

Golden Bear Pass expanded to members of Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program

September 5, 2023



California State Parks and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) today announced the expansion of the Golden Bear Pass to participants of California’s Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ([TANF](#)) program, providing free day-use access to more than 200 state parks.

The [Golden Bear Pass](#) is a calendar year (January–December) pass available to qualifying Californians who receive Supplemental Security Income, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program recipients, or income-eligible Californians age 62 and over. Newly issued passes are valid for the remainder of 2023 with an additional pass for 2024 sent at the beginning of the year.

“Time in nature is healing and beneficial to our overall well-being, which is why equitable access to California’s stunning state parks is essential,” said California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom.

“Expanding eligibility of the Golden Bear Pass to include low-income Native families through the Tribal

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program is critical to ensuring kids, the aging population, and other vulnerable communities reap the benefits of nature and the outdoors.”

“Expanding access to our shared state parks continues to be a priority for State Parks, its partners and the Newsom Administration,” said California State Parks Director Armando Quintero. “We are grateful for our partnership with the California Department of Social Services to help bring that access to more Californians across our beautiful state.”

Last year, State Parks began a three-year pilot program partnership with CDSS to make several improvements to how the Golden Bear Pass is administered. These improvements included a waiver of the \$5 pass fee, direct notifications to eligible CalWORKs recipients, expedited verification of applicant eligibility and streamlined pass fulfillment.

“We hope that the Golden Bear Pass will continue to open state parks to more and more people,” said California Secretary of Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot. “Since 2022, more than 61,000 passes have been distributed compared to an average of 2,500 passes before the partnership with the Department of Social Services. Please make use of these passes because everyone is welcome at our state parks.”

Californians can apply for the Golden Bear Pass with their smartphone or other web-based device in just minutes and have access to more than 200 California state park units. A list of eligible units and FAQs on the Golden Bear Pass can be found at parks.ca.gov/OutdoorsForAll and at cdss.ca.gov/GoldenBearPass.

“The Golden Bear Pass has been a great success, providing an equitable opportunity for more Californians to enjoy our state’s natural beauty,” said CDSS Director Kim Johnson. “We’re thrilled that the Golden Bear Pass has now been expanded to include Tribal TANF participants. It’s my hope that the Golden Bear Pass will help ensure more people across California have an opportunity to get out, connect with their family and friends while experiencing our beautiful parks, beaches and trails.”

In addition to the Golden Bear Pass, State Parks is reminding the public about the two other free pass programs available, including the [California State Park Adventure Pass](#) for California's fourth graders and their families. Championed by First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom—whose [California for All Kids](#) initiatives support children's physical, mental and social-emotional well-being—incoming fourth graders can obtain their California State Park Adventure Pass beginning Sept. 1, 2023, to explore 19 select state parks for free for a full year. Also, all Californians can check out a [California State Library Parks Pass](#) using their library cards to access more than 200 participating state park units. In partnership with the California State Library, the Library Pass program was expanded this year to also include Tribal libraries throughout the state.

The State of California champions the right of all Californians to have access to recreational opportunities and enjoy the cultural, historical and natural resources found across the state. Too many Californians cannot access public outdoor spaces and the state's array of museums and cultural and historical sites. The state is prioritizing efforts to expand all Californians' access to parks, open space, nature and cultural amenities. This priority requires focusing funding and programs to expand opportunities to enjoy these places. Doing so advances Governor Gavin Newsom's strong personal commitment to building a "California for All."

For more information on all three State Parks pass programs, please visit parks.ca.gov/OutdoorsForAll.