

February 10, 2025

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

The purpose of this letter is to provide County Health and Human Service Agencies with guidance to implement the provisions of Executive Order N-17-25 signed by Governor Newsom on February 4, 2025, pertaining to California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and a recently approved CalFresh waiver, both related to reporting flexibilities for families directly impacted by the wildfires in Los Angeles County.



JENNIFER TROIA
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

February 10, 2025

ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS LETTER

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

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

SUBJECT: CALFRESH AND CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND
RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CALWORKS) REPORTING
FLEXIBILITIES IN RESPONSE TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY
WILDFIRES

REFERENCE: [EXECUTIVE ORDER N-17-25 SIGNED FEBURARY 4, 2025;](#)
[TITLE 45, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(CFR\) SECTION](#)
[264.1, AND](#)
[WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTION 11265,](#)
[WIC SECTION 11265.1, AND WIC SECTION 11454.](#)

The purpose of this All County Welfare Directors Letter is to provide County Health and Human Service Agencies (HHSAs) with guidance to implement the provisions of [Executive Order N-17-25](#) signed by Governor Newsom on February 4, 2025, pertaining to California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and a recently approved CalFresh waiver, both related to reporting flexibilities for families directly impacted by the wildfires in Los Angeles County.

Background

Beginning Tuesday, January 7, 2025, multiple wildfires ignited across Los Angeles County (County). The fires prompted mandatory evacuation orders for hundreds of thousands of households throughout the County. The severe wildfires have resulted in road and school closures, left thousands without power, and damaged vital infrastructure.

On Tuesday, January 7, 2025, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a [State of Emergency](#) for the County due to the Palisades Fire. On Tuesday, January 7, 2025, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued a [Fire Management Assistance Declaration](#) for the County due to the Palisades Fire and a second [Fire Management Assistance Declaration](#) due to the Eaton Fire. On Wednesday, January 8, 2025, FEMA issued a third [Fire Management Assistance Declaration](#) for the County due to the Hurst Fire. On Wednesday, January 8, 2025, the county was issued a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration with Individual Assistance ([FEMA-4856-DR](#)) for the severe wildfires that began on January 7, 2025. On Monday, January 27, 2025, the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved Disaster SNAP operations in 58 ZIP codes within the County.

CalFresh and CalWORKs Reporting Flexibilities

In response to the Los Angeles County wildfires and to ensure that impacted residents can continue meeting their basic needs and maintain their CalWORKs benefits, Executive Order N-17-25 provides authority for the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to waive the state requirement to submit a periodic report (i.e., SAR 7) or redetermination for the months of January, February, March, and April 2025 and extend certification periods by six months, contingent on federal approval of a corresponding CalFresh waiver.

On February 4th, 2025, CDSS received approval from the FNS to waive federal regulations that require the submission of a periodic report and recertification for the months of January, February, and March 2025 and that allows the State to provide impacted households whose recertification requirement has been waived a new six-month certification period.

Importantly, the CalFresh waiver only provides authority to apply these flexibilities for periodic reports and recertifications due in the months of January, February, and March 2025. Therefore, CalWORKs will align with the federally approved period for CalFresh; April 2025 will not be included.

The guidance outlined below is effective immediately for both CalFresh and CalWORKs and applies only to families impacted by the wildfires, defined as those who reside in the following ZIP codes within Los Angeles County:

Wildfire	Eligible ZIP Codes
Eaton	91104, 91206, 91103, 91016, 91010, 91001, 91214, 91101, 91107, 91006, 91208, 91020, 91105, 91011, 91024, 91008, 91007, 91042, and 91106
Hughes	91334, 91350, 91355, 91384, 91390, 93532, and 93536
Hurst	91342, 91344, 91321, 91326, 91381, and 91311

Wildfire	Eligible ZIP Codes
Palisades	90049, 91302, 91301, 90290, 90272, 90265, 90402, 90073, 90077, 90095, 90401, 90403, 90404, 91316, 91356, 91367, 91403, 91436, and 91340

Throughout the remainder of this letter, the term 'household' is used in reference to both a CalFresh household and CalWORKs assistance unit. Similarly, the term 'recertification' is used in reference to both a CalFresh recertification and CalWORKs redetermination, the term 'certification period' is used in reference to a CalFresh certification period and a CalWORKs payment period, and the term 'benefit' is used in reference to a CalFresh allotment and a CalWORKs grant.

