San Mateo County CalFresh Outreach
College Student Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Will CalFresh affect my financial aid or taxes?
CalFresh is not considered income and so NO it does not affect your financial aid or taxes.

Q2. I am approved for work study, but I do not have a work study job. Could I be eligible for CalFresh?
Work study meets student eligibility if you are a college student between the ages of 18 and 49, enrolled at least half-time and you have approved (accepted or awarded) federal or state work study, anticipate working, and have not refused a work assignment.

Q3. Do I need to work 20 hours per week to meet student eligibility?
Working and being paid for at least 20 hours per week is a student eligibility, but there are other exemptions students can meet. Students can also meet student eligibility by:
- Having approved (awarded or accepted) federal or state work study
- Received Cal Grant A or B and met additional qualifications
- Enrolled in a state funded program that increases employability
- Enrolled in an approved program
- Exerting parental control over a dependent household member
- Participating in CalFresh Employment and Training Program, or Job Opportunities and Basic Skills
- Be a recipient of CalWORKs or Aid to Families with Dependent Children

-Enrolled in an LPIE is a program at a public college, like a degree or training program, that helps students gain work skills and improve their chances of getting a job.
-Public colleges are California Community Colleges (CCC), California State Universities (CSU), and The University of California (UC). Only programs offered at these schools qualify as LPIEs. Programs at private colleges and vocational schools are not considered LPIEs.
-All associate and bachelor's degree programs at public colleges are now LPIEs.
-If you are in an associate or bachelor's degree program, or taking general education courses needed for these degrees, you may qualify for CalFresh.

Q4. I live with roommates, but we buy separate groceries. Will we be a household of 1 or 2?
For CalFresh purposes, a household is defined as an individual, couple, or family that purchases and prepares food together. If each roommate purchases and prepares food separately, each will be a household of one.

Q5. I live in the dorms and I have a meal plan, can I be eligible for CalFresh?
If your household is receiving more than half (11 or more) of their meals per week from another source, they may not be eligible for CalFresh. If receiving 10 or less meals per week from another source, they may be eligible for CalFresh.

Q6. What does NOT count as income?
Financial Aid Programs: Pell Grants (BEOG), Cal Grants; Federal/State college work study; Stafford, Perkins loans; Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)
How Student Aid is counted: CalFresh is not considered income and does not affect taxes or financial aid; Bills paid directly by parents (where the student never handles the money); Personal loans that need to be paid back.

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Q7. What counts as income?
- Earned income
- Unearned income, like money/allowances from others
- Stipends
- Foster Youth Benefits if student receives money directly
- Military/Veteran Families: some counted and others not counted as income
- Often excluded: educational assistance such as deferred payment loans, private grants or scholarship, if earmarked for allowable educational expenses.

Q8. I am 21 and live with my parents; can I apply for CalFresh as my own household?
People who must apply together:
- A married couple who lives together
- Children under 22 living with their biological, adoptive, or stepparent(s)
- An unmarried couple living together with a common child

Q9. I am an out-of-state student, but I reside in California for the school year, can I be eligible for CalFresh?
Out-of-state students may still be eligible for CalFresh if residing in California for the school year. The student would need to apply for CalFresh benefits in their county of residency.

Q10. Do I need to go to the county office to do the interview?
All applicants must complete an interview. You have the option to do the intake interview in person or on the phone. The county will contact you by phone and/or mail to schedule the interview. Rescheduling the interview is an option.

For any inquiries call
1-800-223-8383
www.smcgov.org/hsa/calfresh