



# Addendum #1. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

## Legislative Issues

### Board Strategic Priority:

*Ensure Fiscal Responsibility*

### Issue:

Ensure that all low-income residents of San Joaquin County can continue to access CalFresh benefits, known at the federal level as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

### Legislative Platform:

Support the proposed rule change by the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) to revise Categorical Eligibility in SNAP. The County is supportive of measured work requirements that, when balanced with assistance programs, help move able-bodied recipients towards self-sufficiency and into permanent employment. On the other elements of the rule change, the County will oppose.

### Background:

SNAP is the Federally mandated, State supervised, and County-operated entitlement program that provides monthly food benefits to assist low-income households in purchasing the food they need to maintain adequate nutritional levels. Known as CalFresh in California, 46,455 San Joaquin County households received benefits in September 2019. At the federal level, SNAP is administered by the USDA-Food and Nutrition Service. At the State Level, California's version of SNAP is called CalFresh and is overseen by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) which is a department of the California Health and Human Services Agency.

In July 2019, the USDA proposed a rule to revise Categorical Eligibility in SNAP. The proposed rule would (1) define "benefits" for categorical eligibility to mean on-going and substantial benefits; and (2) limit the types of non-cash Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits conferring Categorical Eligibility to those that focus on subsidized employment, work support and childcare. Although this proposal would revise some of the streamlined process that California has opted into, which allows the state to deem low-income families that meet certain qualifications, such as CalWORKs participants, automatically eligible for CalFresh food assistance, the work or training component is seen as a motivation for more applications between the ages of 18 to 49 to begin the process of integrating them back into society.

CDSS estimates that about ten percent of households (somewhere between 115,000 and 195,922 households) currently receiving SNAP in California would become ineligible. Of those households that would no longer be eligible under the proposed rule, 27.6 percent include at least one elderly member and 18 percent include at least one member with a disability, and over 21 percent have at least one minor child. In

addition, without this benefit the availability of free school meals would be eliminated. If the proposed rule become law, it will significantly restrict the number of individuals in the County who will be categorically eligible for SNAP. This new rule will significantly increase the workloads and the administrative cost for the County since Eligibility Workers will have to verify all client resources to meet the resource limit requirements, but the work or training requirement may ultimately allow some of those eligible to become more self-sufficient in the long term.