

UPDATED INFORMATIVE DIGEST

Assembly Bill (AB) 6 replaces the current Quarterly Reporting/Prospective Budgeting (QR/PB) system with a Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) system in CalFresh and California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs). The bill mandates that the SAR be implemented as soon as April 1, 2013 and no later than October 1, 2013. CalFresh is California's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This regulation package only amends the CalFresh regulations.

AB 444 (Chapter 1022, Statutes of 2002) replaces the Monthly Reporting/Retrospective Budgeting (MR/RB) with a QR/PB System in the CalFresh and CalWORKs programs effective in 2004. AB 444 required QR/PB to be adopted in the CalFresh program to the extent permitted by federal law, regulations, waivers and directives and considering cost-effectiveness and compatibility between the two programs. Since the implementation of QR/PB in CalWORKs and CalFresh, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has been encouraging California to move towards a simplified, six-month reporting system.

AB 6, (Chapter 501, Statutes of 2011) mandates that CalWORKs and CalFresh implement the SAR in a cost-effective manner that promotes compatibility between the two programs. The FNS will not allow the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to require a second SAR in addition to the annual recertification of eligibility in the CalFresh program. Consequently, CDSS has determined that rather than requiring two SARs in addition to the annual redetermination of eligibility, the annual redetermination/recertification will take the place of the second SAR. This change also reduces the reporting burden on recipients and reduces the administrative burden on county workers by not mandating duplicative reporting requirements.

In order to more closely align the treatment of income under federal SNAP prospective budgeting rules (as indicated in AB 6), recipients will no longer have to estimate their income for each month of the SAR Payment Period in order for their eligibility worker to average that income over the period. Instead, a monthly income amount will be determined for the SAR Payment Period based only on current income and reasonably anticipated income changes. This policy change aligns CalWORKs with the federal SNAP prospective budgeting rules, will simplify the process of reasonably anticipating income for both recipients and county workers and will alleviate one of the factors that has been found to be the most confusing and error-prone under QR.

In addition to the SAR provisions of AB 6, this regulation package also implements the program name change of Food Stamps to CalFresh in Welfare & Institutions Code section 18900.1 as added by AB 433 (Chapter 625, Statutes of 2008).

This regulation package also contains numerous clean-up and technical changes, including repealing outdated (Monthly Reporting (MR) regulations and correcting outdated terms and references.

The benefits anticipated from this regulatory action include simplifying the reporting responsibilities for both CalFresh recipients and county eligibility workers.

The Department finds that these proposed regulations are compatible and consistent with the intent of the Legislature in adopting AB 6 and AB 433, as well as with existing federal and state regulations.

A public hearing was held on February 11, 2015 and no testimony was received.