January, February, and March CalFresh and CalWORKs SAR 7s

The January, February and March SAR 7 reporting requirement has been waived for ongoing households in qualifying ZIP codes. This applies regardless of the length of their original certification period, including CalFresh households with a 24- or 36-month certification period. Because of the timing of waiver approval, this waiver **does not** apply to impacted households who have completed their SAR 7 in January and were appropriately found to be ineligible for CalFresh or CalWORKs.

Pending discontinuances for SAR 7s currently having a "Not received/Sent" or "Incomplete" status for January will be stopped and continuing benefits for February will be issued as soon as possible. The January benefit amount will continue through the remainder of the certification period unless the household reports voluntary or mandatory changes resulting in a benefit change, including but not limited to, a mandatory report of monthly gross income exceeding the Income Reporting Threshold (IRT) or a voluntary report of a decrease in income.

The SAR 7 reporting requirement will be waived for all impacted households with a SAR 7 due in February and March. The benefit amount for the report month will continue through the remainder of the certification period unless the household reports voluntary or mandatory changes resulting in a benefit change, including but not limited to, a mandatory report of monthly gross income exceeding the Income Reporting Threshold (IRT) or a voluntary report of a decrease in income.

Impacted households whose January, February, or March SAR 7 is waived will complete the remainder of their originally assigned certification period. For example, a household assigned to a 12-month certification period with a January SAR 7 does not need to complete the SAR 7 but will complete their recertification as scheduled in July.

Impacted CalFresh households with a certification period length of 24 months with a January, February or March SAR 7 do not need to complete the SAR 7 but will complete the remainder of their assigned certification period as originally scheduled. This applies whether the next report is a SAR 7 or recertification. For example, a

household with no earned income assigned to a 24-month certification period with a January SAR 7 does not need to complete the SAR 7 but will complete their recertification as scheduled the following January.

January, February and March CalFresh Recertifications and CalWORKs Redeterminations

Recertifications will be treated similarly to SAR 7s. The January, February, and March recertification requirement has been waived for ongoing households in qualifying ZIP codes. Households whose recertification requirement has been waived for January, February, or March 2025 will be granted a new six-month certification period with recertification due in July, August, or September 2025, respectively. As such, their new SAR 7 will correspond with their new six-month certification period. This applies to impacted households regardless of the length of their original certification period, including households with a 24- or 36-month certification. Because of the timing of waiver approval, this waiver **does not** apply to impacted families who have completed their CalFresh or CalWORKs recertification in January and were appropriately found to be ineligible.

Discontinuances that are pending due to expired recertifications or recertifications not received and still in "Sent status", or recertifications where the packet is not received and the interview is either not completed or completed but is missing verification related to January recertifications will be stopped and continuing benefits for February will be issued as soon as possible. The January benefit amount will continue through the new certification period unless the household reports voluntary or mandatory changes resulting in a benefit change, including but not limited to, a mandatory report of monthly gross income exceeding the Income Reporting Threshold (IRT) or a voluntary report of a decrease in income.

The reporting requirement will be waived for all impacted households with a recertification due in February or March. The benefit amount for the report month will continue through the new certification period unless the household reports voluntary or mandatory changes resulting in a benefit change, including but not limited to, a mandatory report of monthly gross income exceeding the Income Reporting Threshold (IRT) or a voluntary report of a decrease in income.

For example, a household assigned to a 12-month certification period with a January recertification that has been waived will be assigned a new six-month certification period and will complete their new recertification in July. CalFresh households with a certification period length of 24 or 36 months, whose January recertification has been waived, will also be assigned a new six-month certification period and complete their new recertification in July.

Impacted CalFresh households that are granted a new six-month certification period must be informed of their new six-month certification period and new recertification due date.

