

CalFresh for Nonminor Dependents (NMDs) and Youth Exiting Foster Care: A Fact Sheet for Advocates

CalFresh can help young people meet their food needs and provide stability as they make the transition to adulthood. Unfortunately, many young people in and leaving foster care have a hard time meeting all of their food and nutrition needs. For example, according to the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH), 27%¹ of nineteen year olds in extended foster care and 29.7 %² of 21 year olds and 28.2%³ of 23 year olds who had been in foster care reported being food insecure. However, young people in extended foster care and leaving foster care may be eligible for CalFresh, sometimes called food stamps. This fact sheet provides highlights about the CalFresh program that are most relevant to nonminor dependents in foster care and who are about to age out so that they can have the benefit of CalFresh if they otherwise meet eligibility requirements. **Here are some key takeaways from this Fact Sheet:**

- Non Minor Dependents (NMDs) in extended foster care may be eligible for CalFresh, especially those in Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) settings.
- Some of the benefits and funds that NMDs receive are excluded from income for purposes of calculating the CalFresh benefit and may result in a higher CalFresh grant.
- Young people should be assisted by the child welfare agency in submitting a CalFresh application as part of their transition plan and before they leave foster care at age 18 or older.
- CDSS policy allows a CalFresh application to be submitted 30 days before a young person exits foster care at age 18 or older to help ensure timely benefit receipt upon discharge from foster care.
- Many young adults will be eligible for CalFresh after exiting foster care at age 18 or older.
- There are many exemptions to work requirement for CalFresh; two important exemptions are for young adults with experience in foster care and homeless individuals.

¹ Mark E. Courteny et al., [Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study \(CalYOUTH\): Conditions of Youth at Age 19](#) 90 (Chapin Hall 2016). In the study, a youth was classified as food insecure if he or she answered “yes” to two of more of the following items: (1) Anyone in household skipped/cut size of meals because of not enough money for food, (2) Did not eat for a whole day because of not enough money for food, (3) Ate less than you should because of not enough money for food, (4) Did not have enough money to buy food after food didn’t last (sometimes or often), and (5) Could not afford to eat balanced meals (sometimes or often).

² Mark E. Courteny et al., [Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study \(CalYOUTH\): Conditions of Youth at Age 21](#) 78 (Chapin Hall 2018).

³ Mark E. Courtney et al., [Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study \(CalYOUTH\): Conditions of Youth at Age 23](#) 67 (Chapin Hall 2020).

- There are also exemptions to the student work requirement for CalFresh for which many young adults with experience in foster care may be eligible.
- Young people receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may also be eligible for CalFresh.
- There may be civil legal aid attorneys available for transition age youth that can help access CalFresh and navigate any difficulties getting connected to the program.

CalFresh Basics

How can CalFresh help provide food security?

CalFresh—California’s name for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (aka food stamps)—provides eligible individuals and families benefits to purchase food. The amount of the benefit depends on an individual’s or household’s income and includes members of the household that are buying and preparing food together. Benefits are accessed by using an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, which works like an ATM card. It can be used at grocery stores, farmer’s markets and some online stores to purchase food.

Can young people receive CalFresh while in extended foster care?

Young people in foster care may be able to receive CalFresh. Their eligibility will depend on their income and who they live and prepare food with.

PRACTICE TIP: Many young people in extended foster care are eligible for CalFresh and are not receiving this critical benefit. Assist young people with the CalFresh application and recertification and include application support in the case plan.

How is eligibility for CalFresh Determined?

Individuals and households may be eligible for CalFresh if they are low income and meet several other criteria. A household’s income is calculated using a variety of factors that will be discussed below.

Income is used to determine if an individual or household is eligible and how much their CalFresh grant will be. In some cases, there are also work requirements to receive CalFresh, which will be described more below.

Below we explore some of the key terms to know to understand how eligibility for CalFresh is determined with a focus on how they may play out for youth in and leaving foster care: (1) household; (2) income; and (3) deductions.

