





Don't Go Hungry!

Apply **today** to see if you could be eating better and saving your money with CalFresh.



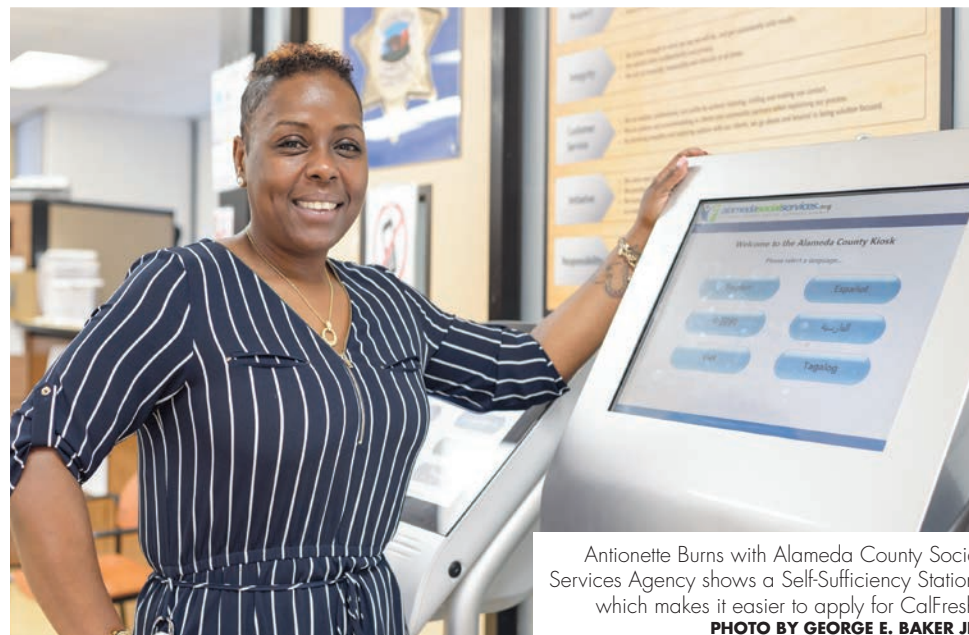
Are you a(n)...

Immigrant	Worker
page 3	page 5
Student	Senior
page 4	page 6



What if You Could *Eat Better?*

Getting food to eat is easy in
Alameda County!



Antionette Burns with Alameda County Social Services Agency shows a Self-Sufficiency Station, which makes it easier to apply for CalFresh.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

no one should have to choose between paying bills or feeding their family, but unfortunately that's a struggle many Californians face. If someone needs more or healthier food, the first place they should turn is CalFresh.

CalFresh is a federally mandated, state supervised and county-operated food assistance program. CalFresh benefits provide low-income individuals and families with access to healthy and nutritious food. Ironically, more people qualify than you may think. For instance, many individuals and families who have jobs may actually qualify for CalFresh.

A common misconception is that CalFresh is a type of welfare. Unfortunately, that misconception continues to keep thousands of people from applying for and receiving benefits for which they potentially qualify. Counties across the state are working to bring awareness, dispel myths and assist families, individuals, students, veterans and the elderly to apply for CalFresh benefits. Through these efforts, the CalFresh application and retention process has been made simpler.

With CalFresh, individuals and families throughout Alameda County are eating better and more often. CalFresh is helping families put nutritious foods in their children's lunch boxes and prepare healthy dinners. With CalFresh, busy adults have access to delicious and balanced food on the go.

In Alameda County, approximately 50,000 households are estimated to already use CalFresh due, in large part, to how easy the county has made the application process.

"We have made the program as simple as possible for new applicants to apply for benefits and current recipients to maintain their benefits," said Antionette Burns, Program Manager with Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA). "The process is streamlined with multiple portals to apply and maintain benefits."

The state has removed barriers that kept many people from applying, such as no longer requiring fingerprinting or bank information. In addition, the state emphasizes dual enrollment. This allows

"We have made the program as simple as possible."

Antionette Burns

Program Manager, Alameda County Social Services Agency

applicants to access multiple government assistance programs using one simple application. For example, individuals who apply for CalFresh in Alameda County can simultaneously apply for Medi-Cal for health assistance. This process reduces legwork for both residents and county agencies.

"Over the years, a lot of community members advocated for changes in the law," Burns said. "Now, CalFresh requirements are the most lenient of all public assistance programs."

