

CalFresh Noncitizen Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions

➤ Why has CalFresh eligibility changed for some lawfully present noncitizens?

Recent federal law passed by Congress and signed by the President limits CalFresh eligibility to certain groups of lawfully present noncitizens. This legislation is known as H.R. 1 or the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Public Law 119-21)¹.

Even though many lawfully present noncitizens are losing CalFresh eligibility, some are still eligible for CalFresh or the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP). CFAP is California's state-funded food benefit program for certain groups of qualified noncitizens.

➤ Who is eligible for CalFresh?

Starting **April 1, 2026**, you are eligible for CalFresh if you are a person who is:

- A Citizen of the United States (U.S.);
- A U.S. National (such as persons born in American Samoa or Swains Island)
- A Cuban and Haitian Entrant (CHE)²;
- A Citizen of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, or Palau; or,
- A Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) who has met the 5-year waiting period or an exemption from the 5-year waiting period, as listed below:
 - Are under 18 years old
 - Have 40 qualifying work quarters
 - Are blind or disabled
 - Were lawfully residing in the U.S. and 65 or older on August 22, 1996
 - Have a U.S. military connection
 - Are admitted to the U.S. as an Amerasian immigrant
 - Are an American Indian born abroad
 - Certain Hmong or Highland Laotian tribal members
 - Certain other categories of humanitarian noncitizens

¹ HR. 1 amends section 6(f) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to limit CalFresh noncitizen eligibility.

² For the full scope of who is eligible as CHE, visit:

https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/orr_fact_sheet_cuban_haitian_entrant.pdf

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➤ Who is no longer eligible for CalFresh?

Starting **April 1, 2026**, you will no longer be eligible for CalFresh and your CalFresh benefits will be terminated if you are a person who is:

- An Asylee;
- A Refugee;
- A Parolee (unless you are CHE);
- An Individual with deportation or removal withheld;
- A Conditional Entrant;
- A Survivor of Trafficking;
- A Battered Noncitizen;
- An Iraqi or Afghan with a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) who is not an LPR;
- A certain Afghan National Granted Parole Between July 31, 2021, and September 30, 2023
- A certain Ukrainian National Granted Parole Between February 24, 2022, and September 30, 2024

➤ What if my immigration status changed?

Even if you were not eligible for CalFresh, you may become eligible if your immigration status changes. Contact your county worker if your status changes to:

- U.S. Citizen;
- U.S. National;
- Cuban or Haitian Entrant (CHE);
- Citizen of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, or Palau; or,
- Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)
 - This applies to you if you were previously granted one of the following statuses:
 - Refugee;
 - Asylum;
 - Deportation or removal withheld;
 - Amerasian immigrant;
 - Victim of trafficking;
 - Iraqi or Afghan SIV who is not an LPR; or
 - Certain Afghan or Ukrainian Parolee

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➤ I am a noncitizen and I applied for CalFresh recently. Will I be eligible?

Starting April 1, 2026, you will be eligible for CalFresh only if you are:

- U.S. Citizen;
- U.S. National;
- LPR;
- CHE; or,
- Citizen of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, or Palau; **and**
- You meet all other financial eligibility criteria. A county worker will determine if you are eligible for benefits when you apply.

If there are multiple people in your household with different immigration statuses, you will receive a notice showing who is approved and who is denied.

➤ When will my benefits stop if I'm no longer eligible after April 1, 2026?

Your benefits will continue until your next recertification as long as you continue to meet all other non-immigration eligibility criteria. A county worker will determine if you are still eligible for benefits at that time.

➤ How will I know if I am losing CalFresh eligibility?

A county worker will review your eligibility at your next recertification. You will receive a notice if you are no longer eligible to receive CalFresh. For example, if your next annual recertification is due in September, 2026, that's when your immigration status will be reviewed to determine if you are still eligible.

Most people recertify every 12 months, but some households have a longer certification period. These households include:

- Those with elderly or disabled members who have a 24-month certification period
- Those with only elderly and/or disabled members and no earned income who have a 36-month certification period.

➤ How can I find my recertification date in BenefitsCal?

You can find your recertification date by logging onto your [BenefitsCal.com](https://www.benefitscal.com) account and viewing your Customer Dashboard.



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Frequently Asked Questions

➤ **My household includes both citizens and noncitizens. Will my household be eligible for CalFresh?**

CalFresh eligibility is determined for each individual in your household. Some members of your household may still be eligible for CalFresh if:

- You are currently receiving CalFresh, a county worker will review your eligibility at your next recertification. A county worker will send you a notice showing which people in your household are still eligible.
- You applied for CalFresh, a county worker will review your application, make a determination, and will send you a notice showing you who is approved and who is denied.

➤ **I am a noncitizen and I can no longer get CalFresh due to H.R. 1. Can I get California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) food benefits?**

Certain lawfully present noncitizens may qualify for CFAP under current state law. However, most noncitizens who are no longer eligible for CalFresh due to H.R. 1 are not eligible for CFAP, with the exception of battered noncitizens and certain parolees.

At recertification, your county worker will determine your eligibility for CalFresh. If you are no longer eligible for CalFresh due to H.R. 1 but you are eligible for CFAP, your county worker will adjust your benefits at that time. If you have questions about CFAP eligibility, you may contact your local county social services office. You can also visit the CFAP website for more information: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/calfresh/california-food-assistance-program>

➤ **Who is eligible for CFAP?**

To be eligible for CFAP benefits, you must be ineligible for CalFresh benefits solely due to your immigration status under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996.

Some examples of CFAP eligible individuals are noncitizens who are:

- LPRs who have not met the five-year U.S. residency requirement or 40 qualifying work quarters criteria;
- Parolees
 - As of June 1, 2026, parolees who have not met the five-year waiting period or an exemption will qualify for CFAP benefits regardless of the length of parole if all other eligibility requirements have been met
- Conditional entrants; or
- Battered or abused



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➤ Will applying for, or receiving, CalFresh or CFAP affect my immigration status?

As of March 9, 2021, CalFresh and CFAP are not considered public charge programs. This means using CFAP will not affect your application for a U.S. visa or your family-based application for a green card. However, the Trump administration has proposed changes to the public charge rule that could impact how receiving food benefits is counted in immigration decisions. Please see the public charge guide below for more information and consult with an immigration attorney if you have more questions.

For more information about public charge, please visit the following:

- California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) Public Charge Guide (available in 21 languages): <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/public-charge-guide/>
- Immigration Legal Services Contractors: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/benefits-services/more-services/immigration-services/immigration-legal-service-providers>

➤ Where can I get food assistance if I am no longer eligible for CalFresh?

If you are no longer eligible for CalFresh, you can:

- Contact your local Food Bank for food assistance: <https://cdss.ca.gov/food-banks>
- Call your local 211 Resource Line
- Contact California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Family services: <https://myfamily.wic.ca.gov/>

➤ Where can I learn more information about legal support for immigrants?

For information about legal services assistance or concerns about adjusting your status, visit the Immigration Services Bureau's Legal Services Assistance webpage:

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/immigration/legal-services>

To find direct service legal providers, visit the Legal Services Providers' Information webpage:

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/immigration/contractor-contact-information>

➤ Where can I learn more information about CalFresh?



Call **1-800-223-8383 Mon -Fri 8 AM -5 PM** to speak with your local county social services worker. California Relay Service call 1-800-735-2922 TDD call 1-800-735-2929.



To learn more about CalFresh or to find a local county social services office near you, visit: www.smcgov.org/hsa