(1) Household: The income of a household is what is considered for CalFresh eligibility. For that reason, it is important to understand who is considered a “household.” The household is a group of people who live together and regularly purchase and prepare food together. This includes people who are or are not related. People who must be included in a household include the applicant’s spouse and their children who are under age 22. Note: this means that if a nonminor dependent is residing with their parent, they must be in their parent’s CalFresh household.

NMDs can live in a variety of different settings. The chart below lists some common NMD living settings and who would be considered part of the household.

Examples of Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILP) or Transitional Living Setting (TLS)	Who is in the Household?
The nonminor rents their own apartment and lives alone or with their child(ren).	The household includes the nonminor and their child(ren).
The nonminor lives in an apartment with a roommate with whom the nonminor buys and prepares meals	They are a household of two since they live together and prepare food together and must receive CalFresh as a household.
The nonminor lives in an apartment with a roommate, but the nonminor and their roommate prepares their meals separately	The nonminor is a household of one.
The nonminor is a boarder ⁴ in someone’s home and pays for room and board (food).	The nonminor must be included in the household of whoever they are paying room and board to.
The nonminor rents a room, but rent does not include paying for board (food). ⁵	The nonminor can apply as their own household.
The nonminor lives in a dorm run by a college, university or training program.	The nonminor can apply as their own household if they prepare their own food and

⁴ Boarders are people, including youth in some foster care placements, for whom payment is made to live and eat in someone’s home or property. 7 C.F.R. §§ 273.1(b)(3) and (4); MPP §§ 63-402.3, 63-402.141(a) and .144..

⁵ In this case, the nonminor is a “roomer.” 7 C.F.R. § 273.1(b)(5).

	<p>are not enrolled in a meal plan.</p> <p>If the nonminor receives more than 50% of their meals through a campus meal plan, they are not eligible for CalFresh.</p>
The nonminor lives in a homeless shelter run by a non-profit.	The nonminor can apply as their own household.
Examples of Transitional Housing Placement Programs for Nonminor Dependents (THP-NMD) Settings	Who is in the household?
The nonminor lives in their own apartment without a roommate (whether in a staffed site or a remote site)	The household includes the NMD. The household also includes the NMD's child(ren) if they reside with them.
The nonminor lives in an apartment (whether in a staffed site or a remote site) with a roommate with whom the nonminor buys and prepares meals	They are a household of two since they live together and prepare food together and must receive CalFresh as a household.
The nonminor lives in an apartment (whether in a staffed site or a remote site) with a roommate, but the nonminor and their roommate prepares their meals separately	The nonminor is a household of one.
The nonminor lives in a host home and food is provided to the nonminor.	The nonminor must be included in the household of whomever they are paying room and board to (i.e. whoever is receiving their foster care maintenance payment).
The nonminor lives in a staffed site where the THP-NMD program provides food to participants	The nonminor would not be eligible for CalFresh.

Foster Home	A foster home is paid to cover the youth’s daily living needs, including food. The nonminor is considered a “boarder” and would be included in the household of their foster parents. They would not be their own household.
Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)	If the nonminor is placed in an STRTP, the child welfare agency, probation department, or tribe is paying for their room and board (food) through their foster care maintenance payment and they would not be eligible for CalFresh.

(2) Income: Income is the money that the nonminor has through work and other sources. Most households must have less income than the gross and net income limits to be eligible for CalFresh. The county welfare office first looks at a household’s gross monthly income to determine whether it is below the gross income limit (130% of the federal poverty line). If monthly gross income is below the limit, then the CalFresh office will look at the household’s net monthly income (income after it subtracts some of the household’s expenses) to determine how much CalFresh a household will receive. Net monthly income must be below 100% of the federal poverty line.

There are many CalFresh rules about income that result in some of the funds that the nonminor has on hand NOT being counted as income. These rules are important to help ensure that an NMD or former foster youth gets the maximum CalFresh benefit for which they are eligible. Below are some examples that are most relevant to NMDs and former foster youth.

