

## **California Revised Request to Provide Emergency Allotments to SNAP Households**

1. **Type of Request:** Initial
2. **Primary Citation:** Families First Coronavirus Response Act
3. **State:** California
4. **Proposed Alternative Procedures:** California proposes to provide additional emergency allotments of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to households not currently receiving the maximum benefit allotment to address temporary food needs that have arisen as a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These emergency allotments will raise each household's regular monthly SNAP allotment to the maximum allowable allotment based on household size. California proposes to provide these additional emergency allotments to qualifying SNAP households for two months (March and April 2020), with the option to extend contingent upon ongoing need.

### *Justification*

California has experienced a rapid increase in the spread of COVID-19. As the number of California coronavirus cases tops 3,000, extensive public health warnings have been issued statewide to reduce exposure, including orders to implement social distancing when conducting essential business, eliminate group gatherings, and to require home isolation for vulnerable populations, including all people aged 65 years of age or older. On March 19, the Governor of California issued a statewide "stay-at-home" order that is in effect until further notice. These restrictions may be in place for weeks and months to come.

Many non-essential businesses have temporarily closed or reduced staffing, resulting in significant and immediate job loss across the state. The economic impacts of COVID-19 have hit hourly workers and the self-employed especially hard as working from home is not an option for many. Many workers will not continue to get paid as demand slows, businesses close, shifts are canceled, and workers are laid off. For instance, hourly paid employees, who make up over half of all wage and salary workers, constitute more than two-thirds of the retail trade and leisure and hospitality workforce nationwide, which are among those hardest hit by the current economic crisis. Many SNAP recipients have lost essential earned income and many Californians, who were not previously SNAP-eligible, are now turning to SNAP for critical food assistance.

Additional emergency allotments will relieve pressure on the emergency food network, which is already shouldering the burden of the immediate response to COVID-19 and will allow SNAP households not already at the maximum allotment to keep sufficient food on hand per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.

### *Issuance*

For the month of March, emergency SNAP allotments will be provided to all qualifying SNAP households via an overnight batch process with staggered client availability no later than approximately April 10, 2020 (based on timely approval). For the month of April, with staggered client availability approximately no later than May 10, 2020.

All emergency allotments will be issued on the household's EBT card and California will provide the emergency allotment(s) without requiring individual household contact.

The state will employ mass change informing practices, including communication that the emergency allotments will be issued for up to two months, via mass text messaging, robocalling, social media, client facing websites, pre-recorded messages on Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems, and other methods as available on a county-by-county basis. Should additional months be approved during the public health emergency, California will provide subsequent mass change notice at that time.

California will complete the FNS-292 on a timely basis in accordance with requirements, as well as all other normally recurring SNAP reports. In addition, California will submit a preliminary report to FNS with the following information for the entire state when the monthly emergency allotments have been issued:

- The total value of the emergency allotments issued
- The number of households issued an emergency allotment

### **5. Affected Caseload**

One month estimates for existing SNAP households under these procedures:

Total Number of SNAP Households: 2,176,109

Total Number of SNAP Persons: 4,075,962

Total Value of Proposed Emergency Allotments: \$253,647,115 (per month)

Number of months requested: 2

### **6. Anticipated Implementation Date: April 2020**

### **7. Signature and Title of Requesting State Agency Official:**



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**8. Date of Request:** March 27, 2020