To make assistance even more accessible, the county has developed technical enhancements available at all of their Self-Sufficiency Centers and Satellite Offices — such as the scanning kiosks where recipients can scan documents or order replacement Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, or the self-service kiosks where residents can address a multitude of questions and concerns utilizing a ticketing system that was developed to make visits to ACSSA county offices more efficient.

"We, at Alameda County Social Services Agency, continue to strive to make it easier for our residents to apply for benefits and provide avenues in which they can report a change or submit required documentation or forms, have questions answered, or receive assistance through referrals," said Burns.

As Alameda County continues to dispel any misinformation associated with CalFresh, Burns only expects the number of CalFresh recipients to increase.

WHAT IS CALFRESH?

- CalFresh is a nutrition assistance program offered by the state of California to low-income residents and households.
- Monthly benefits are given to qualified recipients on an electronic payment card that resembles a debit card.
- CalFresh can be used at most grocery stores and many farmers markets to buy healthy foods.

WHO QUALIFIES?

A household of
1 person
who earns up to
\$2,024/mo.
can receive up to
\$192/mo.
for food



A household of
2 people
who earn up to
\$2,744/mo.
can receive up to
\$353/mo.
for food

A household of
3 people
who earn up to
\$3,464/mo.
can receive up to
\$505/mo.
for food



A household of
4 people
who earn up to
\$4,184/mo.
can receive up to
\$642/mo.
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A household of
5 people
who earn up to
\$4,904/mo.
can receive up to
\$762/mo.
for food



*Each additional household member adds
\$720/mo. in income and
\$144/mo. in benefits

Numbers effective October 1, 2018

CalFresh kept food on the table for Maria Isabel Malagon and her son, Christian, while she recovered from an injury and obtained legal status in the U.S.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

Food for Her Family

Single mother receives help from CalFresh while building a new life in the U.S.

BY MATT JOCKS

Like many immigrants, Maria Isabel Malagon might have remained in the shadows, struggling to make ends meet — if not for her family and CalFresh. Fortunately for Malagon, Alameda County Social Services was there to provide help during an uncertain time in her life.

Malagon came to the U.S. from Mexico, where she was the victim of a violent crime that left her with symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Malagon is safe now and has since been granted a U visa, but when she needed help getting food assistance she was still undocumented.

Malagon supported herself and her son, Christian, by cooking, cleaning and caring for children. Though she was grateful to have a job, her earnings were barely enough to support her family, but even that small sense of stability was taken away when a cooking accident left Malagon with severe burns on both her hands.

“As a single mother, I was in trouble,” Malagon said. “My sister and mother were helping, but it was still hard. At the time, I was afraid because you hear so many rumors about [what can happen if you ask for] the help you need. But it was necessity that pushed me to do it.”

Malagon found out about the CalFresh program through the medical clinic where she received treatment for her burns. If it was just her own well-being at stake, Malagon never would have applied. But she had her son to provide for, so she gathered the courage to apply.

“[CalFresh] helped us out in a time of great necessity and I feel more secure.”

Maria Isabel Malagon
 CalFresh recipient

“For his lunch, he really loves fruit,” Malagon said. “He likes strawberries, bananas [and] pineapple. But that can be expensive.”

Every person’s story is different, but Malagon’s concerns are common in the immigrant community, according to Angelica Castillo, an Eligibility Services Technician for Alameda County Social Services Agency.

“What I see is that a lot of people are not informed about how CalFresh works,” Castillo said.

Those who may be undocumented, like Malagon was, and pursuing citizenship are often fearful that asking for help will make them targets of immigration enforcement. However, this is not the case — applicant information is **not** shared with immigration authorities. Currently, receiving CalFresh is also not counted as a public charge — a term used to identify those who are considered dependent on the U.S. government.

Applying for CalFresh will not affect someone’s immigration status, or their likelihood of receiving a legal status. Those who are still too hesitant to apply for themselves can receive CalFresh assistance for any children who are U.S. citizens.

“The thing we like to emphasize,” Castillo said, “is to come in or apply through one of our portals, and let us determine your eligibility status. Do not assume that you aren’t eligible.”

Things have improved for Malagon since she first sought assistance from Alameda County Social Services Agency for help. She is back at work and is pursuing her GED. One day she hopes to work as a nurse again, like she did when she was in Mexico.

And Christian has fruit back in his daily lunches.

“[CalFresh] helped us out in a time of great necessity, and I feel more secure,” Malagon said. “When I know of somebody who has problems, I tell them to ask about this program.”



