



JENNIFER TROIA
DIRECTOR

CALIFORNIA HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

July 29, 2025

Gina Brand
Senior Policy Advisor for Integrity
United States Department of Agriculture
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services
gina.brand@usda.gov

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO USDA'S JULY 9 AND JULY 23, 2025 DATA REQUEST

Dear Gina Brand:

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is in receipt of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) July 9, 2025 and July 23, 2025, letters requesting more than five and a half years of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipient and applicant data from the state.

As you may already be aware, California is now a plaintiff in a multi-state lawsuit challenging the legality of the USDA's creation of a new federal database and the agency's unprecedented demands for sensitive SNAP data. Even if the proposed data collection reflected in the National SNAP Information Database System of Records Notice were lawful, the USDA has not adhered to standard data protocols ahead of large-scale data transmissions, as laid out in the complaint.

In addition to the above-noted concerns, compliance by the July 30, 2025 deadline would be impossible for CDSS given the size of the request. Specifically, in California, which serves an average of 5.5 million SNAP participants per month, the request for five and a half years worth of data related to all SNAP recipients and applicants would take a minimum of three months and possibly more than six months to gather and provide given the breadth of the request, the need for clarification to address the ambiguities of the request, the need to collect data from multiple legacy automated systems, and other technical challenges.

In light of the foregoing, CDSS will not be sharing the requested data at this time. Moreover, for the reasons stated herein, CDSS respectfully urges that the USDA withdraw the requests for data delineated in the above-referenced letters, or, at a minimum, stay the deadline to submit the requested data pending resolution of the litigation referenced above. CDSS will continue to comply with federal and state law

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relating to the award and administration of SNAP, as well as its approved State Plan of Operation.

Respectfully,

RYAN GILLETTE
Chief Data Officer
Research, Automation, and Data Division