

Guide to Disaster Assistance Services for Immigrant Californians

This guide provides detailed information about the types of federal, state and local disaster assistance services available in California. Although some of the resources are restricted to individuals or households with lawful immigration status, there are many services available to all Californians impacted by the wildfires.

Immigrant families

Shelters and housing assistance

Food and other basics

Health, public health, and counseling

Replacing documents, rebuilding property and insurance

Employment and job services



FAMILIES WITH UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

Am I eligible for any disaster assistance if I am undocumented?

Yes, even if you are undocumented, there are many resources and services that you can access.

I am undocumented but other members of my family are citizens or eligible immigrants. Can I get CalFresh and CalWORKs for them?

Yes. Even though you cannot get assistance for yourself, you should be able to get CalFresh and CalWORKs for your children if they are U.S. citizens or eligible immigrants. Even if you or your family members can't get CalFresh, you can still get school lunch and breakfast, Disaster CalFresh, WIC, and go to community food banks and other food programs.

Who is an eligible immigrant?

An eligible immigrant is anyone who falls into any of the below categories:

- Legal permanent residents (green card holders);
- Asylees and refugees;
- Individuals who have been granted humanitarian parole for a period of one year;
- Individuals whose deportation has been withheld due to status as a political refugee;
- Cuban or Haitian entrants; or
- Victims of domestic violence who currently have a pending petition for relief

I am undocumented. Will I be reported to the immigration authorities if I apply for CalFresh (food stamps) for my children?

If you are not seeking public assistance benefits for yourself, you do not need to give information about your immigration status. You should tell your eligibility worker that you are not trying to get benefits for yourself. Eligibility workers should not ask you any further questions about your immigration status once you tell them that you are not applying for yourself. Do not present false information or identification. You will need to give information about your earnings or any property you may have, like a car.

I do not speak English well. What can I do?

Free translation and interpreter services should be provided to you, including a worker who speaks your language. If a worker cannot speak your language, you should be provided an interpreter or the use of the “language line” interpreter services at no cost to you. Do not be afraid to ask for an interpreter.

I am undocumented. Will I be reported to the immigration authorities if I visit an emergency shelter?

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) have stated that they are not conducting immigration enforcement at disaster relief sites such as shelters or food banks. The Federal Government strongly encourages all persons to follow the guidance of local officials and seek help and shelter regardless of their immigration status.



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Most shelters are managed by local communities, the American Red Cross, and other voluntary agencies. American Red Cross' humanitarian mission is to feed, shelter, and provide other forms of support without regard to race, religion, or citizenship status. The Red Cross will not ask people to show any form of identification to stay in their shelters. To receive some Red Cross services, such as meeting with a caseworker to facilitate disaster recovery, they will need to verify a person's pre-disaster address. For people who don't have government-issued identification, the Red Cross can usually do this through alternative means, such as a copy of a utility bill.

SHELTERS AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

For immediate evacuation center and emergency shelter information you can go to the California Office of Emergency Services website <http://wildfirerecovery.org/evacuation-centershelter-information/>.