QUALIFY — AS AN IMMIGRANT

Many immigrants don't realize that they could qualify to receive CalFresh benefits! Here's what immigrants to the U.S. need to know about CalFresh:

- Legal permanent residents, victims of trafficking, U visa applicants and holders, and other “qualified immigrants” may be eligible for CalFresh.
- Some members of households may be eligible, even if all aren't. For instance, a child born in the U.S. is eligible even if the undocumented parent is not.
- The income guidelines chart does NOT apply to households with mixed immigration status.
- Information is not shared with immigration authorities.
- Receiving CalFresh does not affect immigration status and information is not shared with immigration authorities.



Want to apply for CalFresh?
 Go to [Getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow](https://www.getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow) to apply today!



Hong Heng used to have to balance studying and classes with finding enough food. Now she can eat at home, giving her more time to focus on her goals.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

Fed and Focused

University student can focus more on her studies thanks to CalFresh

BY ELISSA EINHORN



QUALIFY — AS A STUDENT

You are considered a student under CalFresh rules if you are:

- Age 18 through 49
- Physically and mentally “fit” for employment
- Enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education that meets CalFresh standards

If you fit the definition of a CalFresh student, you must also meet one of the following qualifications:

- Work at least 20 hours per week, on average
- Approved for a state or federal work-study and anticipate working
- A full-time student with a child under age 12
- A part-time student with a child under age 6
- A part-time student with a child age 6-11 without adequate child care
- Receiving CalWORKs
- Enrolled in CalFresh employment and training or another job training program accepted by CalFresh
- Receiving CalGrant A and B
- Enrolled in a state-funded program that increases employability or program that increases employability for current and former foster youth
- Currently participating in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) activity or Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) program



Are you a student who would rather focus on studying than worrying about your next meal? CalFresh can help! Go to [Getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow](https://getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow) to apply today.

When Hong Heng transferred from Mt. San Antonio College in Los Angeles to University of California, Berkeley, she had three months of savings to help her. However, by her second semester her funds were running low, so she started attending campus events for the free food they offered.

Even though these events helped Heng stay fed, running from one event to another overwhelmed her schedule.

“I would have to stay for the entire event before the food was offered, so it got in the way of my studies,” she said. Heng also visited the campus food pantry, but said there often wasn’t enough fresh food or produce for a healthy diet.

Now, Heng receives food assistance through CalFresh. Having more time and not having to plan where she will get her next meal are just a couple of the many benefits Heng has enjoyed since receiving CalFresh.

“I’m able to focus more, I feel lighter, I am eating more vegetables and am energized throughout the day,” Heng said. “I can listen to an entire lecture and not feel lethargic.”

Jasmin Mitchell, Supervising Eligibility Technician with Alameda County Social Services Agency, knows what Heng is talking about.

“When we as humans are properly fed and able to eat nutritious foods, our brains function better,” Mitchell said.

Because having access to food is critical for learning, the county partners with UC Berkeley and other area colleges to promote and enroll students in CalFresh.

Students across the nation struggle with food insecurity and proper nutrition, but those challenges are exacerbated in the Bay Area, where the cost of living has skyrocketed. Heng noted that eating out could run

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Hong Heng
CalFresh recipient

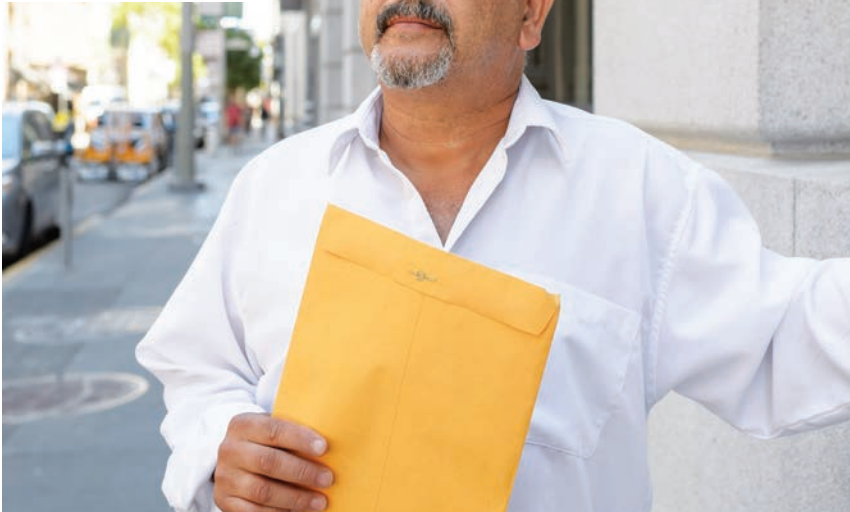
her up a daily tab of \$45, quickly depleting a student budget. With CalFresh, Heng is able to purchase her own groceries, allowing her to make healthy and nutritious meals at home without burdening her wallet.

