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AB-3073 CalFresh: preenrollment. (2019-2020)

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Assembly Bill No. 3073

CHAPTER 225

An act to add Section 18901.35 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2020. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2020.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 3073, Wicks. CalFresh: preenrollment.

Existing federal law provides for the federal 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, and generally prohibits a resident of an institution, including the state prison or a county jail, from receiving these benefits. Existing law also authorizes counties to participate in the CalFresh Employment and Training program, established by federal law, to provide work experience or training and job search training to CalFresh recipients.

This bill would require the State Department of Social Services, no later than September 1, 2022, to issue an all-county letter containing recommendations and suggested methods for county human services agencies to partner with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and county jails to enroll otherwise eligible applicants for the CalFresh program to ensure that an applicant's benefits may begin as soon as possible upon reentry of the applicant into the community from the state prison or a county jail. The bill would require the all-county letter to include specified information on the benefits of enrolling formerly incarcerated individuals into the CalFresh program, the acceptable forms of identification needed to apply for CalFresh benefits, and information on how to connect individuals released from the state prison with employment or employment and training opportunities. The bill would also require the all-county letter to encourage counties to require county eligibility workers to regularly enter any state prison or county jail in the county to conduct interviews and assist individuals that are within 45 days of release with completing a CalFresh benefits application. The bill would require the department to submit a waiver to the federal government to allow for preenrollment of applicants prior to their release from the state prison or county jail if the department deems it necessary to maximize CalFresh enrollment outcomes or employment placement success rates for those individuals.

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

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

SECTION 1. Section 18901.35 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18901.35. (a) (1) No later than September 1, 2022, the department shall issue an all-county letter containing recommendations and suggested methods for county human services agencies to partner with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and county jails to enroll otherwise eligible applicants for the CalFresh program to ensure that an applicant's benefits may begin as soon as possible upon reentry of the applicant into the community from the state prison or a county jail.

(2) The all-county letter shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(A) Information on the benefits of enrolling formerly incarcerated individuals into the CalFresh program.

(B) Information on acceptable forms of identification necessary to complete an application for CalFresh benefits, including information on how to verify an applicant's eligibility for expedited service, as defined in Section 273.2(i)(1) of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(C) Information on how to connect individuals released from the state prison with employment or employment opportunities, including how counties may work with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to connect individuals to employment opportunities related to any experience, training, and education that the individual has obtained, including experience, training, and education obtained while in state prison.

(D) Encourage counties to require county eligibility workers to regularly enter any state prison or county jail within the county to conduct interviews and assist individuals that are within 45 days of release from state prison or county jail with completing applications for CalFresh benefits. This assistance shall be for the purpose of establishing eligibility for CalFresh benefits prior to release from the institution.

(b) If the department deems it necessary to maximize CalFresh enrollment outcomes or employment placement success rates for individuals reentering the community from the state prison or a county jail, the department shall submit to the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service a request to waive Section 273.1(b)(7)(vi) of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations to allow for preenrollment of applicants prior to their release from the state prison or a county jail.