TRANSITIONAL SHELTER ASSISTANCE

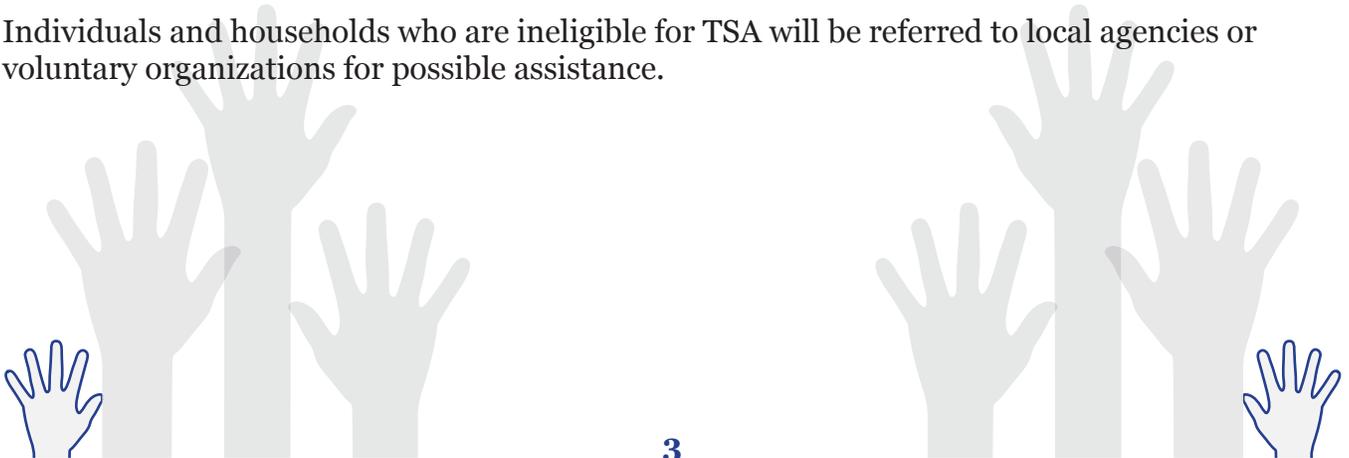
The Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA) Program provides short-term lodging assistance for evacuees who are not able to return home for an extended or indeterminate period of time following a disaster. You must be a citizen or an eligible immigrant to receive this assistance.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may provide TSA to eligible disaster survivors who have a continuing need for shelter after the congregate shelters have closed because they are unable to return to their homes for an extended period of time. This initiative is intended to provide short-term lodging for eligible disaster survivors whose communities are either uninhabitable or inaccessible due to disaster-related damages.

Under TSA, disaster survivors may be eligible to stay in hotel or motel lodging for a limited period of time and have the cost of the room and taxes covered by FEMA. However, FEMA does not cover the cost of incidental room charges or amenities, such as telephone, room service, food, etc.

For more information on the TSA program you can go to the FEMA website at: <https://www.fema.gov/transitional-shelter-assistance>

Individuals and households who are ineligible for TSA will be referred to local agencies or voluntary organizations for possible assistance.



INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLDS PROGRAMS

The Individuals and Households Program (IHP) is a joint Federal and State program. You or someone who lives with you must be a U.S. citizen or “eligible immigrant” in order for your household to apply. Under IHP, FEMA may provide awards in the form of rent, home repair or replacement, transportation repair or replacement, funeral expenses, personal property, medical, dental or other miscellaneous expenses. FEMA disaster assistance covers basic needs, but does not normally compensate disaster victims for their entire loss. Each situation is unique and is handled on a case-by-case basis. Anyone who suffers damage in a Presidentially-declared disaster can register for assistance by calling the FEMA registration line, 1-800-621-3362. For the deaf or hard of hearing, the number is 1-800-462-7585.

For general information or to make changes to an existing application, the FEMA disaster information Helpline number is 1-800-621-3362 or TTY 1-800-462-7585.

STATE SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT PROGRAM

California’s State Supplemental Grant Program (SSGP), administered by California’s Department of Social Services, Disaster Services Bureau, may provide grant funds to assist people who have suffered damage in a disaster area declared by the President when the federal assistance to IHP is implemented. The SSGP is 100 percent State funded. The grant may assist with any eligible items not already addressed by the IHP. However, individuals must have applied to FEMA and maximized the IHP award to be eligible for SSGP. The same FEMA eligibility criteria of being a U.S. citizen or “eligible immigrant” apply. State grants cover disaster-relief needs in the same categories as the IHP.

If you have reached the maximum IHP assistance, FEMA will automatically transmit your application to SSGP. There is no separate application process for SSGP. If you have questions about the State Supplemental Grant Program, you may contact SSGP at 1-800-759-6807, or for the deaf or hard of hearing, the TTY number is 1-800-952-8349.

Click on the following links for more detailed information about the SSGP.