Heng applied for CalFresh at an enrollment clinic at her apartment complex on campus, one of the many events held on Alameda County university and college campuses. A county worker helped her apply, and within a couple of weeks she had completed a short interview and was approved for CalFresh. She also found that benefits do not affect financial aid services.

In between jobs, Heng hopes to pursue two master’s degrees; one in social work and the other in public policy. She sees how CalFresh — and other campus and county resources — help students stay in school and meet their goals.

“The student population is more at risk for hunger or to be homeless,” she explained. “That’s why it’s important to get the word out.”

Luis Canjura uses CalFresh to supplement his food purchases, so he can still eat even when he is low on work.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.



Work Hard and Eat Well

CalFresh helps local man eat when his paychecks alone aren't enough

BY MATT JOCKS

Luis Canjura's job is to help others, and it's a skill that comes naturally. Rather, the real trick for Canjura was learning how to help himself.

Canjura is a phlebotomist, someone who draws blood from patients for medical testing and diagnosis. As a trained professional, he works as a contractor through local medical labs, but this isn't guaranteed steady work. Because his work hours are irregular, Canjura needs to budget every paycheck knowing that his bills will keep coming in whether he has been working or not. His story is becoming more common in the workforce.

"It's very unpredictable," he said. "You call around, looking for work and you're kind of at their mercy because you know there are a lot of other people doing the same thing. It's like you're in water full of sharks. Whoever is closest to the fish is going to get it."

There were enough days with no contracts that Canjura was struggling to make ends meet. As a result, he wasn't eating often enough or well enough.

"I tried to save a little bit, but with rent and other expenses it's hard," he said. "I was eating whatever was cheap and fast, and that's not very nutritious. It starts affecting your health with things like high blood pressure, when you can't buy good, fresh food."

Canjura eventually went looking for information at one of the local food banks. He found out that as a worker with limited income, he was eligible for CalFresh assistance.

When he applied, he also found something else. "The county workers treated me with dignity," he said. "They treat you like a human being, and not like a weight on society."

"[CalFresh] takes away a lot of stress. Your mental health affects your body."

Luis Canjura
CalFresh recipient

Susan Juarez, an Eligibility Services Technician for Alameda County Social Services Agency, started as a front-desk clerk. She has seen all the barriers that keep eligible residents from applying, whether it's a language barrier or they are unaware they qualify.

"There are some who think they can't have any income to be eligible for benefits," Juarez said. "But residents can receive a lot of deductions for things like rent, daycare and utilities."

Knowing that eligible residents are not participating can be a source of concern for Juarez and other workers, who want to ensure residents are meeting their basic nutritional needs. Some workers spend their days off trying to sign up residents by conducting outreach at Alameda County Community Food Bank. But other times, recipients themselves help bring new people into the program.

"I had a friend who got laid off," Canjura said. "He works in design and engineering. I told him he should go check it out and he came back and said, 'Hey, I do qualify!'"

For Canjura, eating better food has also meant more peace of mind.

"The biggest difference is that I can dedicate some of that money to other things," he said. "It takes away a lot of stress. Your mental health affects your body. You wind up taking a trip to the hospital and that can cost you more."

QUALIFY: WITH A JOB

Many part-time, contract and self-employed workers struggle to pay the bills and have enough healthy food. That's where CalFresh can help! If you are currently employed, here's what you need to know:

Household Size 1  \$2,024 Income Limit	Household Size 2  \$2,744 Income Limit	Household Size 3  \$3,464 Income Limit
Household Size 4  \$4,184 Income Limit	Household Size 5  \$4,904 Income Limit	*Add \$720 for each additional household member

Numbers effective October 1, 2018

- There are exceptions to income guidelines for the elderly and disabled. These individuals may earn more money and still be eligible for CalFresh.
- When determining eligibility, income deductions are factored in for things such as rent and utilities, or daycare costs for families with children.
- You can have income from a full- or part-time job, unemployment benefits, General Assistance or CalWORKs and still be able to get CalFresh!

Are you employed but don't want to choose between paying your bills or buying groceries? CalFresh can help! Go to Getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow to apply today.

