



CALFRESH PROGRAM FACT SHEET

The CalFresh Program is a Federal program. The purpose of this program is to promote and safeguard the health and well-being of low-income households by raising their levels of nutrition and increasing their food purchasing power.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Categorical Eligibility

Households in which all CalFresh-eligible members are authorized to receive CalWORKs or General Relief (GR) are "categorically eligible" to receive CalFresh benefits and are automatically eligible to a benefit determination without applying the resource or income limits.

Eligibility requirements for the non-categorically eligible households are as follows:

Income

A two-step determination is done to compute income eligibility for non-categorically eligible households. The gross and net income tests do not apply to categorically eligible households.

1. **Gross Income**

All non-categorically eligible households, **except those containing an aged or disabled member**, must first meet a Gross Income Test and then, if eligible, the Net Income Test. Gross income is defined as all non-excluded income from any source. The maximum allowed is 130% of the poverty level as established by the federal government. Effective October 1, 2011, the maximum gross monthly income for non-categorically eligible households is as follows:

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8*
GROSS INCOME		\$1180	\$1594	\$2008	\$2492	\$2836	\$3249	\$3663
	\$4077							

* Each additional member + \$414

If the gross income for the non-categorically eligible household is the same or less than shown in the chart above, then the adjusted net income is computed.

2. **Adjusted Net Income**

All non-categorically eligible households, including those containing an aged or disabled member, must meet the Net Income Test.

Adjusted net income is defined as all earned income, less 20% for work-related expenses, plus any unearned income received minus allowable deductions.

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8*
NET INCOME	\$908	\$1226	\$1545	\$1863	\$2181	\$2500	\$2818	\$3136

Each additional member + \$319

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

These amounts are effective October 1, 2011 and are subject to change yearly. The allowable deductions include:

- < \$147 standard deduction for household size of 1,2,3
- < \$155 standard deduction for household size of 4
- < \$181 standard deduction for household size of 5
- < \$208 standard deduction for household size of 6 or more
- < \$143 Homeless Standard Shelter Allowance for homeless households

In addition, a deduction is allowed for the cost of housing and utilities based on 50% of the net income or a maximum of \$459, whichever is less.

Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)

SUA amount increased from \$320 to \$329 FFY 2011 – 12, effective October 1, 2011. A household that does not qualify for the SUA, but incurs expenses for at least two separate utilities other than heating and cooling is eligible for a LUA.

Limited Utility Allowance (LUA)

LUA amount increased from \$94 to \$99 FFY 2011 – 12, effective October 1, 2011. A household that does not qualify for the SUA, but incurs expenses for at least two separate utilities other than heating and cooling is eligible for a LUA.

Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA)

The TUA amount is unchanged and remains at \$20 for FFY 2011 – 12. A household that is not eligible for SUA or LUA, but incurs a telephone expense, or an expense for an equivalent form of communication is eligible to receive a TUA.

Households containing a member 60 or older or a disabled member have no maximum on the cost of housing and utilities exceeding 50% of their net income. These elderly/disabled households may also qualify for special Medical deductions.

This adjusted net income is used to compute the household's CalFresh allotment. Effective October 1, 2011, the maximum net monthly income for all eligible households is as follows:

Resources

Resources are assets that are readily converted into cash or available for support of the household; e.g. cash on hand or in a checking or savings account, United States savings bonds, stocks, funds in individual retirement accounts (IRA), etc. The total value of non-exempt resources is limited to \$2,000 for households in which all members are under age 60. For households which include a disabled or aged 60 or older member, the limit is \$3,000 per household.

Effective January 1, 2004, all vehicles are exempt from resource consideration for the purpose of determining eligibility to the CalFresh Program.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

Effective February 1, 2011, households that do not receive CalWORKs or General Relief (GR) benefits can receive CalFresh benefits, if otherwise eligible, without meeting the resource limit for the purpose of determining eligibility to CalFresh Program upon receipt of the PUB 275 brochure or being informed that the PUB 275 brochure is available online, when the applicant/participant has access to internet. These households must still meet other eligibility requirements.

