

Legislative History: CalFresh

California Working Families Policy Summit
January 12, 2011

The following legislative history offers a brief overview of state legislation signed into law related to CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps).

1996

SB 1780 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) – Chapter 206, Statutes of 1996

Created the State-wide Finger Imaging System (SFIS) to finger print CalWORKs and Food Stamp applicants and recipients.

1997

AB 1576 (Bustamante) – Chapter 287, Statutes of 1997

Created the California Food Assistance Program to provide nutrition benefits to certain legal immigrants who lost federal benefits under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996.

1999

AB 510 (Wright) Chapter 826, Statutes of 1999

This legislation allowed Los Angeles and up 8 counties to move to quarterly reporting for CalWORKs and Food Stamps, subject to the agreement of the local district attorney. No counties moved to quarterly under this legislation.

AB 1111 (Aroner) Chapter 147, Statutes of 1999

Expanded the California Food Assistance Program to include additional categories of legal non-citizens.

2000

AB 2013 (Committee on Health and Human Services) Chapter 682, Statutes of 2000

Required a simplified and shortened food stamp application be developed and evaluated for use.

2001

AB 429 (Aroner) Chapter 111, Statutes of 2001

Required the Bureau of State Audits to examine the cost-effectiveness of the Statewide Fingerprint Imaging System.

2002

AB 444 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 1022, Statutes of 2002

Ended monthly reporting and moved CalWORKs and Food Stamp reporting to a quarterly basis while also including an Interim Reporting Threshold (IRT) for CalWORKs.

2003

AB 231 (Steinberg) Chapter 743, Statutes of 2003

A multi-issue food stamp bill that established transitional food stamp benefits, removed the vehicle asset rule, and required screening for face-to-face interview exemptions.

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2004

AB 1796 (Leno) Chapter 932, Statutes of 2004

Restored food stamp benefits for those drug felons whose felony was for use or possession.

2005

SB 68 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) Chapter 78, Statutes of 2005

Shifted the burden of applying for waivers of the food stamp time limit to an “opt-out” in areas of high unemployment. The state Department of Social Services is required to seek waivers for all eligible areas. Counties could then vote to opt-out of the waiver, whereas previously they had to vote to accept the waiver.

AB 1385 (Laird) Chapter 78, Statutes of 2005

Created a state-level computer matching system to automatically enroll recipients of food stamps and CalWORKs into free school meals without paper.

2006

AB 2384 (Leno) Chapter 236, Statutes of 2006

Created the Healthy Purchase Pilot to test incentives to help food stamp recipients be better able to afford fresh produce.

2008

AB 433 (Beall) Chapter 625, Statutes of 2008

Established expanded categorical eligibility to remove the asset test for food stamps. Also required the Department of Social Services to develop a new name for food stamps.

AB 2720 (Leno) Chapter 466, Statutes of 2008

Extended the Healthy Purchase Pilot and allowed federal or private funding be used.

2010

AB 537 (Arambula) Chapter 435, Statutes of 2010

Allows an interested collective group or association of produce sellers that is Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) authorized and in a flea market, farmers’ market, or certified farmers’ market to initiate and operate an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) acceptance system in the market.

AB 1612 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 725, Statutes of 2010

Establishes a system of Inter-county Transfer for when a food stamp recipient moves from one county to another.

Note: Legislation will be introduced in the 2011 session to change references to “food stamps” in state law to “CalFresh.” Until such legislation is passed, “food stamps” remain in state statute.