Make Every Dollar Count

Senior cancer survivor uses CalFresh to stock his pantry with healthier foods

BY ELISSA EINHORN

At 63 years old, Kent Olliver Gerard has many stories to tell. He is a three-time cancer survivor, a political activist with an FBI file for his 1960s anti-war stance, and — most recently — a CalFresh senior recipient.

“One reason I applied for CalFresh is because I couldn’t work, because I was sick,” Gerard said. His cancer treatment made him temporarily incapable of tending to his small consulting business, which made it difficult to manage his bills and ensure he ate healthy.

It’s more important than ever to choose foods that give the best nutritional value. Having a healthy diet can often reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke, as well as lower cholesterol and high blood pressure. It’s important to start incorporating foods that are rich in the vitamins and nutrients that bodies need. Changing and maintaining a healthy diet as a senior, who often have limited income and resources, can be a struggle.

CalFresh made it possible for Gerard to have healthier food options during his absence from work. If not for CalFresh, Gerard would have had to find food assistance elsewhere as he was self-employed and not eligible for state disability. Not only was Gerard able to stop worrying about food and focus on healing, the food assistance program also helped him rethink his approach to nutrition. Even though it meant cutting out unhealthier foods he loved, Gerard is now no longer pre-diabetic.

By taking advantage of CalFresh’s Market Match program, Gerard was able to stretch his benefits even further. That’s because at participating farmers markets, CalFresh benefits are matched dollar for dollar — doubling any amount of food assistance issued. This allowed Gerard to buy more fresh produce compared to highly-processed foods found in local supermarkets.

“I highly encourage seniors to apply instead of using the limited resources they have,” said Elizabeth Romero-Reinholz, an Eligibility Services Technician with Alameda County Social Services Agency. “Having access to healthy food improves quality of life and the

“In addition to being able to eat healthier, [CalFresh] helps to take the pressure off.”

Kent Olliver Gerard
CalFresh recipient

dollars saved can toward things like the cost medical care.”

Being over 60 years old, Gerard qualified for CalFresh as a senior. He found out about CalFresh right where he was receiving his treatment, at Highland Hospital in Alameda County, and applied at the Alameda County Community Food Bank. Romero-Reinholz said this was due to a concerted effort by the county to reach out to seniors at hospitals, long-term care homes and senior living facilities to encourage more people to apply for the program. The county has made CalFresh even more accessible by allowing seniors to use their benefits at local participating restaurants.

In 2017, Alameda County Social Services Agency administered food assistance to approximately 14,000 people older than the age of 60. The county noted that food insecurity is on the rise for seniors with a growing aging and low-income population. More than providing just food access, CalFresh also allows seniors to divert funds they spend on groceries to other essential expenditures, like health care and housing.

That’s exactly what happened to Gerard.

“In addition to being able to eat healthier, it helps to take the pressure off and stay current with utility bills and transportation,” he said.

Currently, Gerard is cancer free.



Kent Olliver Gerard has been able to stay healthier since he applied for CalFresh, and is able to use more of his money on other things like bills.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.

QUALIFY — AS A SENIOR

Seniors and families with seniors in their household have special requirements when it comes to CalFresh, designed to make life easier! Here’s what you need to know:

- Seniors are anyone aged 60 or older.
- Households with seniors may not need to recertify CalFresh eligibility as often and can designate someone to help them with the process.
- Seniors do not need to meet gross income requirements. Their income is counted *after* deductions:

Household Size 1  \$1,012 Income Limit	Household Size 2  \$1,372 Income Limit	Household Size 3  \$1,732 Income Limit
Household Size 4  \$2,092 Income Limit	Household Size 5  \$2,452 Income Limit	*Add \$360 for each additional household member

Numbers effective October 1, 2018

- Seniors may have their benefits increased if they have medical expenses.
- Alameda County’s Restaurant Meals Program allows the homeless, elderly and disabled with CalFresh to purchase prepared meals at participating restaurants.

Are you a senior in need of a way to stretch your food dollars? CalFresh can help! Go to [Getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow](https://getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow) to apply today.

Here to Help

The top priority of county workers like Jacob Chhom is to help more Alameda County residents eat better.
PHOTO BY GEORGE E. BAKER JR.



