

2017 Budget Advocacy

# Invest in Safe Water for Struggling Californians



*“My family has been purchasing water for years because the water coming out of our faucet is brown and dirty and full of contaminants. Arsenic is one example. Every week I purchase anywhere from 10-15 gallons of water with our CalFresh benefits so my daughters have safe water to drink. As a single mother, I work hard to provide for my family. Worrying about water running out or water making my children sick should be the last thing on my mind, but that is the reality I live. I wish someone like our politicians would do more to support families like mine.”*

**- Paula Diaz | Arvin, California**

# Invest in Safe Water for Struggling Californians



## What is the problem?

California is tackling the complex solutions to our water crisis, but many residents are still waiting to feel any relief. While infrastructure plans are developed, tens of thousands of Californians living in poverty must use very limited grocery dollars to buy safe drinking water in addition to food. Families in poverty cannot afford to wait for long-term solutions. Without affordable access to safe water, these struggling households will continue to bear a disproportionate burden of California's water crisis.

## What are we doing about it?

CFPA is advocating for the State to provide emergency supplemental nutrition benefits for CalFresh households who must buy drinking water when their water system poses a serious health threat.

## The Facts



In the Central Valley—where the poverty rate is over 25%—some households devote **20% of their annual median income** of \$14,000 to pay for safe water.



Source: UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, Mission to the United States of America. ¶ 39. U.N. Doc. [A/HRC/18/33/Add.4](#)



In 2015, twenty-seven California counties have water systems with arsenic and nitrate/nitrite contaminations that made water unsafe to drink.

More than 1.9 million CalFresh families reside in these counties.

Some households have to pay twice for water. When water systems fail to meet basic health standards, residents must still pay their water bill and buy bottled water for drinking.

More than 44,000 disadvantaged Californians are served by failing small water systems.

The State's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system is a proven and effective system to deliver benefits to households.

For state governments, EBT provides cost and time savings, operational efficiencies, and promotes accountability while stimulating local economies.