

Students and CalFresh



FOUNDATION *for* CALIFORNIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is CalFresh?

CalFresh, also referred to as SNAP (Supplemental Food Assistance Program), is a program available to help meet the basic needs of Californians by providing monthly benefits on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to buy nutritious food.

Why should I apply for CalFresh?

Many college students are eligible for financial aid to assist with paying for college. Consider CalFresh as your food aid to help you focus on school and stay healthy. CalFresh benefits help increase the amount of money available to purchase food, allowing individuals, including college students and families to afford nutritious options including fruits, vegetables, organic foods, and more.

How much assistance could I receive?

The amount of benefits a household receives is dependent on household size, countable income, and monthly expenses such as rent and utilities.

Will receiving benefits affect my financial aid package?

No. CalFresh benefits are provided in addition to financial aid. They do not negatively impact eligibility or total amount you will receive in financial aid.

Will applying for CalFresh take away benefits from those who need it more than I do?

No. CalFresh is available to everyone who meets the eligibility requirements.

What happens if I was denied CalFresh benefits?

If you tried to enroll in CalFresh and received a Notice of Action letter saying you have been denied, we encourage you to call your county. Most cases can be resolved by calling the county directly and asking for clarification about why the decision has been made. If you disagree with the decision made by the county about your case, fill out the back of the Notice of Action to submit an appeal.

What can I purchase with CalFresh benefits?

Participants can use benefits to purchase food (including refrigerated prepared food) or seeds to grow food. CalFresh can also be used at many local grocery stores and farmer's markets to buy fresh and local fruits and vegetables.

Will I need to pay back the CalFresh benefits I receive?

No. CalFresh benefits do not need to be paid back.

Do I have to report CalFresh benefits on my or my family's taxes?

No, you are not required to report CalFresh benefits when you or your family is filing tax returns.

Will my immigration status affect my CalFresh eligibility?

Some noncitizens may be eligible for CalFresh ([GetCalFresh.org/immigrants](https://www.getcalfresh.org/immigrants)). Even if you are not eligible for CalFresh, other members of your family may be eligible. Getting CalFresh won't count as a public charge if you are working toward citizenship ([irlc.org/public-charge](https://www.irlc.org/public-charge)). If you are undocumented and experiencing food insecurity, check with your college's UndocuLiaison for resources around campus food pantry and local food banks. Sharing your immigration status is not required to use their services.



Students and CalFresh

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

Where do I apply?

If you feel comfortable applying for CalFresh on your own, application can be completed in less than 10 minutes by visiting: www.students.getcalfresh.org/s/ccc or by using your college's application link:



Do you want help applying for CalFresh?

Most California community colleges have faculty and staff available to assist with the CalFresh application. If your college does not provide CalFresh application assistance, check to see if other local organizations can assist you with your application:

- Food banks in your area: cafoodbanks.org/our-members/
- Call 2-1-1: this is a statewide helpline to assist with social services and benefits

Who counts as a member of my household?

A household is a person or group of people who buy and prepare food together.

- You may live with people who don't count as a household member, under CalFresh standards such as a roommate, who purchases and prepares their own food.
- If you are under the age of 22 and live with biological, adoptive, or stepparent(s) you must apply together, even if you purchase and prepare your own food.
- If you are married and live with your spouse, you and your spouse must apply as one household.
- Unmarried couple living together with a common child must apply together.

What if I need food resources immediately?

Call 2-1-1 and ask for free food resources in your community. You could receive expedited CalFresh services within three days of submitting a CalFresh application if:

- Your household has less than \$150.00 in monthly gross income and does not have assets (resources) over \$100; or
- Your household's total month income and resources are less than the monthly rent or mortgage, and utilities; or
- You are a migrant or seasonal farm worker who has stopped receiving income from work and do not have assets (resources) over \$100.00.

Where can I use CalFresh benefits?

- Grocery stores: fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator
- Farmers markets: fmfinder.org
- Online grocery shopping at select retailers such as Amazon, Walmart, Safeway, Albertons, Vons and Instacart.
 - Delivery fees cannot be paid for with CalFresh benefits.

What happens after I submit a CalFresh application?

- Submit all required verification documents after submitting your application (copy of ID, student schedule, proof of income, etc.).
- In most cases, the county has 30 days after you turn in your application to determine if you will get CalFresh food benefits. During the 30 days, the county will interview you. The interview will be either over the phone or in person to go over your application with you.
- The county may call from a blocked or unknown number. Try to answer your phone calls from unrecognized numbers after submitting your application.
- If you missed your interview, call your county office to reschedule as soon as you are able.
- If an interview is not completed within 30 days, you may need to reapply to CalFresh.