



COVID-19 Emergency Allotment for CalFresh Recipients

April 3, 2020

In April, CalFresh recipients will receive an Emergency Allotment (EA) on their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Card. This benefit was authorized by [House Resolution 6201](#) – The Families First Act signed into law on March 18, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

There will be two EA's issued; one on April 12 and one on May 10. The first EA will be for any household that received CalFresh in March and the second EA for any household that received CalFresh in April.

The amount of the EA will vary by household and maybe even by month. This is because the purpose of the EA is to bring the total amount of the household's benefit to the maximum benefit allowed under federal regulation (See the chart below).

SNAP Benefits by Household Size

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Benefit, Fiscal Year 2020
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1,018
8	\$1,164
Each additional person	\$146

The value of the EA for each household is determined by subtracting the amount of CalFresh benefits the household is eligible to receive from the maximum benefit amount for eligible recipients in the household.

For example:

In March and April, a household of one is normally eligible to receive \$100 in regular CalFresh benefits. The maximum benefit amount for a household of one is \$194. This household will receive a \$94 EA on April 11 and a \$94 EA on May 10. This will bring the household total monthly benefit to the maximum for a single-person household, \$194.

CalFresh recipients will not need to take any action in order to receive their EA. This benefit will be automatically loaded to their EBT account. CalFresh applicants are encouraged to submit their applications quickly so that they, too, can be determined eligible in April and receive an EA for that month.

Background: The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) submitted a request to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to provide emergency allotments to SNAP Households in California and [was approved on March 30, 2020](#). An All County Welfare Directors Letter, once issued, will be available on the CDSS Website at: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/letters-regulations/letters-and-notices/county-letters/2020>

Questions and Answers

Q. This help is only offered for households not already receiving the maximum CalFresh benefit amount. Will there be an EA issued for those households?

A. No. CDSS submitted an initial request on March 23, 2020, that would have provided a flat EA for these households, which appeared to be allowed by the Families First Act, but the USDA denied that request. Following the denial of their initial request to secure assistance for households already receiving the maximum benefit amount CDSS submitted a revised request which was approved. However, CDSS maintains that the Act authorizes payments more broadly than what was interpreted by FNS.

Q. Will CalFresh applicants receive an EA if they haven't yet been approved for benefits?

A. At this time, only a household approved to receive CalFresh benefits in March or April will receive an EA.

Q. Will the EA benefit calculation be based on how many people are part of the CalFresh applicant household, even if some are not eligible for CalFresh benefits?

A. No. Only members of the household who are eligible for CalFresh benefits will be considered when determining the value of the EA.

Q. Will recipients of the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) receive an EA?

A. Yes, they'll also receive an EA payment resourced with state funds.

Q. Will Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients who receive a Supplemental Nutrition Benefits (SNB) or Temporary Nutrition Benefit (TNB) Benefits receive an EA?

A. Only SSI recipients who receive CalFresh and SNB benefits will receive an EA. This is because SSI recipients receiving TNB benefits cannot receive CalFresh.

For more information about our Pandemic COVID-19 Advocacy, contact us:

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California Food Policy Advocates: www.cfpa.net or contact: Jared Call at jared@cfpa.net

County Welfare Directors Association of California: www.cwda.org or contact: Cathy Senderling-McDonald at csend@cwda.org

Western Center on Law and Poverty's Pandemic Advocacy: www.wclp.org, or contact Jessica Bartholow at jbartholow@wclp.org.