



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.

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

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



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.

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

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**

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

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

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.

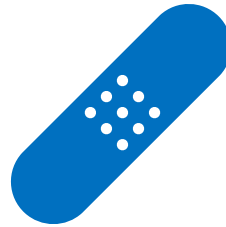
Please be aware of anyone charging a fee, as any request for payment may be a scam.

Medi-Cal Impact to San Diego County



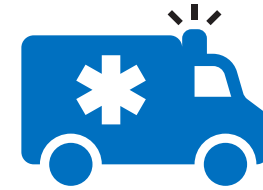
310,000

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

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

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

Uban or
Haitian Entrant
(CHE)

Compacts of
Free
Association
(COFA) Citizen



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	

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 1 or 2 months

~310,000 IMPACTED

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

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**

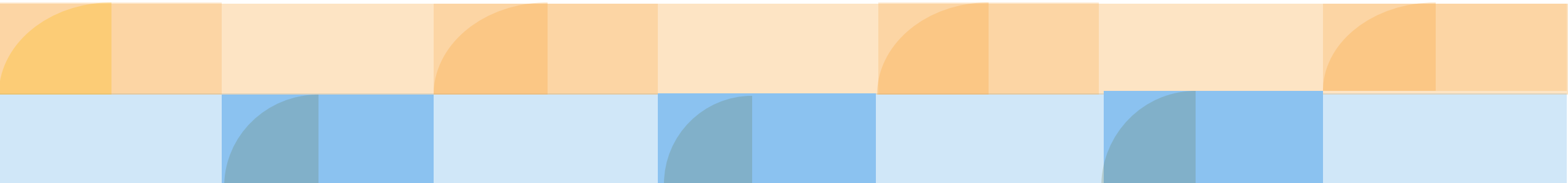
**American
Indians or
Alaska Natives**

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**

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](#)



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





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

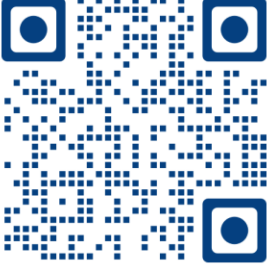
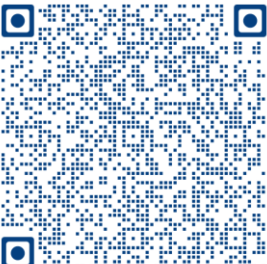
Add or update your information in 211 San Diego's Resource Database so customers can be connected to your services in the *new* **WorkReady Hub!**



211SanDiego.org/Partners

For orgs

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

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

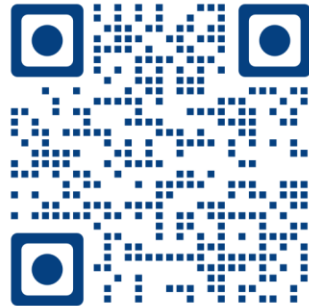
Self-Sufficiency Programs

☎ (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

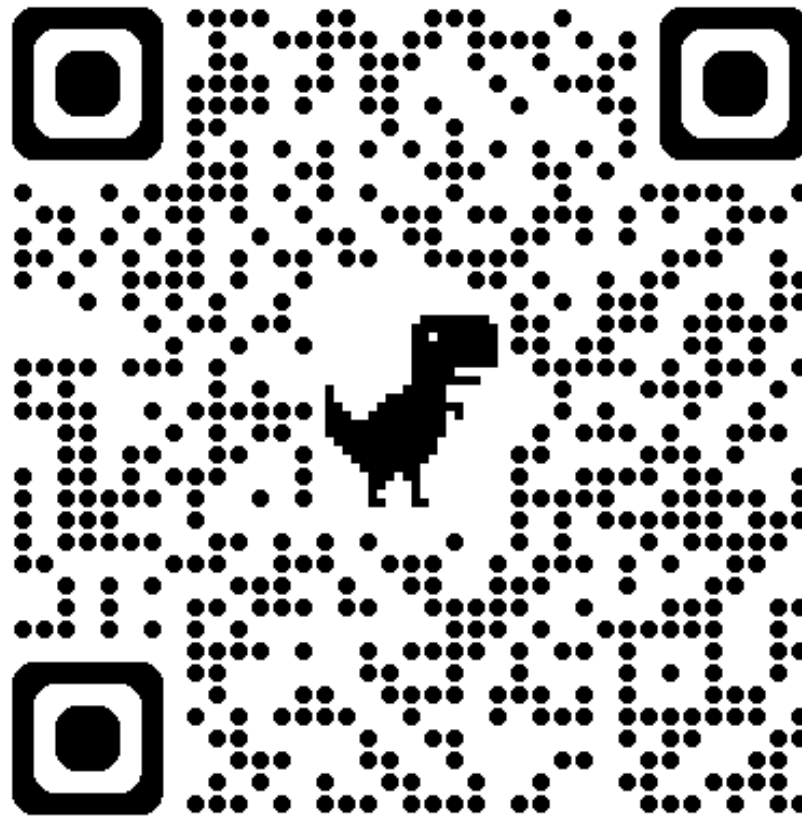


For the most up-to-date information:

- **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**.



AlertSanDiego Registration

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



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](#)





**Please provide your
Presentation Feedback**