Navigate Upcoming Changes to CalFresh & Medi-Cal Benefits

NOTE:

This information is current as of **October 12, 2026.**

If this information is being reviewed after that date, please refer to the **Toolkit** for the most up-to-date information.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

The Bottom Line

1. The County is **here to help** and is being proactive to help people maintain benefits.

2. **Most people will remain eligible** by qualifying for exemptions or meeting the requirements.

3. Top priorities for customers:
   i. Ensure **contact information is updated.**
   ii. Submit requested documentation timely.

4. Federal changes are significant. Resources are available to **share clear, consistent messaging** to the community.

H.R. 1 Background

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

H.R. 1

- On July 4, 2025, House Resolution 1 (H.R. 1), also known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act”, was signed into federal law.

- The bill includes changes to the CalFresh and Medi-Cal programs that California will need to implement over the upcoming years.

CalFresh 101

- California's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Monthly supplemental food benefit that depends on household size, income, etc.
- **Almost 400,000 people are enrolled in San Diego County**
  - 29% under 18 years old
  - 21% over 65

H.R. 1 Background

Two CalFresh changes California must implement in 2026:

- Changes to eligibility for some **non-citizens**
- Reimplementation of the **Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents** (ABAWDs) time limit

SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

CalFresh

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Medi-Cal 101

- California's Medicaid program for no-cost or low-cost health insurance
- **Around 800,000 people are enrolled in San Diego County**
  - ~300,000 ACA Expansion adults
  - 33% under 18 years old
  - 11% over the age of 65

Medi-Cal

H.R. 1 Background

Several Medi-Cal changes California must implement in 2026 and 2027:

- Changes to eligibility for some **non-citizens**
- **Work requirements**
- **Six-month eligibility**
- **Retroactive coverage** limitations

Timeline of Changes

Implementation Date	Policy Change	Estimated San Diego County Impact (as of May/June 2026)
2026		
January 1, 2026	Full-scope **Medi-Cal** enrollment freeze for individuals with "Unsatisfactory Immigration Status" (UIS)	Applies to new applicants only
April 1, 2026	**CalFresh** non-citizen eligibility categories changed	13,000 customers
June 1, 2026	**CalFresh** Work Requirements will apply to "Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents" (ABAWD)	93,500 customers
October 1, 2026	Federal **changes to immigration statuses,** switching some non-citizens to State-funded, full scope Medi-Cal	43,000 customers

Timeline of Changes

Implementation Date	Policy Change	Estimated San Diego County Impact (as of May/June 2026)
2027		
January 1, 2027	Medi-Cal **Work Requirements** begin	310,000 customers
January 1, 2027	Medi-Cal **six-month eligibility** checks begin	130,000 households
January 1, 2027	Those affected by federal immigration status redefinitions switch to **Fee-for-Service** Medi-Cal	

CalFresh Changes

Application assistance is free.

Please be aware of anyone charging a fee, as any request for payment may be a scam.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

CalFresh Changes: Non-Citizens

APRIL 1, 2026

- Some non-citizens are no longer eligible to receive CalFresh benefits
  - **New CalFresh applications** received on or after April 1, 2026, will be reviewed using the new rules.
  - As of April 1, 2026, **households already receiving CalFresh** will be reviewed using the new rules at their next annual renewal.

~13,000 Impacted

Who is Still Eligible for CalFresh?

As of **April 1, 2026,** customers **are eligible** for CalFresh if they are one of the following:

- United States (US) citizen
- US National
- Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)
- Cuban or Haitian Entrant (CHE)
- Compacts of Free Association (COFA) citizen

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Who is No Longer Eligible for CalFresh?

As of April 1, 2026, these individuals are **no longer eligible:**

Asylee	**Refugee**	**Parolee (unless CHE)**	**Individual with deportation or removal withheld**
Conditional entrant	**Victim of trafficking**	**Battered non-citizen**	**Iraqis and Afghans with Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs)**
Some Afghan nationals granted parole July 31, 2021 - Sept 30, 2023	**Some Ukrainian nationals granted parole** Feb 24, 2022 - Sept 30, 2024		

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

CalFresh Changes: Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

JUNE 1, 2026

- **Work requirements** began for some adults. unless they meet an exemption
  - **New applications** will be reviewed using the new rules
  - **Households already receiving CalFresh** will be reviewed using the new rules at their next annual renewal.

