



## **CALFRESH AND COVID-19**

### **Background**

CalFresh is the State of California's food program for low-income residents. Eligible people are issued a card, like a debit card, that allows them to buy food. People who receive SSI/SSP may apply for CalFresh. The program is run by County Departments of Social Services.

During this COVID-19 crisis, County Departments are closed but they are still providing services. All contact is by phone or email. They must have information on their website and posted at the front of every closed office about how to contact them. [Find your local Department of Social Services CalFresh Office here.](#)

### **If you don't get CalFresh**

Apply for CalFresh benefits. Within 30 days of the application, you will have a phone interview with your county CalFresh program. If you are eligible, the amount of benefit you will receive will be decided after the interview. You can [apply for CalFresh here.](#)

### **If you receive CalFresh but need more**

Any time you make less money because you lose a job or work fewer hours, you can ask for more CalFresh benefits. To request more benefits, you should:

- Get a letter or statement from your employer that says you have lost your job or that your hours have been cut back.
- Send the letter to your County Social Services Department. Go to their website to find out how to send it. It may include email, fax or putting it in a drop box outside of their office.

**Go to the next page to learn more about how CalFresh works.**



## Who is Eligible?

Living with family: People who get SSI/SSP and who live with their families may be eligible for CalFresh, but it depends on several factors including the household's size and income level.

Living alone or with housemates: If the person who gets SSI/SSP lives with housemates or on their own, they should be eligible for CalFresh benefits. Tell CalFresh that you are the only person eating your food.

Group living residents: People who live in large residential facilities usually won't be eligible for CalFresh benefits. If the residence houses 16 or fewer people, the SSI/SSP recipient can still apply on their own or, if the person is unable to do so, an authorized representative can apply for them.

## Using the CalFresh EBT Card

Once certified, the person will be issued a debit-type card that can be used to purchase food. Most stores and many farmers' market vendors accept these cards, called EBT cards. EBT stands for Electronic Benefit Transfer. At a grocery store or other food market, use the EBT card like a debit card. To use your EBT card at a farmers' market, go to the information booth at the market to see how.

People may also use their EBT card at certain restaurants. You can find a list of eligible restaurants on your local CalFresh office website.

There are some things you are not permitted to buy with the EBT card:

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco.
- Any nonfood items, such as pet foods, soaps, paper products, household supplies, vitamins and medicines, food that will be eaten in the store, or hot foods.

## For more information

[Get more information about CalFresh here.](#)