Funds that Do Count as the NMD’s Income

- Any portion of the NMD’s foster care payment that is received directly by the NMD is considered unearned income and included when determining the household’s eligibility and benefit level. Money paid to a NMD directly to pay for their SILP setting, for example, is counted as income. Funds paid directly to a NMD from a THP-NMD provider for the NMD to pay for food and living expenses also count as income.

- A stipend that is provided to a NMD is counted as income if it is provided through a credit card company prepaid gift card.
- For an expectant or parenting youth, any portion of the infant supplement or expectant parent payment that is received directly by the NMD is considered unearned income.

Funds that Do Not Count as Income

- Funds that are not paid directly to the NMD are not considered unearned income. This includes the portion of the foster care payment that is paid directly to a transitional housing placement provider or is paid to a vendor to provide goods or services to the NMD. This also includes when a rent payment is made directly to a landlord.
- In-Kind income (benefits received other than cash), including payments made to third parties under the Transitional Housing Placement Program Plus (THP-Plus) do not count as income.⁶
- If the NMD is provided an establishment-specific gift card (e.g. a Target Gift Card, an Amazon gift card), it is excluded as resources in determining a household’s eligibility or benefit level.
- Financial aid for postsecondary education and training, like grants and scholarships, are excluded from income
- A NMD’s income from work does not count if they are participating in the Independent Living Program and they have a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) that states that the purpose of the employment is “to enable the child to gain knowledge of needed work skills, work habits, and responsibilities of maintaining employment.”⁷ But, if it is not included in the TILP, money paid for work WOULD count as income.

PRACTICE TIP: If a young person is working, make sure to include this in the TILP so that the funds from work are not counted as income for CalFresh.

⁶ MPP § 63-502.2(a), California Department of Social Services (CDSS) All-County Information Notice (ACIN) I-54-09, available at https://www.cdss.ca.gov/lettersnotices/entres/getinfo/acin/2009/I-54_09.pdf.

⁷ WIC 11008.15 “Notwithstanding Sections 11008.14 and 11267, the department shall exercise the options of disregarding earned income of a dependent child or ward of the juvenile court derived from participation in the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-300), a dependent child or ward of the juvenile court who is a full-time student pursuant to the Deficit Reduction Act of 1984 (Public Law 97-369), a dependent child or ward of the juvenile court 16 years of age or older who is a participant in the Independent Living Program pursuant to the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-272), and, on and after January 1, 2012, a nonminor dependent, as defined in subdivision (v) of Section 11400 who is participating in a transitional independent living case plan pursuant to the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351), provided that the child's Independent Living Program case plan states that the purpose of the employment is to enable the child to gain knowledge of needed work skills, work habits, and the responsibilities of maintaining employment.”

(3) Deductions

To arrive at the household's net income, **deductions** must be subtracted. Deductions can reduce an NMD's total income, which may result in a higher CalFresh award. There are [many deductions](#). Here are some that may be most relevant to NMDs:

- **Standard Deduction:** The current standard deduction is \$198 for households of 1-3 people.
- **Earned Income Deduction:** If the NMD is working, they can deduct 20% of the amount they earn from their wages.
- **Dependent Care Deduction:** The NMD can deduct the cost of child care that they are paying for to be able to get or keep a job.
- **Standard Utility Allowance:** If the NMD pays utilities separate from their rent and directly to the utility company. The current standard utility allowance is \$596.

What are the income limits for CalFresh?

Until September 30, 2025, \$1,632 is the gross monthly income limit for a household of one, \$2,215 for a household of two, and \$2,798 for a household of three.⁸

The gross income limit is 130% of the federal poverty line and net income must be at or below 100% of the federal poverty line.⁹

Can a youth who receives Supplemental Security Income be eligible for CalFresh?

Yes! As of June 1, 2019, individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be eligible to receive CalFresh, provided they meet other CalFresh eligibility criteria.¹⁰

Are there tools that can help a young person calculate the amount of CalFresh they may be eligible for?

Yes, a CalFresh calculator can be found here:

<https://calfresh.guide/how-to-calculate-the-monthly-grant-amount/>. This tool can be used to provide an estimate. This CalFresh calculator is updated regularly based on new CalFresh rules.