NOTE: If a household requests Expedited Services, the household will be required to provide resource information/verification.

Eligibility for Immigrants

Legal non-citizens are ineligible to Federal CalFresh benefits unless they meet one of the following conditions:

- < Legally residing in the United States for five years or more;
- < Under the age of 18 regardless of the date of entry into the United States;
- < Disabled regardless of the date of entry into the United States and they (1) meet the definition of disability in accordance to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and (2) are receiving blind or disabled benefits, but not receiving SSI/SSP;
- < A Legal Permanent Resident who can be credited with 40 qualifying quarters or work under the Social Security system. Credits may be earned individually, in combination with a spouse and in some circumstances a parent;
- < An elderly individual, 65 years or older, who was lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996.

Effective April 1, 2003, eligibility to Federal CalFresh benefits was restored to legal non-citizens who have lived in the United States as a qualified alien for five years from the date of entry.

Effective October 1, 2003, federal eligibility was restored to all legal non-citizen children under the age of 18 years old regardless of their date of entry to the United States if otherwise eligible. Additionally this regulation eliminates the deeming requirements for non-citizen children that count the income and resources of the non-citizen's sponsor when determining CalFresh eligibility and benefit amounts for the non-citizen child.

The California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) provides CalFresh benefits to legal adult non-citizens who are not eligible to the Federal program because they have resided in the United States less than 5 years.

Eligibility for Drug Felons

Effective January 1, 2005, individuals convicted of felony use or possession for personal use of a controlled substance may be eligible to receive CalFresh benefits if they can provide proof of one of the following:

- < Completion of a government-recognized drug treatment program;
- < Participation in a government-recognized drug treatment program;
- < Enrollment in a government-recognized drug treatment program;

- < Placement on a waiting list for a government-recognized drug treatment program: or
- < Other evidence that the illegal use of controlled substance has ceased.

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

Individuals will remain ineligible for CalFresh benefits if convicted of any drug felony offenses which include: unlawfully transporting, importing into this state, selling, furnishing, administering, giving away, possessing for sale, purchasing for purposes of sale, manufacturing, possessing precursors with the intent to manufacture a controlled substance, or cultivating, harvesting, or processing marijuana.

CalFresh Households

Eligibility is determined on a household by household basis. A "household" is an individual or a group of individuals living together who customarily purchase and prepare food in common. Parents and their children under 22 years of age living together are considered one household. Persons receiving SSI/SSP, boarders, certain non-citizens and most persons residing in institutions are not eligible to receive CalFresh benefits.

Certain types of institutions do qualify for CalFresh benefits. Residents of Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved drug and alcoholic rehabilitation facilities, disabled persons, or persons age 60 or over who live in FNS-approved group living arrangements, homeless individuals in shelters, and women with children who are temporary residents of a shelter for battered women and children, may be eligible to participate in the CalFresh program.

Employable CalFresh participants who do not have a child less than 18 years of age in the home must either be working 20 hours a week, performing workfare, or in an approved education/training program.

Application Processing and Expedited Service

CalFresh applications are processed within 30 days. In emergency situations, a household may receive CalFresh benefits within three days after the date of their CalFresh application. It is our Department's policy to issue expedited CalFresh benefits on the day of application, whenever possible. The household must meet specified conditions which would render the household's situation as emergent (e.g. monthly gross income of less than \$150 and liquid resource of \$100 or less **or** when the combined monthly income and resources are less than the household's monthly rent and utility costs, etc.)

CalFresh Issuance and Use

Los Angeles County uses a method of issuing CalFresh benefits called Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). EBT is an issuance system in which benefits are stored in a central computer database and electronically accessed by cardholders at a Point of Sale (POS) device in authorized food retailers utilizing a reusable plastic card. When the participant is determined eligible, their benefit information is electronically loaded each month into a central computer account.

Any domestic or imported food produced for human consumption may be purchased with CalFresh benefits. Garden seeds and plants sold by retail grocery stores and grown for food may also be purchased with CalFresh benefits. Effective July 25, 2005, homeless, elderly, and disabled households may purchase prepared meals at United States Department of Agriculture – Food and Nutrition Service authorized restaurants with CalFresh benefits.

