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AB-1377 CalFresh. (2019-2020)

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Assembly Bill No. 1377

CHAPTER 461

An act to add Section 18901.56 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to CalFresh.

[Approved by Governor October 02, 2019. Filed with Secretary of State October 02, 2019.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1377, Wicks. CalFresh.

Existing federal law provides for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, under which supplemental nutrition assistance benefits allocated to the state by the federal government are distributed to eligible individuals by each county. Existing law requires each school district or county superintendent of schools maintaining kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, to provide for each needy pupil one nutritionally adequate free or reduced-price meal during each schoolday, as specified. Existing law provides for the Medi-Cal program, which is administered by the State Department of Health Care Services, under which qualified low-income individuals receive health care services. Existing law provides for the establishment of a statewide electronic benefits transfer system, administered by the State Department of Social Services, for the purpose of providing financial and food assistance benefits.

This bill would require the State Department of Education, the State Department of Health Care Services, and the State Department of Social Services to work together with specified stakeholders to develop a proposed statewide process for using data collected for purposes of the CalFresh program, Medi-Cal, free and reduced-price school meals programs, and the electronic benefits transfer system to increase enrollment in the CalFresh program, as provided. The bill would require those departments to submit recommendations on that process and related issues to the relevant policy committees of the Legislature on or before August 31, 2020.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 18901.56 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18901.56. (a) The State Department of Education, the State Department of Health Care Services, and the State Department of Social Services shall work together with stakeholders, including, but not limited to, representatives of school nutrition programs, representatives of local agencies that determine CalFresh program eligibility, family advocates, immigrant advocates, food policy advocates, representatives of the automated systems that support free and reduced-price school meals programs, Medi-Cal, the CalFresh program, and the electronic benefits transfer system, and representatives from the recognized exclusive employee organization representing county eligibility workers to develop a proposed statewide process for using data collected for purposes of those four programs, in addition to any necessary outreach or referrals to relevant county agencies, to increase enrollment in

the CalFresh program. This process shall be targeted toward the families of pupils who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals in order to increase the enrollment of these families in the CalFresh program and to simplify and accelerate the CalFresh program enrollment process to the greatest extent possible.

(b) The State Department of Education, the State Department of Health Care Services, and the State Department of Social Services, with input from the stakeholders described in subdivision (a), shall do all of the following:

(1) Collaboratively examine data from free and reduced-price school meals programs, Medi-Cal, the CalFresh program, and the electronic benefits transfer system to estimate the number of children whose families could potentially be eligible for enrollment in the CalFresh program.

(2) Research past efforts to increase enrollment of these families, including, but not limited to, efforts taken pursuant to Assembly Bill 402 (Chapter 504 of the Statutes of 2011). To the extent past efforts did not result in a significant increase in enrollment, the departments shall review the issues that precluded these efforts from being more effective and shall propose ways to address those issues.

(3) Discuss and determine possible ways to resolve issues that could arise in developing the proposed statewide process, including how to bridge different data systems, different definitions of key variables such as household composition and income, and different data verification processes that exist for each of the four programs.

(4) Examine different approaches, such as accelerated enrollment, a referral process, increased outreach, or other activities identified by the departments that could increase enrollment.

(5) Understand the differing data usage requirements, data sharing and confidentiality requirements, and other potential constraints governing the data used for each of the four programs and determine what federal authorization or state law changes, if any, would be needed to facilitate the processes identified by the departments.

(6) Identify any waivers from the federal government or changes to federal or state law that would be required to implement the processes the departments believe would be most effective for sharing data to increase enrollment in the CalFresh program.

(7) Determine how to implement, in the most streamlined way possible, any consent process required by state or federal law and how best to incorporate informed consent protocols into any recommended process for sharing data to increase enrollment in the CalFresh program.

(c) (1) On or before August 31, 2020, the State Department of Education, the State Department of Health Care Services, and the State Department of Social Services shall submit recommendations pursuant to this section, and on any other issues they identify relating to increasing enrollment in the CalFresh program, to the relevant policy committees of the Legislature for consideration in a subsequent legislative session.

(2) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, paragraph (1) shall become inoperative on January 1, 2024.