⁸ This data is updated yearly and currently can be found in [ACIN I-45-24](#).

⁹ 7 C.F.R. 273.9 (a).

¹⁰ Assembly Bill 1811 (2018), ACL 18-90, available at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2018/18-90.pdf?ver=2018-07-31-142643-887>.

PRACTICE TIP: Explore the CalFresh calculator with clients to provide an estimate of benefits and better understanding of how the program works:

<https://calfresh.guide/how-to-calculate-the-monthly-grant-amount/>

Are there any immigration or citizenship requirements for CalFresh?

Yes. Individuals may be eligible for CalFresh or the state-funded California Food Assistance Program (CFAP)¹¹ if they meet other requirements and are legal permanent residents (LPR), refugees, asylees, parolees, U or T Visa applicants and recipients, VAWA applicants, Cuban or Haitian entrants. Unfortunately, youth who are applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status or have been granted SIJ status but have not adjusted to LPR status are not eligible for CalFresh. Individuals who are undocumented or are Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients are not eligible for CalFresh. For more detailed information on immigration status and CalFresh, please see this [resource](#).

Work Requirements and Exceptions to the Work Requirements

Are there work requirements for CalFresh?

Yes. Generally, individuals who are considered able-bodied adults without dependent children (ABAWDs) are limited to three full months of CalFresh out of every 36 months unless they meet certain work activity requirements. This is called the ABAWD rule.¹² An ABAWD is an adult who:

- a. Is between the ages of 18 and 54,¹³
- b. Who can work, and
- c. Does not have children under age 18 living in the CalFresh household.

When the ABAWD time limit is in place, ABAWDs must work or participate in a work activity to keep their CalFresh benefits for longer than 3 months, unless the person is excused from ABAWD rules. There are three common ABAWD exemptions that may apply to NMDs and to youth who recently aged out of foster care: (1) exemptions for current and former foster youth, (2) exemptions for individuals experiencing homelessness, and (3) students enrolled at least half time in an institution of higher education.

¹¹ CFAP uses state funds instead of federal funds, and is administered in exactly the same way CalFresh is, and so many people who receive CFAP do not know that they are not receiving CalFresh.

¹² Note: California has received a statewide waiver for the work requirement for all individuals in the ABAWD category that lasts until October 31, 2024. This waiver was extended to October 31, 2025.

¹³ The upper age limit moved from 52 to 54 on October 1, 2024.

In addition to the exemptions to the ABAWD requirement described in detail directly below, there are a few other exemptions that may apply to transition aged young people:

- Individuals who cannot work due to:
 - to a physical or mental health issue
 - a drug or alcohol problem
 - being a victim of domestic violence
- Individuals who are pregnant
- A parent of or responsible for the care of a dependent child under age 6.
- Subject to and complying with any work requirement under Title IV of the Social Security Act including CalWORKs programs.¹⁴

PRACTICE TIP: Young people with experience in foster care or who are homeless may be exempt from the work requirements for CalFresh. Because this is a relatively new exemption, advocates may need to educate the CalFresh Office to ensure that the exemption is provided.

1. ABAWD Exemptions for Youth with Experience in Foster Care

On September 1, 2023, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (FRA) became effective that exempts young people with experience in foster care from this work requirement.¹⁵ Foster youth for these purposes is defined as individuals aged 24 or younger who were in care on their 18th birthday, *whether they continue in care or not*.¹⁶ Young people who are in extended foster care would also be eligible for the exemption from the work requirement.

2. ABAWD Exemptions for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Federal law also expanded exemptions for individuals experiencing homelessness. An individual experiencing homelessness is defined in 7 CFR 271.2 as “an individual who lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence *or* an individual whose primary nighttime residence is:

¹⁴ The full list of exemptions can be found in [ACL 19-93](#), page 10-11.

¹⁵ Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, P.L. 118-05.

¹⁶ See California Department of Social Services (CDSS) All-County Letter (ACL) 23-80, page 3-4, available at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Letters-and-Notices/ACLs/2023/23-80.pdf?ver=2023-09-22-145308-893>.

