

Families First Coronavirus Response Act to help families impacted by the pandemic.

This bill created a program to help eligible families receive food benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also made critical changes to give women with young children access to nutrition assistance during the pandemic. Lastly, the bill strengthened existing federal nutrition programs to help more people.

Here is an update on these two federal nutrition programs for families with children, as well as information about other food assistance programs.

Pandemic EBT

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (Pandemic EBT) benefits will be available for eligible California families soon. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals at school will get extra food benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

Pandemic EBT benefits will be issued on an EBT card (known as P-EBT) that can be used to purchase groceries for families with school children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals when school is out of session due to a pandemic. Families will get up to \$365 per eligible child on their P-EBT card to use on food and groceries.

Families with children who get CalFresh, Medi-Cal or Foster Care benefits do not need to apply. P-EBT cards will be arriving in the mail soon and most will get their P-EBT card in the mail through May.

Families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and who do not get their P-EBT card in the mail, must apply online before June 30, 2020. The online application will launch later this month.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act created the Pandemic EBT program to provide families emergency food assistance in the event of a prolonged school closure. California is among the first states to have a Pandemic EBT program approved by USDA.

For more information on Pandemic EBT, please [click here](#).

Nutrition Assistance for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal assistance program for pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and children under the

age of five. WIC continues to operate during the pandemic in order to provide important and necessary services to families.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act made critical changes to allow individuals to access WIC services without jeopardizing their health. While WIC offices remain closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all appointments and benefits are being provided by phone.

In response to WIC authorized foods being in short supply on store shelves, WIC has temporarily expanded the list of approved foods to offer a greater selection of options for families through May 31, 2020. These options include many new brands, flavors, and package sizes. You can find a full list of additional food choices [here](#).

If your income has been affected by recent events, and you are pregnant or a caretaker of a child under age five, you may qualify for WIC. This program can help you get access to healthy foods, nutrition information, breastfeeding support, and community resources.

For more information about WIC and how to enroll, please [click here](#).

CalFresh

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress strengthened the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act authorized an Emergency Allotment benefit for SNAP recipients.

Beginning last month, households that received CalFresh in March should have received an Emergency Allotment benefit on their EBT card. A second allotment will be issued this month for any household that received CalFresh in April.

Additionally, California became the first state to receive federal approval for a pilot program allowing online grocery purchases using SNAP benefits. As of last week, CalFresh households can now make purchases online.

For more information about CalFresh and EBT Online, [click here](#).

Other Food Assistance Resources

Governor Newsom announced a new program for local governments to provide restaurant delivery service to older Californians. More information is [available here](#) and sign-up details will be available soon.

Congress secured \$850 million in emergency funding to help food banks across the country. Food banks have been critical to ensuring families in San Diego do not go hungry during difficult times.

There are several food banks and food pantries around the county that provide emergency food assistance for those in crisis.

For information about food assistance resources in San Diego County, [click here](#).