

September 20, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER**

This All County Welfare Directors Letter provides guidance to County Welfare Departments on the issuance of October 2023 CalFresh benefits.



KIM JOHNSON  
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • [www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov)



GAVIN NEWSOM  
GOVERNOR

September 20, 2023

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

FROM: ALEXIS FERNÁNDEZ GARCIA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT & EMPOWERMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND CALFRESH:  
UPDATES TO THE ISSUANCE OF OCTOBER BENEFITS

REFERENCE: [ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER DATED  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2023;](#)  
[UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM –  
IMPROVEMENTS TO FEDERAL FINANCIAL ACCOUNT MEMO](#)

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) recently released an [All County Welfare Directors Letter \(ACWDL\) on September 15, 2023](#) providing County Welfare Departments (CWDs) guidance and outlining a contingency plan on the early issuance of October 2023 CalFresh benefits due to the possible Federal government shutdown.

On September 18, 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided new information regarding [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) – Improvements to Federal Financial Accounting](#), which impacts USDA's internal accounting practices. USDA is changing the point at which it "obligates" (that is, commits to pay) SNAP benefit funds. USDA will now obligate SNAP benefit funds in advance of the benefit month during which benefits are loaded onto household cards. As a result, SNAP benefit funds for October 2023 will be obligated this month, September 2023, using funds appropriated by Congress for Federal Fiscal Year 2023. This means that California **does not** need to issue CalFresh benefits early for the month of October 2023, even if there is a Federal government shutdown. Customers will receive their October benefits without disruption. Counties must continue all CalFresh operations as usual.

This guidance applies to the issuance of October 2023 CalFresh benefits. The CDSS will issue guidance related to any future possible Federal government shutdown and the impact on CalFresh benefits as needed.

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

Attachment



Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

1320 Braddock Place  
Alexandria, VA  
22314

DATE: September 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) –  
Improvements to Federal Financial Accounting

TO: All SNAP State Agencies  
All Regions

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) wants to extend our continued appreciation to States for their work to serve those eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This communication is intended to provide States with information about a change in the FNS accounting process for obligating SNAP funds.

USDA has been working to improve SNAP's financial accounting with respect to when we recognize and record the point of obligation and it is making this update effective this month. The change aligns with the Department's commitment to ensuring that program participants receive the nutrition assistance that they are entitled to without disruption and USDA's commitment to process improvement.

We have received a number of questions about the process for benefits for the month of October 2023. The change to USDA's financial accounting does not affect state processes for issuing October benefits and States should send their issuance files to their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) vendors on the normal schedule for issuance of October benefits.

This update will not be disruptive to households, States, or retailers. SNAP households will not experience any change in how they receive their monthly benefits. State client-facing operations and retailers, likewise, will not experience a change. The only changes required for implementation in September 2023 are on Federal financial management processes.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of low-income Americans in administering this critical nutrition assistance program. State agencies with questions should contact their respective Regional Office representatives.

**RONALD  
WARD**

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RONALD WARD  
Date: 2023.09.18  
11:32:07 -04'00'

Cathy Buhrig  
Associate Administrator  
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

**DAVID  
BURR**

Digitally signed by DAVID  
BURR  
Date: 2023.09.18  
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David Burr  
Chief Financial Officer  
Financial Management