When the impacted family completes the new recertification in July, August, or September and if the household is determined eligible for CalWORKs and/or CalFresh, they will be assigned a certification period length based on their household type, as normal.

Transitional CalFresh Households

The guidance outlined above also applies to Transitional CalFresh (TCF) households. A TCF household whose recertification is due in January, February, or March will have their recertification waived and will be assigned a new six-month certification period. The household will be issued the January, February, or March benefit amount in February, March, or April, accordingly and will continue through the remainder of the new six-month certification period, unless the household reports voluntary or mandatory changes resulting in a benefit change and if otherwise eligible.

Client Communication

For mass communications, the County may consider a message such as the following:

Attention: CalFresh or CalWORKs Recipients Impacted by the Wildfires

If your paperwork (SAR 7 or renewal) is due in January, February, or March of 2025, you do not need to complete it and your CalFresh and/or CalWORKs will continue for 6 months. If something happened because of the fire that should make your benefits higher, call the county.

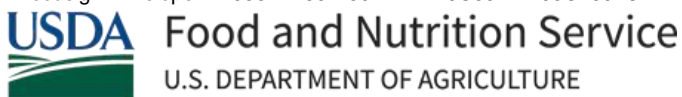
Even with these extra months, you still need to tell the county if your gross monthly income goes over your family's Income Reporting Threshold (IRT). If your income has gone down, benefits may go up. Call the county to find out your IRT, if your income went down, or if you have any questions.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance regarding the information in this letter, contact:

For CalWORKs, the Early Engagement and Eligibility Bureau at CWEligibilityBureau@dss.ca.gov.

For CalFresh, the CalFresh Policy Bureau at CalFreshPolicy@dss.ca.gov.

Attachment



February 4, 2025

Alexis Fernández García
Deputy Director
Family Engagement and Empowerment Division
California Department of Social Services
744 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Deputy Director Fernández García,

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approves the California Department of Social Services' (DSS) request to extend certification periods and waive periodic reporting requirements for ongoing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households in the following ZIP codes in Los Angeles County: 00018, 90049, 90073, 90077, 90095, 90265, 90272, 90290, 90401, 90402, 90403, 90404, 91001, 91006, 91007, 91008, 91010, 91011, 91016, 91020, 91024, 91042, 91101, 91103, 91104, 91105, 91106, 91107, 91206, 91208, 91214, 91301, 91302, 91311, 91316, 91321, 91326, 91334, 91340, 91342, 91344, 91350, 91355, 91356, 91367, 91381, 91384, 91390, 91403, 91436, 93015, 93040, 93225, 93243, 93532, and 93536.

On January 8, 2025, President Joseph R. Biden issued a major disaster declaration designating Los Angeles County as eligible for Federal individual assistance due to the wildfires and straight-line winds that began on January 7, 2025.

FNS approves DSS' request to waive the certification provisions of section 3(f) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.20(f)(5). DSS may extend certification periods in the above ZIP codes in Los Angeles County scheduled to expire in January, February and March 2025 for up to 6 months.

FNS also approves DSS' request to waive the periodic reporting requirements of section (6)(c)(1)(D)(i) of the Act, and SNAP regulations at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(1) and 7 CFR 273.12(a)(5)(iii)(B) for ongoing households in the above ZIP codes in Los Angeles County.

FNS approves this request due to the adverse impact that wildfires and straight-line winds have caused to both ongoing households and program operations throughout Los Angeles County. This waiver will ensure ongoing households continue to receive critical nutrition assistance, allow DSS to sustain timely processing for ongoing households and new applicants, and alleviate the administrative burden on DSS as it plans to operate a Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Conditions of Approval

FNS approves DSS' request subject to the following conditions:

- DSS must notify households impacted by this approval and continue to comply with the notice requirements at 7 CFR 273.10(f)(5)
- SNAP Quality Control will review the terms of this waiver in accordance with FNS Handbook 310
- DSS will submit a request to FNS for approval if it wishes to extend this waiver beyond the initial period

Authority

FNS approves this waiver under the authority of section 412 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and section 5(h) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Sasha Gersten-Paal
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Sasha Gersten-Paal
Director
Program Development Division
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program