

May 3, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter is to provide County Welfare Departments with guidance on completing and submitting their required Disaster CalFresh plan for Federal Fiscal Year 2024 to the California Department of Social Services by **Friday, July 14, 2023**.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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May 3, 2023

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: JULIANNA VIGNALATS, Acting Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division

SUBJECT: COUNTY DISASTER CALFRESH PLANS FOR FEDERAL
FISCAL YEAR 2024

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter (ACWDL) is to provide guidance to County Welfare Departments (CWDs) on completing and submitting their required Disaster CalFresh (D-CalFresh) plans for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024 to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) by **Friday, July 14, 2023**.

The state D-CalFresh plan will be submitted by CDSS to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) by the annual deadline of August 15, 2023 and will be shared with all CWDs.

Background

County D-CalFresh plans serve as guides for CalFresh's emergency response efforts in the event of a natural or human-made disaster. A comprehensive plan ensures a coordinated response and timely and accurate issuance of D-CalFresh food benefits to impacted households. Furthermore, county D-CalFresh plans ensure that California counties understand their roles and responsibilities during a disaster, as well as the policies and procedures governing the D-CalFresh program.

As the state oversight agency, CDSS is required to provide an annual state D-CalFresh plan to FNS at the beginning of every FFY. The state D-CalFresh plan is based, in part, on information provided in the county plans and informs FNS of California's overall approach to serving new and ongoing CalFresh households who are affected by a disaster.

Counties are reminded that, under [California Welfare and Institutions Code \(W&IC\) Section 18917\(a\)\(2\)](#), all CWDs are required to submit a D-CalFresh plan to CDSS every

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FFY. The statute also requires counties to establish a mutual aid region, which includes at least two counties; details on the mutual aid region must be included in the county D-CalFresh plan. The mutual aid section of the plan will list all cooperating counties that make up the mutual aid region, as well as detail the level of support that will be provided by, and to, each cooperating county in the event of a disaster.

County D-CalFresh Plan Template and Emergency Response Handbook

For FFY 2024, CDSS is requesting that counties utilize the most recent version of the County D-CalFresh Plan Template. Counties may utilize their FFY 2023 plan as a foundation for the FFY 2024 plan. Counties should review their previously submitted plan and update any outdated information.

Although optional, CDSS highly encourages each CWD to utilize the county D-CalFresh plan template when developing and submitting their plan for FFY 2024. If CWDs opt to NOT use the template, they must ensure that all plan components captured in the attached template are also incorporated into the CWD's template of choice.

Any changes to the FFY 2024 plan that are different from the FFY 2023 plan must be highlighted in yellow. Changes may include new contact information for relevant staff or new roles and responsibilities for staff, among others.

The [CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook](#) (the Handbook) is a useful tool when developing the county D-CalFresh plans as the handbook provides policy guidance and information on required plan components. Additionally, for added efficiency, the D-CalFresh plan template includes references to the page number that corresponds to the same section in the Handbook.

County D-CalFresh Plan Instructions and Submission Procedure

All CWDs must submit D-CalFresh Plans to CDSS by **Friday, July 14, 2023**; completed plans must be submitted to DisasterCalFresh@dss.ca.gov on or before the due date. Email submission from a county representative will be considered an electronic signature of the plan and no further signatures will be required by CDSS. Questions regarding the planning process or plan submission should also be sent to DisasterCalFresh@dss.ca.gov.

County disaster contacts will receive a Microsoft Word version of the template, via email, immediately following the issuance of this ACWDL. Updated state and federal disaster contact information will also be provided via email.

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Additional resources about D-CalFresh, including any current or recent disaster responses by CalFresh, can always be found on the [CDSS Disaster Response website](#).

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact the CalFresh Policy and Employment Bureau at CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov.

Attachment

SECTION 1: D-CALFRESH ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The D-CalFresh Roles and Responsibilities section is used to provide contact information and responsibilities for several key partners who play a role during D-CalFresh operations. Please reference the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for information pertaining to this section.

THE ROLE OF COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE(S)

Please reference pages 20-21 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Please reference page 22 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Please reference page 22 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

Please reference page 22 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (CDSS) CALFRESH POLICY

Please reference pages 22-23 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF CDSS CALFRESH OPERATIONS

Please reference page 24 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF CDSS CALFRESH OUTREACH AND PROGRAMS

Please reference pages 24-25 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF CDSS EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP)

Please reference page 25 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE (USDA FNS)

Please reference page 26 *Roles and Responsibilities During D-CalFresh Operations* in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook and make sure to include all relevant contact information.

SECTION 2: D-CALFRESH READINESS

The D-CalFresh Readiness section is intended to outline the county's "readiness" to operate D-CalFresh when a Presidential Declaration for Individual Assistance is granted and D-CalFresh operations are subsequently approved. Please provide as much information as possible and reference the CalFresh Emergency Handbook for more details on how your county can properly prepare to operate D-CalFresh.

