



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

CALFRESH FACTS

<p>What is CalFresh?</p>	<p>CalFresh (Food Stamps) provides monthly food benefits for individuals and families with low-income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, recipients must have gross income below 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and net income below 100% FPL. • Income limits and benefit levels are based on household size.
<p>How are CalFresh benefits issued?</p>	<p>CalFresh benefits are issued monthly to eligible households via an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. An EBT card works similarly to a debit card.</p>
<p>Where can CalFresh benefits be used?</p>	<p>EBT cardholders can use CalFresh benefits at many grocery chain stores and neighborhood stores in San Mateo County as well as in most Farmers' Markets. Customers use their EBT card like a debit card on devices called point-of-sale terminals. In addition, certain retailers allow for online EBT purchases.</p>
<p>What items can be purchased with CalFresh?</p>	<p>Households can use CalFresh benefits to buy food to eat, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits and vegetables • Breads and cereals • Beans and other legumes • Meat, fish, and poultry • Milk and other dairy products <p>Households can also use CalFresh benefits to buy seeds and plants, which produce food to eat.</p>
<p>What items cannot be purchased with CalFresh?</p>	<p>Households CANNOT use CalFresh to buy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any nonfood items, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pet food ○ Toilet paper • Tobacco and alcohol • Vitamins and medications • Hot prepared meals or food that will be eaten in store
<p>Who can benefit from CalFresh?</p>	<p>An individual, a family, or a group of people that live, buy, and prepare their food together and who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the income limits, • Are residents of San Mateo County, and • At least one individual meets citizenship requirement such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legal Permanent Resident ○ Naturalized Citizen ○ U.S. Citizen
<p>I am not a U.S. Citizen. Am I eligible for CalFresh?</p>	<p>You may be eligible for federal benefits if you are a <i>qualified</i> immigrant. As of April 1, 2026, this includes: Noncitizen U.S. Nationals, Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs), those who reside in the U.S. in accordance with a Compact of Free Association (COFA) agreement, and Cuban/Haitian Entrants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your immigration status is only used to check whether you are eligible for CalFresh. • Immigrants with sponsors may qualify for CalFresh, depending on sponsors income and resources.

- If you are *not* eligible, your children may still be eligible. You may apply for your children if they were born in the United States (U.S.) or have legal residency in the United States. You may still need to show proof of income to determine eligibility.

Example 1: A married undocumented couple is applying for CalFresh with their 2 U.S. born children ages 5 and 7. Due to the couple having a non-qualified immigration status, only the 2 U.S. born children will be eligible to receive CalFresh benefits. The married couple is still responsible to comply with all program requirements.

Example 2: A Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) mother is applying for CalFresh with her LPR child aged 10. Both mother and child would be eligible for CalFresh if all program requirements are met. Note: If individuals are sponsored, a family may be subject to add the income/resources of the sponsor(s) to determine the eligibility.

Note: California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) eligibility remains unchanged for battered noncitizens.

Please contact your local Human Services Agency office for more information.

What are the application processing timeframes?

Regular applications are processed within a 30-day timeframe unless the household is eligible for Expedited Services (ES).

What is Expedited Services (ES)?

A household is eligible to receive CalFresh benefits within 3 calendar days if the household meets **one** of the following criteria:

- Households monthly gross income is less than \$150, and household has \$100 or less in liquid resources; or
- Households whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household’s monthly rent or mortgage and utilities; or
- Households with migrant or seasonal farmworkers and have \$100 or less in liquid resources.

Gross and Net Income Limits

Income is considered when determining CalFresh eligibility. Income includes things such as, earnings from a job, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, self-employment income, retirement benefits, child or spousal support, and other means of income or support.

- Generally, households must have monthly gross income below the Gross Income Limit of 200% FPL.
- All households must have monthly net income below the Net Income Limit of 100% FPL.
 - Net income is monthly income after expenses are taken into consideration.
- Monthly gross and net income limits are based on the number of people in the household.

Note: Households that include an elderly (age 60 or older) and/or disabled member are not subject to the CalFresh Gross Income limit, however they must still meet the CalFresh Net Income Limit.

Household Size	200% FPL	100% FPL	CalFresh Maximum Allotments
	(Effective 10/1/25 – 9/30/26)	(Effective 10/1/25 – 9/30/26)	(Effective 10/1/25 – 9/30/26)
1	\$2,610	\$1,305	\$298
2	\$3,526	\$1,763	\$546
3	\$4,442	\$2,221	\$785
4	\$5,360	\$2,680	\$994
5	\$6,276	\$3,138	\$1,183
6	\$7,192	\$3,596	\$1,421
7	\$8,110	\$4,055	\$1,571
8	\$9,026	\$4,513	\$1,789
Each Additional Person	Add \$918	Add \$459	Add \$218

Expenses and Deductions

When determining whether a household is CalFresh eligible, initially a household needs to meet the gross income limit. After a household meets the gross income limit, expenses will be deducted from a household’s gross income to determine if a household meets the CalFresh net income limit which determines a household’s monthly allotment.

