

## Important Message – Federal Reduction in Benefits effective November 1, 2013

Every October 1, SNAP benefits (known as CalFresh in California) are adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living.

In April 2009, a law called The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 raised SNAP benefits to help people affected by the recession.

The increased benefits provided by this law are expected to expire on November 1, 2013.

SNAP recipients will see two changes in their benefit amounts during the fall of 2013.

First, deductions and income thresholds will increase slightly for most households on October 1 to reflect the costs of food. Some households may experience an increase in benefits as a result.

Then, most families will see their benefits decrease on November 1 due the end of the extra benefits provided by the 2009 law.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### Are cost of living adjustments (COLAs) done every year?

Yes, these cost of living adjustments happen every year. The maximum benefit is adjusted every year. Other adjustments include updates to the standard deduction, shelter deduction, income tests (gross and net), and D-SNAP allotment. By law, States must make these SNAP adjustments each October 1.

#### What is the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)?

The ARRA is also known as the stimulus package. It became law in 2009 in order to foster economic activity in response to the recession.

#### How did ARRA affect SNAP?

ARRA increased the maximum SNAP allotment to provide larger benefit amounts to clients. This increase in benefits is expected to end on November 1, 2013.

#### When will the changes from ARRA go into effect?

SNAP benefits may go down starting on November 1.

#### How much will my benefits change on November 1, 2013?

Your benefits depend on many things—income, household size and expenses. So it is hard to say exactly how your benefits will change. This table gives you an idea what the reduced amount might be for households that have no income.

SNAP Maximum Monthly Benefit Levels

Household Size	October 1, 2013 (ARRA stimulus levels)	November 1, 2013 (June 2013 TFP levels)	Difference
1	\$200	\$189	-\$11
2	\$367	\$347	-\$20
3	\$526	\$497	-\$29
4	\$668	\$632	-\$36
5	\$793	\$750	-\$43
6	\$952	\$900	-\$52
7	\$1,052	\$995	-\$57
8	\$1,202	\$1,137	-\$65
Add on	\$150	\$142	-\$8

**How will I be notified of a change in my SNAP benefits?**

You will be notified by your County. You may also hear about these changes via the news, posters in local offices, or from retailers where you shop with your SNAP benefits. You might also get a notice in the mail about the changes to your case.

**How do I check the balance for my SNAP benefits to know how much I have?**

Different States offer different ways to check your balance. However, a couple of easy ways are:

Check the SNAP balance on your last grocery receipt.

Your notice-of-action will have your new CalFresh benefit amount.

Go on-line to “Your Benefits Now” account and check your balance on-line.

In California go to [www.ebt.ca.gov](http://www.ebt.ca.gov)

**What if there is a mistake in my new benefit amount?**

If you think there might be a mistake in your benefits, contact your local office to ask for a fair hearing. A neutral party will look at your case to make sure all the rules were properly followed.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COLA AND ARRA SUNSET**

CalFresh (SNAP) Client Correspondence Paragraphs [\(English\)](#) [\(Spanish\)](#)

Handout for Clients [\(English\)](#) [\(Spanish\)](#)

Information from Retailers to Clients [\(English\)](#) [\(Spanish\)](#)

**How can I figure out how to feed my family healthful foods on a lower budget?**

USDA provides several resources to help you prepare healthy meals on a low budget:

[10-Tips Nutrition Series](#)

[ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov)

[Plan, Compare and Prepare](#)

[Eat Right When Money's Tight.](#)

The SNAP [Recipe Finder](#) helps you create cookbooks and shopping lists. Use it to search for recipes based on total cost or cost per serving.

**What should I do if I need food right away?**

Contact your [regional food bank](#) and ask for the nearest food distribution site. Or call 1-877-847-FOOD (3663) and ask for the nearest food pantry or food distribution site.