- A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary accommodations (such as a welfare hotel or congregate shelter);
- A halfway house or similar institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized;
- A temporary accommodation for not more than 90 days in the residence of another individual; or
- A place not designed for, or ordinarily used, as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (a hallway, a bus station, a lobby, or similar places)."

Under the FRA, individuals no longer have to experience chronic homelessness to meet the criteria for an exemption from the ABAWD time limit, as they are exempt based on the criteria mentioned above.¹⁷ NMDs and former foster youth are especially vulnerable to homelessness, so this new exemption may be critical to ensure that these youth are able to access CalFresh.¹⁸

3. ABAWD Exemptions for Students Enrolled in Higher Education

Students enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education are exempt from the work requirement rules if they meet the CalFresh student eligibility rules.¹⁹ A student is a person between ages 18 and 49 who is enrolled in higher education at least half-time. This requirement applies to institutions of higher education that are either (a) business, trade, technical or vocational schools normally requiring a high school diploma or GED to enroll; or (b) a junior, community, two-year or four-year college or university, or graduate school, regardless whether a high school diploma or GED is required (such as California Community Colleges (CCCs), California State Universities (CSUs), or Universities of California (UCs), or nonprofit and for-profit colleges).

This work requirement is not impacted by any of the exceptions mentioned directly above, including those related to being a young person with experience in foster care or homelessness.

A student enrolled in higher education is eligible for CalFresh and exempt from the ABAWD requirements if they meet one of the following criteria:

¹⁷ ACL 23-80, page 3.

¹⁸ Mark E. Courteny et al., Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CaYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 21 (Chapin Hall 2018), available at:

https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_YT_RE0518_1.pdf. In the study, researchers found that at age 21, nearly 20 percent of the youth participants reported that they were homeless at some point in extended care.

¹⁹ MPP §§ 63-407.21(h), 63-406.2. (See MPP 63-406.1: "Any person who is age 18 through 49; physically and mentally fit for employment; and enrolled at least half-time, as defined by the institution, in an institution of higher education (as defined in Section 63-406.111(a)), shall be ineligible to participate in the Food Stamp Program unless that person complies with the eligibility requirements as specified in Section 63-406.2").

- Employed 20 hours per week or averaged to 80 hours per month,
- participating in a program to increase employability ,
- unable to be employed due to a disability.²⁰
- receiving federal or state work-study money.²¹
- approved for a TANF-funded Cal Grant A or B (CalWorks or Tribal TANF).
- students with children with the following situations:
 - full-time student with a child under age 12; or
 - part-time student with a child under age six or a child between ages six and 12 for whom adequate care is not available; or
 - receiving CalWORKs
- Does not intend to register for the next normal school term.
- enrolled in a CalFresh employment and training (FSET) program, or other state or local job training programs that USDA will accept.
- enrolled in a program to increase the student’s employability, which are referred to as LPIE programs–Local Programs that Increase Employability.

For more information about student eligibility rules, see California Department of Social Services All-County Letter 24-31 CalFresh Student Eligibility Handbook Version 2.0.²²

What makes a program a Local Program to Increase Employability (LPIE)?

An LPIE program must be (1) government-run, and (2) contain the equivalent of a CalFresh E&T component listed in federal law at 7 CFR 273.7(e)(2). To be government run, the program must be run or overseen by a CCC, CSU, or UC.²³ LPIE programs must assist an individual to develop skills that increase their chances of being employed. They must provide structured programming that is required and ongoing rather than optional and intermittent activities. Drop-in centers that offer services on an as-needed basis are not considered an LPIE. CDSS keeps a list of approved LPIEs on its website. You can find it [here](#).

²⁰ 7 C.F.R. §§ 273.5(b); MPP § 63-406.211

²¹ “Receiving” for these purposes means when the student is approved (or awarded or accepted) for state or federally financed work study for the current school term, anticipates working during the term, and has not refused a work assignment. [ACL 17-05; ACIN I-89-15.] This exemption applies even if a work study job assignment has not yet begun or is not available.