PANDEMIC PLANNING

Detail planning efforts that would mitigate delays or the lack of availability of day-to-day CalFresh services if a pandemic outbreak were prevalent in your county. Additionally, the Pandemic Planning section will detail the continuity of services for when clients are not able to physically attend or visit county offices for services or appointments at an impacted CWD.

DATA

Identify local demographic data that may affect the county's response to a disaster. Include available data and information from sources such as the local office of emergency services, the local sheriff's or fire department, or community-based organizations that can be used to assess language needs and locate persons with disabilities, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations. Identify resources for disaster impact such as flood maps or electrical outage data.

MUTUAL AID REGION AND CROSS-COUNTY SUPPORT

Identify counties or regions (at least two or more) that would assist and support during an emergency response. A mutual aid agreement is co-developed between counties and includes information such as primary contacts, roles and responsibilities, and staff support plans between counties with the intention of establishing a foundation for

coordinated emergency response efforts. Please reference pages 26-27 *Mutual Aid Region* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

D-CALFRESH RESPONDERS

The primary roles of D-CalFresh Responders are to ensure all D-CalFresh applications are processed within the allotted timeframe and, as important, they must take all necessary steps to ensure client access and that all human comforts are addressed while operating, whether at a county office or at an offsite application site. Create a master list with all staff that includes current contact information, job classification, and language spoken. It would be beneficial to include a map with all county offices and/or possible D-CalFresh application sites and how many staff they could accommodate.

APPLICATION SITES

Describe D-CalFresh application and issuance site selection procedures. Consider options for site location and size, as appropriate, for differences in disaster size and scope. Include any agreements in place with potential sites. If a planned D-CalFresh site is also a local CalFresh office, include plan for running D-CalFresh and CalFresh simultaneously. If possible, list the sites here with their address and primary functions. Please reference pages 42-44 *Application Site Selection and Set-Up* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

PROCEDURES TO REDUCE APPLICANT HARDSHIP

Describe the steps that will be taken to reduce hardship for D-CalFresh clients and existing caseload. Specifically, include provisions for security and human needs. Counties need to make every effort to reduce hardship for D-CalFresh applicants and for their existing caseload by providing eligibility services in areas close or adjacent to the affected areas. Please reference pages 47-49 *Procedures to Reduce Applicant Hardship* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

PROVISIONS FOR SERVING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) APPLICANTS

Describe how your county will provide meaningful access to D-CalFresh applicants who are LEP through the use of bilingual staff, interpreters, and translated documents. Please reference page 47 *Provisions for Serving LEP Applicants* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Describe how your county will take steps to provide reasonable accommodations to safely ensure access for vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and persons with disabilities. Please reference pages 44-46 *Measures to Ensure Access* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER (EBT) CARD STOCK

Describe the plan for securing sufficient EBT card stock as well as unique, Disaster EBT cards, when applicable. This section must also include the total number of EBT card stock your county regularly has on hand. Please reference pages 56-58 *EBT Card Stock & EBT Issuance* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

DISASTER RESPONSE TRAINING

Describe what types of trainings will be given to staff, and when. D-CalFresh trainings should, at minimum, be provided to all D-CalFresh Responders, but it is highly encouraged to include all program staff in the trainings. Please reference pages 27-28 *Pre-Disaster Training* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

Describe your public information strategy to ensure that accurate, clear information reaches disaster affected populations quickly and in languages they understand. Describe procedures to notify retailers of D-CalFresh implementation and special D-CalFresh waivers such as the allowance of hot food purchases. Please reference pages 41-42 *Public Information and Outreach* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Describe the specifics of the certification process including potential application sites, staffing, separation of eligibility and issuance, and how application sites will manage large crowds. If online applications are to be used by workers or clients, describe that process and back-up systems in place if technical issues are encountered. Please reference pages 51-52 *Interview and Certification* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

ISSUANCE PROCESS

Describe how D-CalFresh benefits will be made available within 72 hours of application (or seven days from the date of application for questionable cases) without compromising service to ongoing CalFresh caseload. Each county must be prepared to issue D-CalFresh benefits through their respective consortia and the state's EBT system. Please reference pages 53-54 *D-CalFresh Issuance* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

SYSTEMS AND EBT PRINTER CONTINGENCIES

Describe your county's contingency plan and alternative procedures for when your systems and/or EBT printers fail or go offline. Additionally, describe how your county

will prepare and act when an EBT printer fails, especially if operating at application sites not located at county offices.

SECURITY AND FRAUD PREVENTION PLAN

Describe special procedures for handling applications submitted by county employees, questionable applications, and a screening process to check all households for duplicate participation. Please reference pages 58-60 *Fraud and Prevention* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.

DAILY REPORTING

Describe how staff will meet the daily reporting requirements and detail the methods that your county will use to ensure all the appropriate data is included and submitted on a timely basis. Please reference page 64 *Daily Reporting During D-CalFresh* section in the CalFresh Emergency Response Handbook for more information.