

LA County Department of Public Social Services

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) During the Coronavirus Pandemic

General Questions

1. What do I have to do to prevent the termination of my CalFresh, CalWORKs, General Relief, Refugee Cash Assistance or Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic?

If you have an active case with DPSS for any program, you do not have to submit a SAR-7, QR-7 or annual recertification in March, April or May 2020. You do not need to call the office as your benefits will not be discontinued. The department will notify you when the recertification is required. Your benefits will continue at the prior level unless you have a mandatory report such as income over the Income Reporting Threshold or a loss in income that would result in supplemental benefits.

2. Does this mean that I do not need to submit a SAR-7 or recertification packet?

If your SAR-7 or renewal date is due in March, April or May 2020, you do not need to submit as your benefits will continue without any interruption.

3. What happens if I did not submit my February SAR-7/QR-7?

If your Report Month was January and your SAR-7 was due in February, your case is discontinued; therefore, you must reapply for benefits. If your Report Month was February and your SAR-7 was due in March, then you are exempt from having to submit a SAR-7 in March. The Governor's Executive Order only waived SAR-7s due in the months of March, April and May 2020.

4. What if my case is currently terminated?

CalFresh and CalWORKs cases that are terminated as a result of a SAR-7 report or recertification due in the months of March, April or May 2020 will be reopened. If you do not receive your benefits by your pickup date, contact the Customer Service Center at 1-866-613-3777, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

5. I lost my EBT card, how do I get a replacement card?

Call the Customer Service Center at 1-866-613-3777, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to request a new card. If you are homeless, your new card can be mailed to a temporary address or you will be given an appointment to pick up your card at your nearest DPSS district office.

To register your new EBT card, please contact the EBT Customer Service line at (877) 328-9677 for assistance.

6. What if I lost income, can I report the change to increase my benefits?

Yes. Simply call the Customer Service Center and report your loss of income and EW will re-evaluate your case.

7. What is the waiting period once my application has been submitted for me to hear back on the status of my application?

The department has up to 30 days to process your application. However, if a household is eligible to Expedited Services CalFresh benefits or CalWORKs Immediate Need, your case may be approved much sooner.

CalFresh

1. How will a stimulus payment affect my CalFresh case?

The one-time stimulus payment will not impact your CalFresh case as it is not considered income.

2. If I get unemployment will it impact my CalFresh case?

Yes, unemployment is considered as income and will impact your CalFresh case.

3. I received a CalFresh recertification packet for the month of April. Do I need to submit the packet, and will my benefits be discontinued?

No, you do not need to submit the CalFresh recertification packet. These packets were mailed out before we received State instructions to waive this requirement. You will continue to get your benefits for the months of April through May 2020.

4. I'm having trouble applying for benefits, what should I do?

You may contact our Customer Service Center at (866) 613-3777, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

5. Will CalFresh participants receive any additional CalFresh benefits?

Yes. Active CalFresh households will receive two emergency payments automatically issued directly to their EBT card in the months of April and May 2020. Households will have their CalFresh benefits increased to the maximum benefit amount for their household size. The March increase will be issued on April 12, 2020; and the April benefit will be issued on May 10, 2020.

6. Will the emergency payment be based on how many people are part of the CalFresh applicant household, even if some are not eligible for CalFresh benefits?

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

7. What type of CalFresh recipient will receive an emergency payment?

The emergency payment is only for regular CalFresh cases. Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) program recipients are not receiving CalFresh; therefore, they will not receive an emergency payment.

CalWORKs

1. How can CalWORKs participants apply for homeless benefits?

Call the Customer Service Center at 1-866-613-3777 Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to apply for homeless benefits. The representative will initiate a request for the Eligibility Worker to contact you by phone regarding your request.

The Eligibility Worker will complete the application for homeless benefits on your behalf, over the phone. Be sure to provide the Customer Service Representative with a good phone number where you can be reached.

2. Is DPSS conducting Home Visits for CalWORKs customers?

Home visits are not being conducted/required to receive CalWORKs benefits. You will be contacted by phone if information is needed to determine your eligibility.

General Relief

1. Will time limits for GR be suspended?

GR benefits will not terminate for time limits during the months of March, April or May 2020.

2. Will GR customers and SSI recipients obtain additional dollars as a result of the stimulus package?

We are not aware of any stimulus payments allocated to these benefit programs.

3. Will GR unemployable status be automatically continued?

No. Currently there is no automated extension for this status. If your unemployability status will expire soon, and you have difficulty obtaining the required documentation for extension, please contact our Customer Service Center at (866) 613-3777.

4. Why were my General Relief benefits terminated when I received them for 9 out of 12 months?

GR Benefits that were terminated for “time limits” effective March, April and May 2020 will be rescinded.

Immigration

1. What assistance, if any, is being offered to those undocumented parents who can no longer provide for their kids because of job loss?

You can apply for CalWORKs (cash assistance) and CalFresh (food benefits) if at least one of the children is a U.S. citizen or has an eligible immigration status.

You can apply online by visiting the Your Benefits Now (YBN) website at www.dpss.lacounty.gov and click on the YBN logo. You can also call the Customer Service Center (CSC) at (866) 613-3777, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to apply.

If you are already receiving CW and/or CF, call the CSC to report the loss in income to have your benefits recalculated to potentially receive supplemental benefits.

Medi-Cal

1. How will a stimulus payment effect my Medi-Cal case?

At this time, we do not know how this income will be treated. We are awaiting guidance from the Department of Health Care Services.

2. What should I do if I receive health insurance through Covered California, but I am unable to make payments as my income has decreased. Can I apply for Medi-Cal?

You can report your change of income through your Covered California account <https://www.coveredca.com/members/creating-an-online-account/>. If you no longer qualify for health insurance coverage through Covered California, your case will automatically be transferred to DPSS where an eligibility evaluation will be conducted for Medi-Cal.

3. If I receive a Medi-Cal renewal packet in the months of March, April or May 2020, do I need to mail it in as I understand that benefits will not be terminated during this 90-day period?

Yes, please submit your renewal packet so that when the suspension period is lifted, your benefits will not be discontinued. Once the suspension period is lifted, if you have not submitted your renewal packet, your benefits will be terminated.

In Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

1. Will LA County be providing virtual IHSS orientations?

LA County is in the process of making the provider orientation videos available to new providers on-line.

2. Is DPSS conducting Home Visits for IHSS Consumers?

The State has temporarily waived the required annual home visit for current IHSS consumers. During this waiver period, Social Workers (SW) will complete annual reassessments by telephone interview. In addition, if the consumer is not receiving CalFresh benefits, the SW will ask the consumers if they need assistance applying for CalFresh.

The State has not waived the home visit for new consumers applying for IHSS services. For new consumers, the SW will obtain as much information via telephone and schedule a home visit.

3. If my assessment is not conducted on time, will my services be discontinued?

No, services will not be discontinued if the reassessment interview is not conducted by the end of the reassessment month. The State has delayed all negative action through June 2020. Social Workers are conducting reassessments by telephone. The IHSS Helpline agents are available to assist Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at (888) 822-9622.