²² Available at

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Letters-and-Notices/ACLs/2024/24-31.pdf?ver=2024-05-13-162325-140>.

²³ [CalFresh Student Eligibility: A Guide for College Campuses to Increase CalFresh Participation Through The Identification of Local Programs that Increase Employability](#) (June 2, 2022).

Has the law changed on LPIEs? What is the impact of the law change on transition aged foster youth?

State law changed in 2022 with the passage of AB 396 of 2021. Now it is required that programs must be individually certified as LPIEs. Before the change in the law, there were types of programs that were considered LPIEs by virtue of their program type. For example, all Guardian Scholar programs were considered LPIEs. While many campus support programs that provide services to youth with experience in foster care may be eligible as LPIEs, they must go through the certification process. The certification process is streamlined and programs should use this [template](#). They can also get technical assistance from the Center for Healthy Communities by emailing their resource hub at CFOResourceHub@csuchico.edu.

How can you find out if a program is certified as an LPIE?

You can find out if a program is certified as an LPIE [here](#).

PRACTICE TIP: If a young person is involved in a campus support program that you think would meet the requirements of an LPIE, but has not been certified yet, reach out to them and ask them to contact the Center for Healthy Communities at CFOResourceHub@csuchico.edu to find out the simple process for certification.

Appealing a CalFresh Denial, Termination or Reduction of Benefits

What can someone do if their CalFresh application is denied or they receive a notice that their CalFresh benefits will end or be reduced?

The county welfare agency must provide adequate written notice of any change, denial, or termination of a social services program benefit.²⁴ The notice must be mailed at least ten days in advance of the effective date of change or termination.²⁵ The notice must be a CDSS or county-developed form, prepared in clear language, and should inform the participant what information or action, if any, is needed to reestablish eligibility.²⁶ If an individual disagrees with the proposed action, they have 90 calendar days to request a state fair hearing.²⁷

²⁴ MPP §§ 22-001(a)(1), 22-071.13.

²⁵ MPP §§ 22-001(t)(1), 22-072.4. The ten-day count does not include the day of mailing or the effective day of the action.

²⁶ MPP §§ 22-071.3 – 22-071.6.

²⁷ MPP § 63-804.5.

If a household whose benefits have been reduced or terminated files a request for a hearing within the appropriate time frame, and the household's certification period has not expired, the county welfare department shall continue the household's participation in the Food Stamp Program *unless the household specifically waives in writing the continuation of benefits*.²⁸ If they lose at hearing, they will be asked to repay the benefits they received during the appeal process.²⁹ They can also request a hearing if an action is taken and no notice was issued.

An individual can contact CDSS to request a state fair hearing online at <https://acms.dss.ca.gov/acms/page.request.do?page=public.intakeForm> or call (800) 743-8525. An individual can also submit their request to your County Welfare Department Office. It is best practice for all requests to be submitted in writing.

How can a nonminor dependent or former foster youth find legal assistance to help with an appeal?

The Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC) maintains a website with a statewide legal aid directory, which can be accessed [here](#).

What can someone do if their application is delayed?

Counties must process non-emergency CalFresh applications and issue benefits to those eligible, as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the date of application filing.³⁰ An applicant household with very low income and few resources may qualify for "expedited service," commonly referred to as emergency CalFresh or food stamps.³¹ Under California law, emergency CalFresh must be paid to eligible households no later than three calendar days after applying.³² Although counties have a mandatory duty to meet these deadlines, some counties fall behind in practice, and applications can linger beyond the statutorily mandated timeframes. If a CalFresh applicant's application is delayed, the person can request a state hearing, and if the application is for expedited service benefits, the applicant can request an expedited hearing.

Exiting Foster Care and CalFresh Applications

If a youth is in extended foster care and about age out, does the placing agency have an obligation to help them apply for CalFresh?

The child welfare agency and juvenile probation department are required to provide the NMD with written information that they may be eligible for CalFresh and how to apply at the last

²⁸ MPP § 63-804.611.

²⁹ MPP § 63-804.612.