- Many **exemptions** exist, including:
  - Having child(ren) under 14 in the home
  - Physically or mentally unable to work

~93,500 Impacted

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

CalFresh Work Requirements

People who may need to meet work requirements include:

- Adults 18-64
- Do not have children under 14 at home
- Are physically and mentally able to work
- Do not meet any other exemptions

Can be met by completing 20 hours/week (80 hours/month) of:

Work	Self-Employment	Training	Volunteering

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CalFresh Work Requirements

THESE RULES WILL NOT APPLY IF:

- Under 18
- Over 64
- Pregnant
- Child Under 14 in the Home
- Physically or mentally unfit to work
- Attend Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) training program at least half time
- Indian, Urban Indian, or California Indian under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA)
- Being disabled or caring for a person with a disability
- Receiving or applying for unemployment or disability benefits
- Attending school, college, or a training program at least half time
- Meeting the work requirement for CalWORKs
- Being in a drug or alcohol abuse treatment program

Medi-Cal Changes

Application assistance is free.

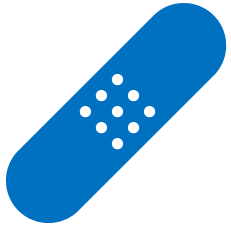
Please be aware of anyone charging a fee, as any request for payment may be a scam.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Medi-Cal Impact to San Diego County

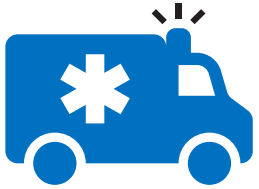
310,000

San Diego County residents will be subject to new work requirements



95,000

Residents might be unable to meet new work requirements



43,000

Residents who might only be eligible for emergency Medi-Cal due to their immigration status

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Medi-Cal Changes: Non-Citizens

January 1, 2026

- **Enrollment freeze** for adults with “Unsatisfactory Immigration Status” (UIS)

October 1, 2026

- Federal **changes to immigration statuses** go into effect, switching some non-citizens to State-funded, full scope Medi-Cal

January 1, 2027

- Grandfathered undocumented individuals and those affected by immigration status redefinitions **switch to Fee-for-Service** Medi-Cal

~67,000 IMPACTED

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Who Will Still Be Eligible for Medi-Cal?

From **October 1, 2026,** customers **remain eligible** for federally-funded, full scope Medi-Cal if they are one of the following:

- United States Citizen
- US National
- Lawful Permanent Resident
- Urban or Haitian Entrant (CHE)
- Compacts of Free Association (COFA) Citizen

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Medi-Cal Changes for Certain Groups

Starting **October 1, 2026**, these groups transition to State-funded, full-scope benefits, then Fee-for-Service **January 1, 2027:**

Asylee	**Refugee**	**Parolee (unless CHE)**	**Individual with deportation or removal withheld**
Conditional entrant	**Victim of trafficking**	**Battered non-citizen**	**Iraqis and Afghans with Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs)**
	Some Afghan nationals granted parole July 31, 2021 - Sept 30, 2023	**Some Ukrainian nationals granted parole** Feb 24, 2022 - Sept 30, 2024	

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Medi-Cal Changes

January 1, 2027

- **Work requirements** begin for some 19–64-year-olds
- **Six-month eligibility** checks will begin for some adults
- **Retroactive coverage** limited from 3 months prior to application to 1or 2 months

~310,000 IMPACTED

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Medi-Cal Work Requirements

People who may need to meet new requirements:

- Adults 19-64 years old without dependents
- Has Medi-Cal due to ACA expansion
- Do not have an exemption

Can be met by completing 20 hours/week (or 80 hours/month) of:

Work or earning at least $580/month	Education	Training	Volunteering

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Medi-Cal Work Requirements

THE REQUIREMENTS MAY NOT APPLY TO:

Under 19 **Over 64**	**Former Foster Youths**	**Pregnant** (and 1 year post partum)	**Parents with children age 0-13**
Physically or mentally unfit to work	**American Indians or Alaska Natives**	**Disabled** (physically unable to work)	**Released from jail/prison in last 90 days**

What Customers and Organizations Can Do

County Action Plan

Coordinated Countywide Strategy

Proactive Customer Service & Communication

Statewide Engagement & Advocacy

Technology, AI, and Data Solutions

Cross-Sector and Community Partnerships

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

For orgs

Call to Action for Organizations

Inform	Share information with your clients and staff: CalFresh and Medi-Cal Changes	**Create or Promote Volunteer Opportunities**	Partner with organizations that promote volunteer opportunities like HandsOn San Diego
Enrollment Support	See if your organization is a good fit for the Access CBO Line Request the Live Well on Wheels for events	**Stay Engaged**	Provide feedback & ask questions at EngageSD
Create or Promote Work Opportunities	List open job opportunities with San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) Employer Job Posting Website		Request a presentation on CalFresh/Medi-Cal changes

Check out the CalFresh/Medi-Cal Changes Toolkit

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

2-1-1 SAN DIEGO

Need help navigating Work Requirements?

Browse and connect with job training, volunteer, work resources and more.

Visit the WorkReady Hub

Call **2-1-1** or scan the QR code

211sandiego.org/work

For orgs

Does your organization offer work programs, job training, education, or volunteer programs?

Add or update your information in 211 San Diego's Resource Database so customers can be connected to your services in the *new* **WorkReady Hub**!

211SanDiego.org/Partners

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For individuals

What should I do next?

BenefitsCal Account: Update contact info	Family Resource Centers: Benefits Support (in-person support)
Visit your BenefitsCal account and make sure your contact information is up to date.	Visit a Family Resource Center.
Website	**Access Customer Service: Benefits Support (phone support)**
Visit the Changes to CalFresh and Medi-Cal webpage to view changes to benefits.	Call 1-866-262-9881.

Email: You can send documents and update your contact information by emailing DPC.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

If someone is impacted by these changes, they will be contacted or informed during their intake interview or next re-certification

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

For individuals

Look Out for Communications from the County

If you are using a County of San Diego P.O. Box, check your mail at least monthly to ensure you do not miss any communication.

Respond to communications that come from County of San Diego staff.

If you are impacted by any of these changes, you will be contacted or informed during your intake interview or next recertification

Additional Community & Food Resources

Self-Sufficiency Programs
(866) 262-9881

211sandiego.org
2-1-1

Feeding San Diego
(858) 452-3663

San Diego Food Bank
(858) 527-1419

San Diego Hunger Coalition

Catholic Charities
(619) 323-2841

Jewish Family Service
(858) 637-3210

San Diego Workforce Partnership
(619) 319-9675

HandsOn San Diego

For the most up-to-date information:

- **CalFresh –**
  CA Department of Social Services:
  www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/calfresh

- **Medi-Cal -**
  CA Department of Healthcare Services (DHCS):
  www.dhcs.ca.gov/medi-cal/updates/medi-cal-changes

AlertSanDiego Website

El Niño- Severe Weather Preparedness: Know your hazards, make a plan, and sign up for **Alert San Diego**.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

ALERT SAN DIEGO

AlertSanDiego Registration

<u>Stay informed and ready</u> by registering for emergency alerts and keeping your contact information up to date.

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ALERT SAN DIEGO

El Niño: Stay Informed & Prepared

Opt-In System: Alert San Diego

Build a Kit: Alert San Diego BuildAKit

FEMA Flood Zone Lookup

Free Sand and Bags: Sand and Sandbag Locations

Purchase flood insurance, renew flood insurance policy: Flood Insurance Providers

San Diego "Know Your Hazards“ Tool: Know Your Hazards

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ALERT SAN DIEGO

Please provide your Presentation Feedback