



CDSS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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GOVERNOR

August 6, 2014

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 14-49

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CALFRESH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS

SUBJECT: CALFRESH RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM (RMP) FOR THE HOMELESS, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

REFERENCE: 7 USC 2012(k); 7 CFR 274.7; 7 CFR 278.1; MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (MPP) 63-102(e)(2)(H)(3); ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICES I-31-04, I-13-07 AND I-71-11

The purpose of this letter is to describe the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) expectations for County Welfare Departments (CWDs) that have elected to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP). The RMP is an optional county program that enables homeless, disabled and elderly CalFresh households to use CalFresh benefits to purchase meals at participating restaurants. This federal option has been available to CWDs since 2003. Currently, Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Luis Obispo, San Diego, and San Mateo counties have been approved by CDSS for the RMP.

This letter also is intended to remind CWDs of the option to participate in the RMP. Interested counties should submit a proposal requesting approval to implement the RMP as described in All County Information Notice I-31-04. The main component of the proposal is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that details the obligations of both the county and the restaurant.

General CWD RMP responsibilities are found in MPP 63-102(e)(2)(H)(3) and include:

- Certifying homeless, elderly and disabled recipients of CalFresh as eligible to purchase low cost meals with CalFresh benefits in restaurants which have entered into MOU's with the county for this purpose.
- Identifying households eligible to participate in the program for the use of CalFresh benefits at authorized restaurants.
- Informing those recipients of the names and addresses of participating restaurants.

- Ensuring that the RMP Indicator Code programmed into the county consortium system will only be applied to RMP eligible Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cardholders.

The following are CDSS' expectations intended to provide uniform policies and procedures for those CWDs that have opted to participate in the RMP in order to better serve CalFresh recipients:

1. Develop a process for automatically identifying the RMP-eligible population in each participating county. Upon application or recertification for CalFresh, each household should be evaluated to determine if the household is RMP-eligible. The Statewide Automated Welfare Systems must be programmed to automatically identify RMP-eligible participants and applicants who meet RMP eligibility requirements (homelessness, disabled, or elderly) and to automatically code that individual's EBT card for RMP use. This process would also have to include removing a recipient and decoding their EBT card when RMP eligibility no longer exists (i.e., termination of a disability or a household no longer being considered homeless). Necessary automation changes should be made as soon as possible but no later than April 1, 2015.
2. Provide training to staff about the RMP. This training should stress that staff evaluate a recipient's RMP eligible status at intake, at recertification and when the CWD becomes aware of a change in the household's circumstances that would trigger RMP-eligibility.
3. Ensuring that applicants and recipients are made aware of the RMP at intake and recertification.
4. Provide households with a list of participating restaurants within the county and a list of other participating RMP counties. .

In 2012, CDSS surveyed participating RMP counties as to how recipients were identified for RMP. Of those CWDs surveyed, many were already taking the necessary steps to identify RMP-eligible households and to increase RMP awareness. All CWDs that have been approved for the RMP are encouraged to share implementation strategies, identification processes, RMP staff education, and recipient outreach efforts.

If you have any questions regarding RMP policy, please contact Eden-Marie Eulingborough at (916) 654-2236 or via e-mail at eden-marie.eulingborough@dss.ca.gov. If you have any questions regarding EBT, please contact Dianne Padilla-Bates at (916) 654-1396 or via e-mail at Dianne.Padilla-Bates@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

LINDA PATTERSON, Chief
CalFresh Branch