[State Supplemental Grant Program \(SSGP\) Information Sheet \(Spanish Version\)](#)

[State Supplemental Grant Program \(SSGP\) Information Sheet](#)

FOOD AND OTHER BASICS

DISASTER CALFRESH [ALL INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES MAY APPLY]

Disaster CalFresh can help meet the temporary nutritional needs of disaster victims of modest incomes, regardless of immigration status, following a natural disaster such as a flood, fire, or earthquake. Disaster CalFresh provides a month’s worth of food benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which can be used to purchase food at authorized grocery stores and farmer’s markets. For more information on Disaster CalFresh, visit the website at:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFresh/Disaster-CalFresh>



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CALFRESH

CalFresh provides ongoing food assistance to people with low-incomes through monthly benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card which can be used to purchase food at authorized grocery stores and farmer’s markets. To find out how to apply for benefits in your county, please call the toll free number 1-877-847-3663 (FOOD) or apply online at: www.benefitscal.org/ For more information on CalFresh, visit the website at: www.calfresh.ca.gov

FOOD BANKS [ALL INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES MAY APPLY]

Food Banks throughout California can provide relief to families affected by the wildfires by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost, regardless of immigration status. Locate a food bank in your area by going to www.cdss.ca.gov/Food-Banks.

WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM [ALL INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES MAY APPLY]

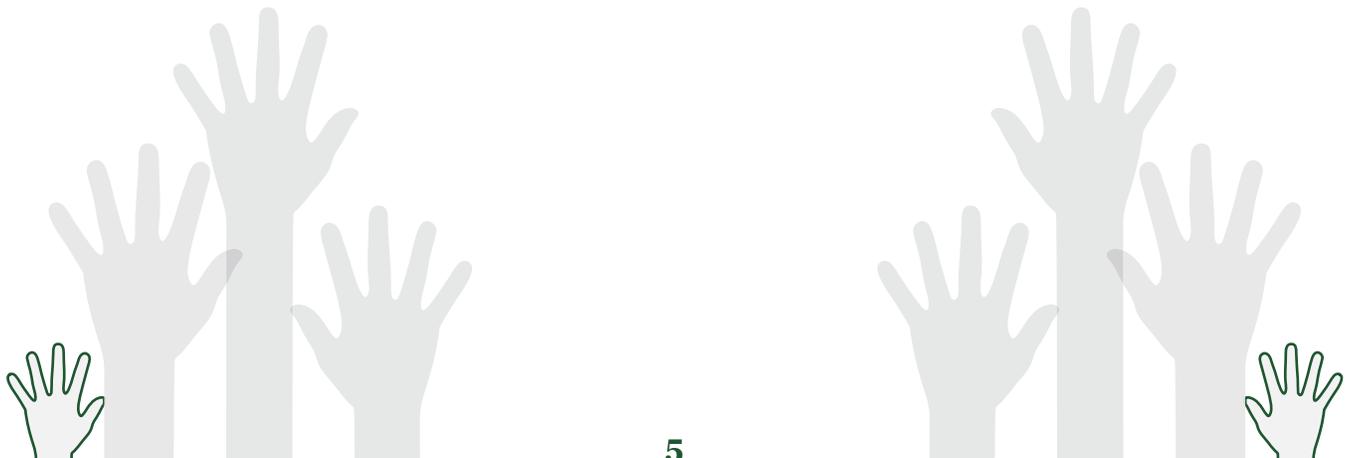
The WIC program is available to pregnant women and young children regardless of immigration status. The WIC program helps low-to-moderate-income pregnant women, new mothers and their babies, and young children to eat well and stay healthy. WIC provides:

- Special checks to buy healthy foods such as milk, juice, eggs, cheese, fruits, vegetables, baby foods and whole grains;
- Information about nutrition and health; and
- Breastfeeding support and referrals to health care and community services.

For more information, call 1-888-942-9675 or visit the website at: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/Program-Landing1.aspx> and click on “Find a Local WIC Agency” under Program Information.

CALWORKs

CalWORKs provides cash aid to eligible needy California families to help pay for housing, food, and other necessary expenses. If you are a “non-eligible immigrant” and not seeking CalWORKs benefits for yourself, you should be able to get assistance for your children if they are U.S. citizens or eligible immigrants. For more information about this program, visit the cash aid website at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/CalWORKs> or apply online at: www.benefitscal.org/. You may also contact your local county welfare/social services department at: <http://www.cwda.org/links/chsa.php>



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HEALTH, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND COUNSELING

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Existing recipients of In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) may receive services from their provider (or from another enrolled provider) even if evacuated from their primary residence. Recipients and providers of In-Home Supportive Services with questions regarding services impacted by a disaster should contact your county IHSS worker. For a list of county IHSS offices visit the website at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/County-IHSS-Offices>.