Tobacco and alcohol may not be purchased with CalFresh benefits. The United States Department

of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for authorizing retail food stores to accept CalFresh benefits. Currently over 8,000 food retailers in Los Angeles County accept CalFresh benefits.

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ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

Allotments are adjusted by the FNS annually on October 1 to account for changes in the cost of Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the maximum and minimum allotments for household size remain unchanged for FFY 2012. ARRA raised the maximum allotments by 13.6 percent of the June 2008 value effective April 1, 2009.

The total dollar amount of CalFresh benefits a household is entitled to receive is determined by the number of eligible household members and their total adjusted net income. Examples effective October 1, 2011 are as follows:

Persons in Household	Adjusted Net Income	CalFresh Allotment	Maximum CalFresh Allotment If Zero Income
1	\$ 90	\$ 173	\$ 200
3	\$170	\$ 475	\$ 526
6	\$300	\$ 862	\$ 952
10	\$300	\$1,412	\$1,502
14	\$350	\$1,997	\$2,102

Restoration of Aid Waiver

Effective May 1, 2011, if you are a CalFresh household and your benefits have been discontinued, you may request to have your CalFresh eligibility and benefits restored if you resolve the reason(s) for the discontinuance within the calendar month following the discontinuance date, unless your case termination was due:

- . Failure to complete recertification
- . Returning to Los Angeles County after moving out of County
- . Disqualified from the CalFresh Program

CALFRESH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The CalFresh Employment and Training (E&T) Program provides employment and training activities to CalFresh participants not exempt from work registration. The goal of the program is to assist participants in obtaining employment and avoiding long-term dependency on assistance.

The CalFresh Security Act of 1985 directed the States to develop CalFresh employment and training programs. Counties were authorized to design programs which best fit their needs within the parameters of the federal requirements. The Los Angeles County's E&T Program consists of the following components:

CALFRESH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

Non-Assistance CalFresh Participants

- S Workfare

General Relief and CalFresh Participants

- S Job Search
- S Job Club
- S Education
- S Vocational Training
- S Job Retention

Workfare

- < The objective of the Workfare Program is to provide non-assistance CalFresh participants with work activities that may lead to self-sufficiency. Participants gain job skills and work experience which may assist them in obtaining entry level employment.
- < The number of hours the Non-Assistance CalFresh participants are required to perform workfare is based on the monthly CalFresh allotment divided by the minimum wage.
- < Sponsor organizations and agencies utilizing this program benefit from client services, as well as play an important role in providing work skills and training experience to the participants. There are approximately 238 workfare project sites located throughout Los Angeles County.
- < Currently we have workfare projects with 20 other Los Angeles County departments; incorporated cities; State, Federal, and private non-profit agencies.

Job Search

- < This component requires participants to make a predetermined number of inquires to prospective employers over a specified period of time, and participants may receive Mandatory Substance Abuse Recovery Program (MSARP) and/or Mental Health (MH) counseling, as needed.

Job Club

- < This component is designed to enhance the job readiness of participants by providing instruction in job-seeking techniques, writing resumes, completing employment applications, job retention, soft skills training, employment counseling and participants may receive MSARP/MH counseling, as needed.

Education

- < This component provides educational programs or activities to improve basic skills or otherwise improve employability and participants may receive MSARP/MH counseling, as

needed. Such programs include Adult Basic Education (ABE), basic literacy (LIT), English-as-a-Second Language (ESL), and General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

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CALFRESH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

Vocational Training

- < In this component, participants receive referrals to short-term vocational training programs that can be completed within 60 days based on their employment goals or interests and receive MSARP/MH counseling, as needed.

Job Retention

- < Job Retention also known as Post Employment Services (PES) is a voluntary component that provides case management and supportive services to participants, who become employed at least 20 hours per week, and remain eligible to General Relief. PES assists participants in remaining employed, obtaining additional education and advancing in their careers.

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