

FAQs about getting Cash and Food Help¹

FOOD

How can I get food help during a disaster?

There are a couple of ways to get food help during a disaster.

If you receive CalFresh:

- Even when no declaration of a disaster will happen or has happened, anyone who has lost food to a disaster or power outage of more than 4 hours can request a replacement of the food that is lost. Simply fill out the CF303 form (available in 12 languages) and give it to your county worker within 10 days of the food loss. <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/FMUForms/A-D/CF303.pdf?ver=2017-10-20-134741-470>
- When an event has resulted in many people losing food, the state can request permission from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to replace the benefit on Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards without a form signed by each person. To check with your county office to see if this has been done for your EBT card, call 1-877-847-3663 or the EBT Hotline at 1-877-328-9677.
- If the President has declared a disaster with Individual Assistance, the USDA may authorize Disaster CalFresh (disaster food stamps or D-SNAP). If you already get CalFresh (food stamps or SNAP), your household will receive the maximum benefit for the month(s) that DSNAP is approved. To learn more, go to <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/DisasterCalFresh1> or call 1-877-847-3663.
- If you have been forced to leave your home because of the disaster, you can go to any CalFresh office to get help with a lost EBT card, replacement benefits or to ask about Disaster CalFresh. To find your local CalFresh office or an office near you if you have had to leave your home, you can go to <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/food-nutrition/calfresh> or call 1-877-847-3663.

¹ Updated October 2019.

If you do not receive CalFresh:

- If the President has declared a disaster with Individual Assistance, the USDA may authorize Disaster SNAP (or DSNAP). These are SNAP benefits for people in the disaster area, even if they are not eligible for SNAP. **This includes people who are undocumented.** To learn more, go to <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/DisasterCalFresh1> or call 1-877-847-3663.
- Food Banks will have information about food help during a disaster. To locate a food bank near you, go to <http://www.cafoodbanks.org/find-food-assistance>. You may also find food assistance available through the Red Cross, the United Way, or local religious organizations. You often can find all of these groups at a DRC, if one has opened (see below).

How do I get food help after a disaster?

If you have lost income because of the disaster or you just need extra help and you already had a low-income, you may want to apply for CalFresh (also called food stamps or SNAP). To learn more, talk to a legal aid worker (see below), or go to <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/food-nutrition/calfresh>. Please note that people who are undocumented are not eligible for CalFresh, but other people in their family may be. You can apply online at <https://www.mybenefitscalwin.org/>

Often food banks offer extra help after a disaster. To locate a food bank near you, go to <http://www.cafoodbanks.org/find-food-assistance>. You may also find food assistance available through the Red Cross, the United Way, or local religious organizations. You often can find all of these groups at a DRC, if one has opened.

CASH

Where can I get cash to pay these unexpected expenses?

- If you carry insurance, you may be able to get help from your insurance company with replacing personal belongings and paying for temporary housing. Please see our FAQs on insurance.

- If the President has declared an Individual Assistance Disaster, you may be able to obtain cash benefits from FEMA. Please see our FAQs on FEMA. If there is a DRC open in your area, FEMA will be there answering questions. Please note that people who are undocumented are not eligible for FEMA benefits, BUT if there is just one member of your household who is documented, even a child, that person can claim FEMA benefits for the whole household. There are some risks involved – please see our FAQ for people who are undocumented.
- Often the Red Cross, United Way, and/or religious institutions offer cash assistance to disaster survivors. **THIS HELP IS AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE UNDOCUMENTED**, as well. If there is a DRC open, you will find these organizations there. If not, you can find Red Cross help at <https://www.redcross.org/get-help.html>, or call 211.
- You may have become eligible for CalWORKs (welfare or TANF) benefits as a result of the disaster. Generally, the family must have a pregnant person or minor child in the home and must have a low income, less than \$2,000 in resources and no car worth over \$9500. Those with higher incomes or resources will not qualify. If you appear to be eligible, you may get up to \$200 for immediate needs while your eligibility is determined. For more information on CalWORKs, go to <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/CalWORKS>.
- If you are or have become permanently disabled, you may be eligible for SSI benefits. For more information, go to https://ca.db101.org/ca/programs/income_support/ssi/faqs.htm.
- Your county may offer “General Assistance” (welfare) benefits. Go to <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/General-Assistance> or call 211 for more help.

I am on General Assistance, SSI, or CalWorks, or I receive Social Security. I had to evacuate – how will I get my check?

CalWORKs, CalFresh, and most General Assistance / General Relief is provided on an EBT Card and nothing will change about that. If your EBT card has been lost or damaged during or following a disaster, you may contact the EBT Hotline at 1-877-328-9677.

Many people receive their SSI or SSA payments on a pre-paid card. Nothing will change about that either. If you receive your SSI or SSA Payment by check, you may go to any social services agency to arrange to get your check.

If your Women, Infant and Children Supplemental Nutrition Assistance vouchers have been lost or destroyed during or following a disaster, you can contact the state W.I.C. agency to ask about replacements at 1-888-942-9675.

Where can I get help with all this?

For information on social services near you, call 211.

To get legal help, search for a legal aid provider near you using this link:

<https://lawhelpca.org/legal-directory>

Or find a local lawyer referral hotline by using this link:

<https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Public/Need-Legal-Help/Lawyer-Referral-Service>

How can I learn more about Disaster Assistance?

If the President has declared a disaster with Individual Assistance, then FEMA will open a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in the area affected by the disaster. The DRC will have tables staffed by FEMA, the Red Cross, Legal Aid, and many other groups there to help. To find out if an Individual Assistance Disaster has been declared, go to <https://www.fema.gov/disasters>. (If it only says “Fire Management Assistance,” that means the President has not declared Individual Assistance disaster. That could still happen, but has not happened yet.

If the President HAS declared an Individual Assistance disaster, go to <https://egateway.fema.gov/ESF6/DRCLocator> to find a DRC near you.²

² DLAC appreciates the hard work of Legal Aid of Sonoma County, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles (NLSLA), Western Center on Law and Poverty, and Legal Services of Northern California for this information in this sheet.