CRISIS COUNSELING

Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

For information on public health concerns during a disaster you can contact 916-650-6416 or visit the California Department of Public Health website at: <http://www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov>.

HEALTH CARE AND COVERAGE (MEDI-CAL)

Medi-Cal is a public health insurance program that provides comprehensive medical, dental and vision care coverage to low-income individuals, including families with children, seniors, persons with disabilities, pregnant women and low-income people with specific diseases, such as tuberculosis, breast cancer or HIV/AIDS. You must be a citizen or an eligible immigrant to receive this assistance, but emergency services are available to everyone. For information about eligibility or any other questions contact your county welfare/social services department. To find your local office, visit the website at: <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/CountyOffices.aspx>.

SERVICES FOR SENIORS

The California Department of Aging contracts with and provides leadership and direction to Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) that coordinate a wide array of services to seniors and adults with disabilities. You can locate an AAA in your area by calling 1-800-510-2020; TTY 1-800-735-2929 or visit the website at: http://www.aging.ca.gov/ProgramsProviders/AAA/AAA_listing.asp



REPLACING DOCUMENTS AND INSURANCE

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) can respond to questions and provide the forms needed to assist individuals in replacing DMV documents, such as driver licenses, identification cards, vehicle registration certificates and certificates of title, that were lost as a result of the disaster. You can visit the DMV website at: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/>.

The Department of Motor Vehicles provides interpreters, including American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, at no cost.

If you need an interpreter, please let DMV staff know and an appointment will be scheduled for when a foreign language or an ASL interpreter is available. Appointments may also be scheduled during regular business hours by calling 1-800-777-0133 and indicating foreign language assistance is needed. For the California Relay Telephone Service from TTY phones, call 1-800-735-2929 or, from voice phones, call 1-800-735-2922 for assistance in contacting DMV and making arrangements for an ASL interpreter.

Interpreters cannot be used to administer a commercial driver license (CDL) knowledge test.

BIRTH, DEATH, MARRIAGE, AND OTHER VITAL RECORDS

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is working with those who have lost vital records as a result of the disaster. Birth, death, and marriage records should be requested from the county recorder's office in the county where the event occurred (visit <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHSI/Pages/Obtaining-Vital-Records-From-County-Offices.aspx> for a list of county recorders). Or you may call 916-445-2684; TTY 711, or 1-800-735-2929 or visit: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHSI/Pages/Vital-Records.aspx>.

INSURANCE & REBUILDING INFORMATION

The California Department of Insurance provides assistance on insurance issues, such as claim handling delays, additional living expenses, underinsurance disputes, etc. If you are experiencing difficulty with the processing of your claim or wish to have an underinsurance issue investigated, contact the officers at the Department's Consumer Hotline at 1-800-927-HELP (4357); TTY 1-800-482-4833 for assistance. For additional information you may also wish to visit the Department's website at: www.insurance.ca.gov.

CONTRACTORS STATE LICENSE BOARD:

The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) verifies contractor licenses, investigates complaints, and provides helpful information about hiring a licensed contractor. For information on hiring or filing a complaint regarding a contractor, disaster victims may call CSLB's Disaster Hotline M-F from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at 1-800-962-1125, or the 24-hour automated telephone response system, 1-800-321-CSLB (2752). Licenses can also be checked online at: <https://www2.cslb.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CheckLicenseII/CheckLicense.aspx>. You can also view a video, "Rebuilding After a Natural Disaster" on the CSLB website at: http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Media_Room/Disaster_Help_Center/



HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) can assist with manufactured housing questions including repairs, installations and/or registration and titling. For information on obtaining construction permits for manufactured homes or parks contact the Riverside Area Office at 951-782-4420 or the Sacramento Area Office at 916-255-2501. For information concerning Registration and Titling call 1-800-952-8356; TTY 1-800-735-2929 or visit the website at: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/manufactured-mobile-home/registration-titling/index.shtml>.

EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SERVICES

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Employment Development Department (EDD) and local partner agencies at all America's Job Center of California locations throughout the state offer a wide variety of employment services, such as job search and referrals, and training. Job seekers and employers can connect with thousands of available job opportunities and qualified candidates through CalJobs, California's online labor exchange system at www.caljobs.ca.gov.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE:

Workers who lose their jobs due to no fault of their own, such as in the case of a disaster, may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. Eligibility for UI benefits requires that individuals have work authorization, be unemployed or working less than full time, be able to work, be seeking work, and be willing to accept a suitable job.

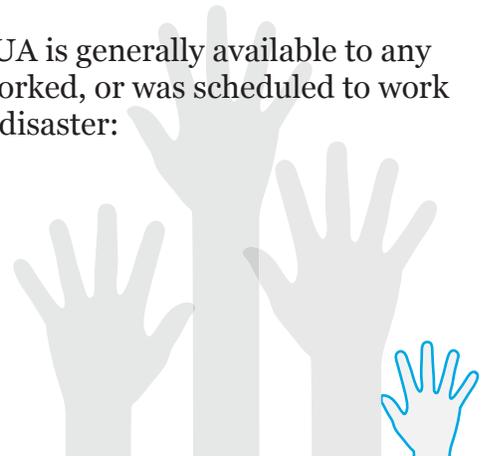
The quickest and easiest way to apply is online at the Employment Development Department (EDD) website at: www.edd.ca.gov. Click on the "Unemployment" link, then on "Apply for UI" (eApply4UI) at the top right of the page. UI claims also can be filed by telephone at 1-800-300-5616. (For Cantonese, call 1-800-547-3506; For Mandarin, call 1-866-303-0706; For Spanish, call 1-800-326-8937; For Vietnamese, call 1-800-547-2058; For TTY, call 1-800-815-9387).

DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a federal program that provides financial assistance and employment services to jobless workers and the self-employed when they are unemployed as a direct result of a major natural disaster.

When a major disaster has been declared by the President, DUA is generally available to any unemployed worker or self-employed individual who lived, worked, or was scheduled to work in the disaster area at the time of the disaster; and due to the disaster:

- no longer has a job or a place to work; or
- cannot reach the place of work; or
- cannot work due to damage to the place of work; or
- cannot work because of an injury caused by the disaster.



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For more information on the program see California’s Employment Development Department (EDD) DUA Fact Sheet available at:

[English] http://www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_pub_ctr/de8714y.pdf

[Spanish] http://www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_pub_ctr/de8714ys.pdf

To find more information on DUA and how to file for both employment insurance and DUA visit EDD website at: http://www.edd.ca.gov/About_EDD/Disaster_Related_Services.htm

WORKERS HEALTH AND SAFETY

Cal/OSHA has issued guidance on how to protect workers exposed to smoke from wildfires on their website available at:

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Worker-Health-and-Safety-in-Wildfire-Regions.html>

They have also published instructions on using filtering facepieces, available in English and Spanish at:

[English] <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/documents/Wildfire-Safety-Notice-for-Employers.pdf>

[Spanish] <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/documents/Spanish/Wildfire-Safety-Notice-for-Employers-Spanish.pdf>

To file a workplace safety complaint visit the Department of Industrial Relations website at:

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Complaint.htm>

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your eligibility based on your immigration status or need legal help to navigate the disaster relief application process, you may be eligible for free legal services. To learn more contact the organizations below directly.

CALIFORNIA STATE BAR

Legal services for disaster relief

<http://www.calbar.ca.gov/Public/Need-Legal-Help/Free-Legal-Help/Legal-Help-After-Disaster>

LEGAL SERVICES FOR IMMIGRATION STATUS

Legal assistance with immigration status issues

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Immigration/Contractor%20Referral%20List%20FY%2016-17.pdf?ver=2017-08-21-132743-620>



Our Mission

The California Department of Social Services serves, aides and protects needy and vulnerable children and adults in ways that strengthen and preserve families, encourage personal responsibility and foster independence.



State of California
California Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Social Services
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