

**County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)  
CalFresh Program Guide**

**Authorized Representatives**

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**63-113**

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**Revision Date:**

10/01/2019

**Background:**

Customers may designate an individual to act on their behalf when the head of household or their spouse is unable to apply for CalFresh. These individuals are called Authorized Representatives (AR). Refer to CFPG 63-123 for specific information about AR's of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centers (DATC) and Group Living Arrangement (GLA) situations. This section is being updated to clarify AR regulations.

**63-113.1 Authorized Representative:**

AR's are designated and authorized by the customer to act on their behalf in one or all of the following situations:

- Apply for CalFresh benefits and attend the interview
- Obtain the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card
- Use the EBT card and access the EBT benefits
- Complete required reporting (such as mid-period reporting, SAR7, voluntary reporting)
- Complete work registration forms

The AR is designated by the head of household, his or her spouse, or any responsible household member. The AR can be an excluded household member or a non-household member.

When an adult non-household member is chosen as the AR, ensure that:

- The AR is designated in writing by the head of the household, spouse, or another responsible household member and
- The AR knows relevant information about household composition, income, and resources

Verify and image the AR's identity at intake, recertification and whenever a new AR is appointed.

When an AR is applying on behalf of a household, verify the identity of both the AR and the responsible household member.

There is no limit to the number of households an AR may represent.

An AR must be an individual. An institution cannot be designated as an AR. Customers seeking assistance from community-based organizations (CBO), community agencies, residential facilities or other similar institutions must designate an individual employee of that facility as the AR.

**SSI/SSP Representative Payee**

An SSI/SSP recipient's Representative Payee for SSI/SSP benefits may also act as a CalFresh AR. The customer must designate the Representative Payee as the CalFresh AR. Do not assume that the SSI/SSP recipient's Representative Payee will be the AR for the CalFresh case. The SSI/SSP recipient may choose to have separate individuals serve as AR for the SSI/SSP Representative Payee and CalFresh AR.

**Powers of Attorney, Conservatorship and Guardianships**

Documents such as Powers of Attorneys, conservatorship and guardianships may be used to authorize a third party to apply for and/or obtain CalFresh benefits. Review each document to ensure completion and verify that the individual listed on the form is the person who is acting on behalf of the applicant or recipient. Once it has been determined that the third party has the authority to act on behalf of the applicant or recipient, the third party is not required to be designated as an AR.

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Document that the third party has the authority to act on behalf of the customer and verify the identity of both the third party and the customer.

**Designation of an AR**

Designation of the AR may be made in one of three ways:

- On the application or recertification form itself
- Using a CalFresh AR designation form
- A written statement signed by the responsible household member

Households may designate an AR anytime during the certification period. Households may designate multiple ARs to fulfill distinct roles and responsibilities. For example, the AR designated to apply for the household may be different from the AR designated to use the EBT card. The designation of the AR will remain in effect for the duration of the certification period, unless the household chooses to change the AR.

**Applying for Benefits**

Customers choosing an AR to help with their CalFresh application must:

- Enter the AR information on the application/recertification form or on the *Household Request for Authorized Representative Form*; and
- Verify the reason they are unable to apply for CalFresh for themselves

Inform the customer that the household will be responsible for any overissuance that results from incorrect information given by the AR. Request that the customers review the application and any verifications submitted by the AR.

**Alternate Cardholder (AC) for EBT Card**

Customers can designate another adult to receive an EBT card and have access to their CalFresh benefits (Alternate Cardholder/AC). The AC will receive an EBT card issued in their name and will be able to use the customer's CalFresh benefits. The AC can be the AR or could be another responsible household member. The customer may designate only one person as an AC.

Customers must designate the AC on the:

- Application/recertification form or
- *Cash Aid/Food Stamp EBT Request for A Designated Alternate Card Holder/Authorized Representative form*

Designation is not required in writing if the person designated as the AC is an eligible household member.

Refer to 63-123 for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center AR requirements and qualifications.

**Using the EBT Card**

The AC may use the EBT card to purchase food for the CalFresh household.

**63-113.2 Restrictions on who can be an AR:**

**Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centers (DATC)**

Institutions or organizations may not act as an AR. Residents of a DATC must use an AR who is employed and designated by the DATC to apply for and obtain CalFresh benefits (63-123).

**Retailers**

Employees of retailers, authorized food firms and meal service providers that are authorized to accept CalFresh, are not authorized to act as an AR unless the county determines that no one else can serve as an AR.

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**Health and Human Service (HHSA) Employees**

HHSA employees, will not be designated as an AR, except in cases of hardship. Hardship cases are those in which:

- No household member can act on behalf of the household; and
- There is no other acceptable person outside the household who is willing to, and able to, serve as the AR

Forward requests for Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) approved retailers or HHSA employees to act as an AR to the CalFresh Program Manager. Include written justification and the endorsement of the manager. Requests may be denied at the Family Resource Center (FRC) level only if an acceptable alternate AR is found or if the FRC documents that the household can adequately represent itself without the assistance of an AR.

**Persons Disqualified for Intentional Program Violation (IPV)**

Individuals disqualified for Intentional Program Violation (IPV) may not act as an AR during the period of disqualification unless the person is the only adult member of the household and it is determined that no other representative is available.

**Homeless Shelters**

Homeless meal providers cannot act as AR for homeless CalFresh customers.

**Persons Disqualified as AR's**

AR's who misrepresent a household's circumstances by knowingly providing false information about the household or using the household's CalFresh benefits improperly may be disqualified from being a CalFresh AR. This disqualification period may be imposed for up to one year.

**Federally Funded Application Assisters**

Federally funded application assisters cannot act as AR's. Non-federally funded application assisters are not subject to the same restriction and can be CalFresh AR's.

**63-113.3 Emergency AR for Obtaining Benefits:**

Households can designate an emergency AR for a specific month, allowing AR's to obtain the household's benefits and purchase food for the household. The signature of the emergency AR and the signature of the responsible household member is required for the authorization of an emergency AR (MPP 402.612). The emergency AR designation must be made using the *Cash/Aid CalFresh Electronic Benefit Transfer Request for a Designated Alternate AR* form. The purpose of the emergency AR designation is if the household has unforeseen circumstances that result in the household's inability to obtain benefits (such as an illness or hospitalization).

**Other Program Impacts:**

None

**References:**

ACL 19-55

MPP 63-402.612

MPP 63-402.6

MPP 63-503.47

**Sunset Date:**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 10/31/2022

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Approval for Release:



10-8-19

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