876. If translations are not available, recipients who have elected to receive materials in languages other than English should be sent the English version of the form or notice along with the [GEN 1365-Notice of Language Services](#) and a local contact number.

Per [Government Code Section 7290, et seq.](#), the County Welfare Departments (CWDs) must ensure that effective bilingual services are provided. This requirement may be met through utilization of paid interpreters, qualified bilingual employees, and qualified employees of other agencies or community resources. These services must be provided, free of charge, to the applicant/recipient. If CDSS does not provide translations of a form, it is the county's responsibility to read and interpret the form if an applicant or recipient requests it.

Additionally, the CWDs must provide auxiliary aids and services to persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, or persons with impaired speech, vision, or manual skills, where applicable. More information regarding provisions for services to applicants and recipients who have limited English proficiency or who have disabilities can be found in [MPP Section 21-115](#) and [ACL 19-45](#).

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.

Attachments

NOTICE TO ALL CALFRESH RECIPIENTS – END OF CALFRESH EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ

The temporary CalFresh Emergency Allotments which provided a minimum of \$95 for CalFresh households are ending. CalFresh Emergency Allotments were authorized under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020.

The last month CalFresh Emergency Allotments will be issued is March 2023. No further action is required.

Beginning in April 2023, your CalFresh benefits will return to the regular amount. Your regular amount is the amount put onto your EBT card between the 1st and 10th of each month. Your regular benefits are based on your circumstances, including your household size, income, and deductions.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

- If you have questions regarding this letter:
 - You may call 1-888-445-1955 for more information, or
 - Find a local county social services office near you at www.CalFreshFood.org
- If your circumstances have changed and you think you may be eligible for more benefits, contact your county office.
- This is a mass change that affects all CalFresh households in California due to Federal regulations and is not considered a reduction to the approved regular CalFresh benefit amount. A state hearing judge cannot order payment of Emergency Allotments after they have stopped.
- This notice is not an adverse notice of action. No action is required.

AVISO A TODOS LOS BENEFICIARIOS DE CALFRESH – FIN DE LAS ASIGNACIONES DE EMERGENCIA DE CALFRESH

IMPORTANTE - POR FAVOR LEA

Las asignaciones de emergencia temporales de CalFresh que proporcionaron un mínimo de \$95 para los hogares de CalFresh están llegando a su fin. Las asignaciones de emergencia de CalFresh se autorizaron bajo la Ley Familias Primero de Respuesta al Coronavirus del 2020 (Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020).

El último mes en que se emitirán las asignaciones de emergencia de CalFresh es marzo de 2023. No se requiere ninguna acción adicional.

A partir de abril de 2023, sus beneficios de CalFresh volverán a la cantidad regular. Su monto regular es el monto que se deposita en su tarjeta EBT entre el 1 y el 10 de cada mes. Sus beneficios regulares se basan en sus circunstancias, incluyendo el número de personas en su hogar, los ingresos y las deducciones.

INFORMACIÓN ÚTIL

- Si tiene preguntas sobre esta carta:
 - Puede llamar al 1-888-445-1955 para más información, o
 - Encuentre una oficina local de servicios sociales del condado cerca de usted en www.CalFreshFood.org
- Si sus circunstancias han cambiado y cree que puede ser elegible para más beneficios, comuníquese con la oficina de su condado.
- Éste es un cambio masivo que afecta a todos los hogares de CalFresh en California debido a los reglamentos federales y no se considera una reducción del monto del beneficio regular aprobado de CalFresh. Un juez de audiencia estatal no puede ordenar el pago de asignaciones de emergencia después de que hayan terminado.
- Este aviso no es de acción adversa. No se requiere ninguna acción.