
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1049 (Celeste Rodriguez) - California Food Assistance Program: sponsor deeming rules

Version: February 20, 2025
Urgency: No
Hearing Date: June 29, 2026

Policy Vote: HUMAN S. 4 - 1
Mandate: Yes
Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 1049 would delete the requirement that federal sponsor-deeming rules apply to the California Food Assistance Program.

Fiscal Impact:

- Unknown General Fund costs for increased CFAP caseloads due to more individuals becoming eligible for the program.
- The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates a one-time General Fund cost of approximately \$103,500 for automation.
- Unknown potential costs to counties for administration. Costs would be potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

Background:

CalFresh. CalFresh is California's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), an entitlement program that provides eligible households with monthly benefits to purchase food. Benefits are delivered through an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card which cardholders can use at authorized point-of-sale terminals. Monthly benefits per household vary based on household size, income, and deductible living expenses. CDSS provides oversight for the CalFresh program at the state level, and counties are responsible for eligibility determinations and administration at the local level.

California Food Assistance Program (CFAP). CFAP provides state-funded food benefits for certain lawfully present noncitizens who do not qualify for federal CalFresh benefits. In order to be eligible to CFAP, noncitizens must currently be ineligible for CalFresh benefits solely due to their immigration status under the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. For example, CFAP-eligible individuals include noncitizens who are lawful permanent residents who have not met the five-year U.S. residency requirement. Counties are responsible for eligibility determinations and administration at the local level.

Sponsor Deeming. Federal law requires certain immigrants to be sponsored, meaning that a sponsor must have signed an affidavit stating that they will provide assistance to maintain the immigrant at a certain annual income. When determining eligibility for federal means-tested public benefits such as SNAP, the income and resources of the

sponsor are deemed available to the sponsored immigrant. State law requires that federal deeming rules and exemptions governing SNAP also govern CFAP for purposes of program eligibility, with certain exceptions.

Proposed Law: AB 1049 would delete the requirement that the federal deeming rules and exemptions governing SNAP apply to CFAP.

Related Legislation: AB 2299 (Calderon) would expand eligibility for CFAP. The bill is currently in the Senate Human Services Committee.

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