

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CALFRESH FOOD BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVING SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME BEGINNING JUNE 1

SACRAMENTO – As we celebrate May as CalFresh Awareness Month, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is announcing the expansion of the CalFresh program to include recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

“This is an example of the commitment and collaboration among public and private organizations to help ensure that the most vulnerable Californians have access to nutritious food,” said California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly. “I would like to recognize the tremendous work of our county and community partners who are helping to make this a reality.”

Beginning June 1, 2019, hundreds of thousands of SSI recipients in California may be eligible to receive CalFresh food benefits.

“For the first time, people receiving SSI benefits can also receive CalFresh food benefits,” said Acting CDSS Director Pat Leary. “It’s very important to know: Applying for CalFresh will not change your SSI eligibility or benefit amount in any way.”

CalFresh applicants can apply at their local county social services office. All 58 California counties have assistance in place to help residents navigate the initial enrollment period.

There are three ways to apply:

Click: GetCalFresh.org to apply online,
Call: 1-877-847-3663 (FOOD). Available in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Russian. For speech and/or hearing assistance, call 711 relay (available in most counties).
Come In: locate your local county office at CalFreshFood.org.

The CalFresh application process includes:

1. Complete an application – by phone, on-line, or in person.

2. Complete an interview – by phone or in person.
3. Provide proof of income and expenses, if needed.
4. Counties will determine eligibility in 30 days or less (or three days if no or very low income when applying for CalFresh).

Reasonable accommodations and services in multiple languages are available through county social service departments.

Households that already receive CalFresh, and currently have an excluded member receiving SSI, do not need to contact the county. Counties will contact households on their next report date.

If a household's CalFresh case is negatively impacted by including the SSI recipient's income into the eligibility calculation, that household may be eligible for additional state-funded nutrition assistance benefits to offset the impact.

CalFresh is the nation's largest nutrition assistance program, providing nearly 3.8 million individuals (one in ten Californians, including nearly 2 million children) with food benefits each month. These federally-funded benefits total approximately \$515 million in monthly food purchases. Food benefits for one person range from \$15-\$192 per month, with an average for older adults and people with disabilities around \$105-110 per month. Food benefits are delivered on an EBT debit card accepted at grocery stores, farmers markets' and other approved CalFresh locations statewide.

SSI is a needs-based program that provides a monthly benefit to individuals who are blind, elderly, or have a disability.

For more information, go to CalFreshFood.org

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