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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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## SB 1077 (Gonzalez) - CalFresh: federal government shutdowns

**Version:** March 16, 2026  
**Urgency:** No  
**Hearing Date:** April 20, 2026

**Policy Vote:** HUMAN S. 5 - 0  
**Mandate:** No  
**Consultant:** Agnes Lee

**Bill Summary:** SB 1077 would require the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to take various actions during a federal government shutdown that impacts the disbursement of CalFresh benefits.

**Fiscal Impact:** Unknown General Fund costs, potentially hundreds of thousands, for CDSS for state administration during a federal government shutdown.

**Background:** CalFresh is California's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), an entitlement program that provides eligible households with federally-funded 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.

Starting on October 1, 2025, after a failure to pass a continuing resolution to fund the government's operations, the federal government entered a shutdown. Later that month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sent a memo to the state indicating there was not enough money available to fund CalFresh benefits in November 2025. The USDA also ordered states not to take any action to prepare benefits to be delivered to EBT cards. However, the USDA did announce that states could use contingency reserves, if needed, to fund the benefit. The contingency reserve was created to provide for beneficiaries in circumstances like a federal shutdown. Most recently, in 2024, Congress approved \$3 billion in contingency funds to be available for two years to cover any lapse in SNAP payments. After a policy reversal, the USDA did not use the contingency fund and the federal government did not fund SNAP benefits at the beginning of the month for the first time in the program's history.

**Proposed Law:** Specific provisions of the bill would:

- Require CDSS, during a federal government shutdown that impacts the disbursement of CalFresh benefits, to maintain a clearly marked landing page on the department's internet website to provide the public with information on how their benefits will be impacted, as specified.
- Require CDSS, in coordination with stakeholders, to establish a strategic communications plan for use during a federal government shutdown that impacts the disbursement of CalFresh benefits, as specified.

- Require CDSS to issue guidance to county human services agencies for use during a federal government shutdown that impacts the disbursement of CalFresh benefits.
- Require CDSS to develop a benefit issuance mechanism to allow the department flexibility to rapidly provide nutrition benefits on an emergency basis in response to a federal government shutdown that impacts the disbursement of CalFresh benefits, as specified.

**Related Legislation:**

AB 2072 (Solache) would create the CalFresh and Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Contingency Fund for the purpose of maintaining continuity of CalFresh or WIC benefits during a federal government shutdown or other federal appropriations lapse. The bill is currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2309 (Bains) would, in the event of a federal funding lapse, require CDSS to utilize state funds to ensure that CalFresh benefits continue to be issued to existing recipients. The bill is currently in the Assembly Human Services Committee.

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