CalFresh expense types include:

- Shelter expenses
- Utility expenses
- Dependent care expenses
- Medical expenses

Resources

- Resource limits vary according to household composition.
- Only certain households are required to meet the established resource limits.

Households that include at least one member that is elderly (age 60 or older) and/or disabled	\$4,500
All other households	\$3,000

I'm in another program, can I get CalFresh?

If you are enrolled in one of the following programs, you may also qualify for CalFresh:

- Medi-Cal
- SSI/SSP
- CalWORKs
- Foster Care
- Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)
- Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Does CalFresh have work requirements?

Yes, CalFresh has work requirements, but they may or may not be applicable to you.

CalFresh has two sets of work requirements

- General work requirements
- Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirements

Effective 6/1/2026, the ABAWDs are limited to receiving no more than any three full months of benefits in a 36-month period unless they meet certain criteria, or an exemption.

An ABAWD is a CalFresh recipient, between age 18 and 64 years of age, who is able-bodied without dependent children and does not meet the criteria for an exemption from the ABAWD time limit.

An individual would be exempt from the ABAWD time limit if they meet any of the following:







- **Under 16 or over 59 years of age; a person aged 16 or 17 who is not the head of household, who is attending school, or is enrolled in an employment training program on at least a half-time basis, is also exempt from work registration**
 - **Note: Individuals aged 60 or older who are exempt from work registration solely due to age, are still subject to the ABAWD time limit, unless they qualify for another work registration exemption or an ABAWD exemption.**
- **Physically or mentally unfit for employment**
- **Subject to and complying with any work requirement under Title IV of the Social Security Act including California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) programs**
- **A parent of, or individual responsible for the care of a dependent child under age 6. Note- The child does not have to be a CalFresh member or living in the home for this work registration exemption.**
- **Responsible for the care of an incapacitated person. Note- The incapacitated person does not have to be a CalFresh household member or living in the home.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has applied for or is receiving unemployment insurance benefits • A regular participant in a drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program • Employed or self-employed at least 30 hours per week or receiving weekly earnings at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note - Due to California’s high minimum wage (in comparison to the federal minimum wage) an individual may be working much less than 30 hours, but still exempt from work registration under this provision • Enrolled in a school, training program or institution of higher education on at least a half time basis Note- Students enrolled at least half time in an institution of higher education must meet student eligibility requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 18 or over 64 years of age • A parent of, or responsible for the care of a dependent child under age 14 who is part of the household. • Pregnant • Unable to work due to a physical or mental limitation • Participating in an Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) training program for at least half time • Indian • Urban Indian • California Indian <p>If you’re unsure whether you qualify for an exemption or need help meeting the requirements, please know that your local Human Services Agency office will guide you through the screening process.</p>
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Verifications	<p>The county may ask you for verifications for any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Income • Immigration status of any non-U.S. Citizen applying for benefits • Residency • Social security number • Resources • Shelter/utility expense • Medical expense
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Interview language	<p>Applicants may be interviewed in the following languages: English, Spanish, and others, if necessary.</p> <p>Also Available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teletypewriter (TTY) • Providing forms in alternate format such as large font.
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Your rights	<p>When you apply for CalFresh, whether you are eligible or not, you have the right to be treated with courtesy, consideration, and respect.</p> <p>The Human Services Agency will not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, religion, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, or condition of physical or mental disability.</p>
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How to apply	<p>You can apply for CalFresh by any of the following methods:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Apply Online at: benefitscal.com</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td>Apply by Phone by calling the Service Center toll-free at 1 (800) 223-8383</td> </tr> </table>		Apply Online at: benefitscal.com		Apply by Phone by calling the Service Center toll-free at 1 (800) 223-8383
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Apply by **Mail** by mailing an application to:

Attn: CalFresh Application
400 Harbor Blvd. Bldg. B
Belmont, CA 94002



Apply by **Fax** by faxing an application to:

(650) 654-8885



Apply **In-person** at a Human Services Agency Office:

Northern Region
271 - 92nd Street
Daly City, CA 94015
(650) 301-8440

Central Region
400 Harbor Blvd. Bldg. B
Belmont, CA 94002
(650) 802-6470

Southern Region
2500 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 599-3811

2415 University Avenue 3rd Floor
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
(650) 363-4175

Offices are open Monday – Friday, 8:00AM – 5:00PM



Apply by calling **Second Harvest of Silicon Valley** at 1 (800) 984-3663

This Fact Sheet is not to be used as a substitute for federal/state CalFresh regulations.