

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**San Diego - March. 7, 2023**

**Contact:** Mike Peterson, [mike@gomixte.com](mailto:mike@gomixte.com), (619) 732-0789 ext. 645

**Links:**

- [San Diego Hunger Coalition Research Reports](#)
- [Impact of Meals Lost By San Diego ZIP Code](#)

**Extra Pandemic Aid for Groceries Coming to an End for CalFresh Recipients in March – Will Mean 7.7 Million Fewer Meals Per Month in San Diego County**

- *People relying on CalFresh may be able to increase their regular monthly benefits by voluntarily updating monthly household expenses on record with County of San Diego*
- *CalFresh emergency increases ended in February, with last deposits on EBT cards on March 26*
- *End of emergency allotment benefits could result in a loss of \$250 or more to some monthly household grocery budgets*

**WHAT:**

CalFresh pandemic emergency allotments – which have been provided as a second CalFresh installment each week – have ended, resulting in a significant hit to the purchasing power of San Diego households during a time of rampant inflation.

During the pandemic, the federal government implemented a temporary increase to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, known as “CalFresh” in California. These higher than usual [emergency payments](#) were critical for many households during the chaos of the pandemic and were delivered as a second installment on people’s cards each month.

In December 2022, however, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which sunsets the additional CalFresh benefit dollars despite ongoing federal or state public health emergencies. The California Department of Social Services says that the last of the emergency allotments will be deposited on March 26.

The effects on individuals and families throughout San Diego County experiencing nutrition insecurity will vary depending on income, household size and other factors. Households will see a minimum of a \$95 reduction in their CalFresh benefits, with some monthly reductions could be as high as \$250 or more per month.

The ending of emergency benefits equates to 7.7 million fewer meals per month throughout the county. According to the Hunger Coalition, the communities that will lose the most support within the city of San Diego are:

- **City Heights:** 368,000 meals lost
- **Logan Heights:** 272,000 meals lost
- **Encanto:** 260,000 meals lost
- **College Grove:** 245,000 meals lost
- **El Cajon:** 752,000 total meals lost
- **Chula Vista:** 1 million total meals lost

San Diego Hunger Coalition leads a network of trained community-based organizations, healthcare providers and other nonprofits throughout San Diego County that can help people on CalFresh ensure they are receiving the maximum benefit for which they are eligible.

CalFresh households can connect with [San Diego Hunger Coalition partner agencies](#) or the County of San Diego directly to boost potential benefit amounts by voluntarily updating case information such as shelter costs, dependent care costs, medical deductions and utility costs. Additional information is [available here](#).

#### **WHY:**

As of June 2022, nearly one in four San Diego County residents were nutrition insecure, or unable to pay for three healthy meals a day. Nutrition insecurity rates were also higher in populations of color, including the Hispanic/Latino, Black, and Indigenous communities.

The end of emergency payments will worsen financial hardship among San Diegans and increase the demand on services from already overburdened food assistance resources like food banks and pantries, especially since many households aren't receiving the full amount they are eligible for.

This critical help for families in need also comes amid rampant inflation and skyrocketing grocery prices. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), grocery store prices were up 11.3% since January 2022.

#### **QUOTES:**

“Between inflation and threats like EBT fraud, these benefits are ending at an already difficult time for San Diego households in need,” said **Anahid Brakke, President & CEO of the San Diego Hunger Coalition**. “San Diego’s hunger relief community, advocates, elected officials and others must band together to help households relying on CalFresh at this critical time by ensuring that the most people receive the maximum benefit amounts for their household and connecting

them with additional resources. This includes making it easier for families to apply for benefits at the county level.”

**Additional details and contact:**

- **Organization:** [San Diego Hunger Coalition](#)
- **Interviews:** Contact Mike Peterson at [mike@gomixte.com](mailto:mike@gomixte.com) or (619) 732-0789 x 645 to request interviews
- **Link to use in your story:** [sdhunger.org](http://sdhunger.org)

###

**ABOUT SAN DIEGO HUNGER COALITION:**

San Diego Hunger Coalition brings organizations across San Diego County together to create a Hunger Free San Diego. For nearly 50 years, they have led coordinated action to end hunger supported by research, education and advocacy. For more information, visit [sdhunger.org](http://sdhunger.org).

Hunger Free San Diego is a multi-year initiative to apply a data-informed and community-driven approach to ending hunger in the region. Hunger Free San Diego is led by San Diego Hunger Coalition and is part of the national Hunger Free Communities Network.