

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

**Certification Periods**

**Number**

**63-301**

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**Revision:**

03/01/2021

**Background:**

A certification period is the number of months for which a CalFresh household is certified to receive benefits without completing a new application.

**Purpose:**

This section describes certification period policies for CalFresh. The purpose of this material revision is to reformat the section and due to sunset review.

**Policy:**

All eligible CalFresh households must be assigned a definite period of time for which they will be certified to receive benefits. The length of the certification period will be based on the household's circumstances at the time eligibility is certified. Eligibility to benefits will end at the expiration of the certification period. Benefits must not be continued after the end of the certification period without a new determination of eligibility. Certification periods will be matched with Semi-Annual Reporting (SAR) cycles. (Refer to 63-272 regarding aligning certification periods and SAR cycles with CalWORKs.)

**NOTE:** The CalFresh certification period should not be adjusted to align with a Medi-Cal application or renewal.

1. Initial Month of Certification

At initial application, the first month of the certification period is generally the month of application. When the household is ineligible in the month of application, the first month of the certification period will be the first month in which the household is eligible to benefits. This is also known as the beginning date of aid (BDA). The new certification period for timely recertifications will begin with the month following the last month of the previous certification period.

**NOTE:** If processing of the application was delayed beyond 30 days due to the fault of the household, the household will lose the first month's benefits and the second month's benefits will be prorated from the date the required verification/information was received by the Human Services Specialist (HSS). In this instance the certification period begins in the second month. (63-109.6)

2. Establishing Certification Periods

Establish certification periods as follows:

Generally, a certification period will be no fewer than 4 months. If it appears likely that the household will become ineligible for CalFresh in the near future, then a one- or two-month certification period may be assigned. All households will be assigned a 12-month certification period unless they fit into one of the following categories:

<b>When the household consists of:</b>	<b>Then the certification period will be:</b>
ALL adult members who are elderly or disabled,	24 months
ALL members who are elderly or disabled with no earned income,	36 months (63-360)
Members living on an Indian Reservation,	24 months

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**Procedure:**

**Shortening Certification Periods:**

The certification period can be ended only if the Agency determines that the household is ineligible, and a timely Notice of Action is sent to the household.

**Lengthening Certification Periods:**

An established certification period may be lengthened, as long as the total months of the certification period do not exceed the maximum for the household type (12/24/36).

If the certification period is extended:

- Align the SAR Cycle to the new recertification period, if applicable
- Send the household a Notice of Action advising them of the extended certification period

**Approval of CalFresh Pending CalWORKs:**

When CalFresh and CalWORKs eligibility are determined separately to meet required eligibility requirements and timeframes, the intake HSS will make a Non-Assistance CalFresh eligibility determination at the time the household meets the eligibility criteria or meets Expedited Services criteria, but no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> day after the application date.

When CalFresh eligibility has been established, granting CalFresh will not be delayed pending a determination of CalWORKs eligibility.

When the CalWORKs and CalFresh approval action is taken in a month other than the application month, the initial month of the public assistance grant is considered a retroactive payment and is not counted in the CalFresh budget. (63-285).

**References:**

MPP 63-504.1

CFR 273.10(f)

CFPG 63-333 and 63-360

**Sunset Date:**

This policy will be reviewed for continuance on or by 02/29/2024.

**Approval for Release:**



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RW', followed by the date '2-26-21'.

RICK WANNE, Director

Eligibility Operations