³⁰ 7 U.S.C. § 2020(e)(3); 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(a), (g)(1), (3); Welf. & Inst. Code § 18911(a)

³¹ 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(i)(1); MPP § 63-301.51.

³² See Welf. & Inst. Code § 18914(b) (implementing 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(i)); MPP § 63-31.531(a).

hearing before they turn age 18 and every hearing that follows.³³ As mentioned above, an NMD may be eligible for CalFresh while they are in extended foster care. Some young people may not be eligible for CalFresh until they exit foster care. For those young people, it is important to submit the CalFresh application prior to leaving foster care so that the benefits can be in place as close to your discharge date as possible.

An NMD can submit a CalFresh application 30 days before their discharge.³⁴

PRACTICE TIP: Discuss whether youth are eligible for CalFresh at Transitional Independent Living Planning Meetings while they are in extended foster care and put actions to apply for CalFresh benefits in the TILP. If a youth is not eligible for CalFresh while in foster care, make sure their application is submitted 30 days prior to discharge date to ensure benefits begin as soon as possible. Make sure that at the last hearing before a youth is discharged from foster care that the court orders any assistance that is needed to help the young person apply for CalFresh before leaving care.

Can a youth who receives Supplemental Security Income be eligible for CalFresh?

Yes! As of June 1, 2019, individuals in receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be eligible to receive CalFresh, provided they meet other CalFresh eligibility criteria.³⁵

Selected Guidance Documents from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

[ACL 24-42](#) (June 14, 2024)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to release the CalFresh Work Rules Oral Script. The County Welfare Department (CWD) may use this script to meet the requirements to provide an oral explanation of the CalFresh work rules to all work registrants, as mandated by the Employment And Training Opportunities In The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Final Rule (the Final Rule) published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA, FNS) published on January 5, 2021.

[ACL 24-31](#) (May 3, 2024)

³³ Welf. & Inst. Code § 391(b)(10); [ACL 23-40](#) (April 26, 2023).

³⁴ [ACIN 1-35-13](#).

³⁵ Assembly Bill 1811 (2018), ACL 18-90, available at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2018/18-90.pdf?ver=2018-07-31-142643-887>.

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to release the CalFresh Student Eligibility Handbook Version 2.0 (Handbook). The Handbook provides updated policy guidance on CalFresh student eligibility. The guidance released in ACL 24-31 supersedes guidance released in the previous CalFresh Student Eligibility Handbook, ACL No. 20-08 issued on February 12, 2020.

[ACL 23-107](#) (December 19, 2023)

The purpose of this letter is to release revised notices and forms due to changes to the Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) time limit policy as mandated by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (FRA).

[ACL 23-80](#) (September 21, 2023)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to release guidance on changes to the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) time limit policy required by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (FRA).

[ACL 22-84](#) (October 27, 2022)

This ACL includes the Revised CalFresh Student Exemption Screening Form (CF 6177) to County Welfare Departments (CWDs).

[ACL 22-48](#) (June 10, 2022)

This ACL describes the obligation that all CWDs designate at least one employee as a staff liaison to serve as a point of contact for academic counselors and other professional staff of a campus of an institution of public higher education located within the county. The liaison is to serve as a point of contact to facilitate the connection between students in need of county services and CWDs and provide information on programs and services offered by the agency that may be available to students.

[ACL 22-46](#) (June 3, 2022)

This ACL describes the new assessment and approval process of campus-based Local Programs that Increase Employability (LPIEs) for the CalFresh program including the reassessment of previously approved statewide programs and the removal of LPIEs at private institutions of higher education.

[ACL 17-05](#) (Feb 14, 2017)

This ACL provides clarification on current CalFresh student eligibility rules, key definitions, and an expanded list of programs that qualify a student for an exemption from the student eligibility rule. Additionally, this ACL describes verification procedures and provides a sample checklist to identify potential exemptions.

Additional Resources

Legal Services of Northern California's Guide to CalFresh Benefits

<https://calfresh.guide/>

John Burton Advocates for Youth NMD and CalFresh FAQ

<https://jbay.org/resources/faq-non-minor-dependents-calfresh/>