

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 27, 2011

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 69**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Beall**  
*(Coauthors: Assembly Members Ammiano, Butler, Fuentes, and Swanson)*

December 15, 2010

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An act to add Section 18924 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 69, as amended, Beall. Senior nutrition benefits.

Existing federal law provides for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh (formerly the Food Stamp program), under which nutrition assistance benefits formerly referred to as food stamps, allocated to the state by the federal government, are distributed to eligible individuals by each county. Under existing law, the State Department of Social Services administers CalFresh at the state level, and has certain specified duties in that regard.

This bill would require the State Department of Social Services to ~~seek a federal waiver, demonstration project, or other authority to establish a pilot project in 2 areas of the state identified by the department, to the extent permitted by federal law or other specified federal authority, to allow counties that satisfy certain criteria to simplify enrollment into CalFresh for potentially eligible low-income social security benefit recipients, utilizing existing information maintained by the Social Security Administration regarding low-income social security benefit these recipients, and to more easily enroll eligible recipients into the CalFresh program.~~ The bill would specify the

department's duties in connection with establishment of the pilot project support of the enrollment efforts described in the bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) Good nutrition is important for all Californians, especially  
4 for seniors, who may suffer from diet-related diseases, may require  
5 food with medication, or who are trying to maintain independence.

6 (b) The University of California at Los Angeles estimates that  
7 approximately half a million older Californians living alone are  
8 unable to make ends meet.

9 (c) Seniors on a fixed income find it difficult to afford nutritious  
10 food.

11 (d) The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program  
12 (SNAP), administered in California as CalFresh, should help many  
13 of these vulnerable seniors to meet their nutrition needs. However,  
14 only 10 percent of eligible seniors in California participate in the  
15 CalFresh program.

16 (e) In California, only 5 percent of social security recipients  
17 eligible for CalFresh participate in the program.

18 (f) The federal Social Security Administration has information  
19 that could help easily enroll eligible seniors for CalFresh benefits.  
20 A partnership between the state and the Social Security  
21 Administration to develop a more streamlined approach to enrolling  
22 this population is needed.

23 (g) Many states have worked with the Social Security  
24 Administration to establish Combined Application Projects (CAPs)  
25 for other elderly populations, suggesting that similar action for  
26 social security recipients may be successful.

27 (h) Enrolling more seniors into CalFresh not only draws more  
28 federal nutrition benefits to California, but also stimulates the  
29 economy. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates  
30 that every dollar in SNAP benefits generates \$1.73 in economic  
31 activity.

32 SEC. 2. Section 18924 is added to the Welfare and Institutions  
33 Code, to read:

1 18924. ~~(a) The department shall seek a federal waiver,~~  
2 ~~demonstration project, or other authority to establish a pilot project~~  
3 ~~utilizing existing information that the Social Security~~  
4 ~~Administration maintains regarding low-income social security~~  
5 ~~benefit recipients, to more easily enroll eligible recipients into the~~  
6 ~~CalFresh program administered pursuant to this chapter.~~

7 ~~(b) In establishing the pilot project described in subdivision (a),~~  
8 ~~the department shall do all of the following:~~

9 ~~(1) Identify two areas of the state in which to operate the pilot~~  
10 ~~project, in conjunction with local social security offices.~~

11 ~~(2) Work with the Social Security Administration to develop~~  
12 ~~ways to target social security recipients eligible for CalFresh~~  
13 ~~benefits.~~

14 ~~(3) Develop a streamlined application process for social security~~  
15 ~~recipients eligible for CalFresh, which, to the extent feasible, shall~~  
16 ~~be used to automatically or more easily enroll recipients of social~~  
17 ~~security, 65 years of age and older, whose incomes qualify them~~  
18 ~~for aid through the CalFresh program.~~

19 ~~(4) Consider for implementation as a component of the pilot~~  
20 ~~project strategies used by other states to reduce paperwork and~~  
21 ~~increase federal nutrition benefits, including, but not limited to,~~  
22 ~~self-certification of key eligibility factors, standardization of~~  
23 ~~benefits and deductions, and automation of the application process.~~

24 ~~(5) Consider other strategies to increase CalFresh participation~~  
25 ~~among existing eligible seniors.~~

26 *18924. (a) To the extent permitted by federal law, waiver,*  
27 *demonstration project, or other federal authority, the department*  
28 *shall allow counties to utilize existing information maintained by*  
29 *the federal Social Security Administration regarding low-income*  
30 *social security benefit recipients, to simplify enrollment into the*  
31 *CalFresh program administered pursuant to this chapter, provided*  
32 *that an interested county has either the existing capacity to receive*  
33 *that information, or the ability to adapt its existing automation*  
34 *systems without costs or significant changes.*

35 *(b) The department shall support enrollment efforts pursuant*  
36 *to this section by doing all of the following:*

37 *(1) Working with the Social Security Administration to target*  
38 *social security recipients 60 years of age and older whose income*  
39 *and other factors are likely to qualify them for aid through*  
40 *CalFresh.*

- 1    (2) *Developing a streamlined application and simplified*
- 2    *enrollment process for likely eligible recipients, which may include*
- 3    *strategies used by other states to reduce paperwork and increase*
- 4    *federal nutrition benefits, including, but not limited to,*
- 5    *self-certification of key eligibility factors, standardization of*
- 6    *benefits and deductions, and automation of the application process.*
- 7    (3) *Seeking waivers, grants, or other federal authority and*
- 8    *support necessary to implement this section.*