

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 608**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Gordon**  
**(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Alejo)**  
**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Cristina Garcia, Maienschein, and**  
**Mark Stone)**  
**(Coauthor: Senator Hancock)**

February 24, 2015

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An act to amend Section 18911 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to CalFresh.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 608, as introduced, Gordon. CalFresh: school meals.

Existing law provides for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, under which supplemental nutrition assistance benefits allocated to the state by the federal government are distributed to eligible individuals by each county. Existing federal law requires that a child receiving benefits under SNAP be certified as eligible for free school lunches and breakfasts without further application. Existing law requires a county welfare department to compile a list of emergency food providers and make that list available upon request.

This bill would instead require a county human services agency to compile a list of emergency and supplemental food assistance providers, as specified. The bill would also require a county human services agency to inform households applying for CalFresh that if the household is certified for CalFresh, specified children in the household are income-eligible for the WIC Program and all children in the household are directly certified for the National School Lunch Program and School

Breakfast Program without further application. The bill would also require the Department of Social Services to inform all CalFresh households annually, prior to the end of the school year, about the summer meal program using information the department receives the State Department of Education and a method deemed appropriate by the department. The bill would require the department to implement these provisions by all-county letters or similar instructions beginning no later than March 1, 2016, until regulations are adopted, and would require the department to adopt regulations on or before October 1, 2017. The bill would also include a statement of legislative findings and declarations.

By increasing the duties of county human services agencies, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: yes.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (1) Over 2 million children in California live in low-income
- 4 families and are in danger of experiencing hunger.
- 5 (2) California is home to more children living in poverty than
- 6 any other state in the country.
- 7 (3) Child development experts have found that even one
- 8 incidence of hunger can impact a child's health and future academic
- 9 success.
- 10 (4) Research conducted in California has found that most
- 11 families do not apply for public assistance until they are already
- 12 experiencing hardship from unmet basic needs.
- 13 (5) Federal law requires states to directly certify children in a
- 14 CalFresh household for the National School Lunch Program and

1 state law requires all public schools, except charter schools, to  
2 serve a free or reduced-price school meal during the schoolday.

3 (6) In California, the process for a family with children to be  
4 directly certified can take up to three months and a school meal  
5 may not be received through direct certification while a CalFresh  
6 application is pending.

7 (7) During the summer months, child hunger increases with the  
8 absence of school meals and the lack of information about summer  
9 lunch programs for children.

10 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to reduce opportunities for  
11 children to go hungry by requiring increased coordination between  
12 CalFresh and child nutrition programs administered by the State  
13 Department of Education.

14 SEC. 2. Section 18911 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is  
15 amended to read:

16 18911. (a) An application and an authorization for participation  
17 in CalFresh shall be processed within a period of not more than  
18 30 days from the date of application.

19 (b) The department shall develop written information that  
20 describes the eligibility and verification requirements for expedited  
21 service, the process for applying for those benefits, and the  
22 availability of assistance in filling out the forms and gathering  
23 needed documentation.

24 (c) ~~Each A county welfare department~~ *human services agency*  
25 shall make the material developed pursuant to subdivision (b)  
26 available to ~~each~~ *an* applicant at the time the applicant initially  
27 seeks CalFresh benefits.

28 (d) ~~Each A county welfare department~~ *human services agency*  
29 shall, upon request, make available the information developed  
30 pursuant to subdivision (b) to community action agencies, legal  
31 services offices, emergency food programs, and other *community*  
32 programs.

33 (e) ~~Each county welfare department shall compile a list of~~  
34 ~~emergency food providers in the area served by the local CalFresh~~  
35 ~~office. The list shall be updated, based on information from the~~  
36 ~~food providers. The list shall be made available upon request, and,~~  
37 ~~where needed, may be used to refer individuals to emergency food~~  
38 ~~sites that may be able to provide assistance.~~

39 (e) (1) *A county human services agency shall compile a list of*  
40 *emergency and supplemental food assistance providers, including*

1 *local nutrition assistance programs authorized by Chapter II*  
2 *(commencing with Section 210.1) of Subtitle B of Title 7 of the*  
3 *Code of Federal Regulations, in the area served by the local*  
4 *CalFresh office. The list shall be updated, based on information*  
5 *the county receives from emergency and supplemental food*  
6 *assistance providers, cities, school districts, summer lunch*  
7 *providers, the State Department of Education, and the California*  
8 *Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and*  
9 *Children (WIC Program). The list shall be made available to*  
10 *households applying for CalFresh.*

11 (2) A county human services agency shall inform households  
12 applying for CalFresh that if the household is certified for  
13 CalFresh, children under five years of age in the household are  
14 income-eligible for the WIC Program, pursuant to Section 246.7  
15 of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and all children in  
16 the household are directly certified for the National School Lunch  
17 Program and the School Breakfast Program without further  
18 application, pursuant to Section 245.6 of Title 7 of the Code of  
19 Federal Regulations.

20 (f) ~~Each A county welfare department~~ human services agency  
21 shall make available to CalFresh applicants, upon request,  
22 nonpromotional information that contains addresses and phone  
23 numbers of local legal services and welfare rights organizations.

24 (g) The State Department of Social Services shall inform all  
25 CalFresh households annually, prior to the end of the school year,  
26 about the summer meal program using information the department  
27 receives from the State Department of Education and a method  
28 deemed appropriate by the department.

29 SEC. 3. Notwithstanding the rulemaking provisions of the  
30 Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with  
31 Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government  
32 Code), the department shall implement this act by all-county letters  
33 or similar instructions beginning no later than March 1, 2016, until  
34 regulations are adopted. The department shall adopt regulations  
35 implementing this act on or before October 1, 2017.

36 SEC. 4. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that  
37 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to  
38 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made

- 1 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
- 2 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

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