Q&A with Jacob Chhom of Alameda County Social Services Agency on how receiving CalFresh is easy

For some Alameda County residents, obtaining healthy food is a real struggle, and when they believe there are barriers to qualifying for CalFresh, many don't apply. However, Alameda County has made the application seamless by providing residents with multiple ways to apply for benefits — to ensure they are connected to the services they need. Jacob Chhom, Supervising Eligibility Technician, spoke about this mission.

What does Alameda County Social Services Agency do?

Our offices have dedicated and trained staff available to accept and process applications for public benefits programs, including CalFresh. In addition to applying online, by fax, or by mail, residents can also come to any of our six office locations to apply for benefits, or to obtain more information about CalFresh. Residents interested in applying online can go to www.mybenefitscalwin.org.

What misconceptions discourage residents from applying for CalFresh?

Some people think they may not be eligible if they are employed, but that's not necessarily true. If they fall within the income guidelines for their household size, chances are they may be eligible.

There are non-citizens who believe they have to be a U.S. citizen to receive assistance, which is not true. Certain non-citizens, like legal permanent residents are eligible for CalFresh benefits.

People who own property may not think they qualify, but property is not considered in the CalFresh program.

Some think they must have children to qualify, but one person households could qualify for CalFresh.

What kind of food can be purchased using CalFresh benefits?

You can use your CalFresh benefits to purchase foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, breads, cereals, meat, fish poultry and more. However, CalFresh benefits cannot be used for alcohol and tobacco products, hot foods, pet foods, medicine or vitamins. There are a few exceptions on hot foods — for instance, elderly, disabled and homeless CalFresh recipients may be eligible to use their benefits to purchase hot meals through the Restaurant Meals Program. Local restaurants participating in the service will display a sign on their door or window indicating they are an Alameda County Restaurant Meals Program location.

How do recipients receive their benefits?

CalFresh benefits are deposited monthly on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that works like a debit card. Recipients can check their EBT card balance online or over the phone.

How long does it take to receive CalFresh benefits?

Once you've completed the required interview and submitted all documents, you will receive your benefits no later than 30 days from the date we received your application. If you need help right away you may qualify for Expedited Services CalFresh, where you receive your CalFresh benefits within three days if you meet the requirements.



Want to apply for CalFresh?

Go to Getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow to apply today!

DUAL ENROLLMENT: HOW IT WORKS

Nutritional health is just as important as medical health. Residents may be able to meet their medical needs with Medi-Cal but Medi-Cal doesn't cover other important basic essentials, such as food and nutrition. In an effort to ensure residents have access to both medical and nutritional health, Alameda County Social Services Agency has dual trained eligibility workers, who can enroll applicants and recipients in CalFresh and Medi-Cal. Residents are encouraged to enroll in both programs because:

- If you are eligible for Medi-Cal, then you are most likely eligible for CalFresh benefits as well. Currently, there are a lot of residents in Alameda County who receive Medi-Cal or cash assistance but are not receiving the CalFresh benefits they may be eligible for.
- Eating healthy and overall health care go hand-in-hand. Medi-Cal can cover your medical needs while CalFresh gets you food needed to stay healthy.
- If you are struggling to pay for food, you may not just be undernourished. Chances are the food you are eating is not as fresh and healthy as it should be.
- You shouldn't have to make a choice between taking care of yourself and paying bills.

**Already receive CalFresh?
Contact Alameda County
Social Services Agency to
see if you qualify for Medi-Cal.**



Eat Better *Sooner*, Apply Today

You could qualify for CalFresh and not even know it!

EMPOWERING ALAMEDA COUNTY

"CalFresh is our community's most powerful tool to make sure all of our county's residents have enough to eat.

Given the high cost of living in the Bay Area, even families and individuals who are working may still find it hard to stretch their food budget to the end of the month.

CalFresh was created to help.

Because people spend their CalFresh dollars at grocery stores and farmers' markets in their neighborhoods, it supports local businesses, too. Many people are eligible, and don't even realize it. A family can receive hundreds of dollars a month for food, depending on how many people live in their household. Everyone should claim their benefit!"

Supervisor Wilma Chan

Alameda County Board of Supervisors,
District 3



Apply online:

Applying takes 10 minutes or less, and receive benefits in less than 30 days.

Getcalfresh.org/s/calfreshnow



A household of **1 person**
who earns up to **\$2,024/mo.**
can receive up to
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A household of **2 people**
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Numbers effective October 1, 2018

Find the closest location to you:

Eastmont Self-Sufficiency Center

6955 Foothill Blvd., Ste. 100
Oakland, CA 94605
510-383-5300

Fremont Office

39155 Liberty St., Ste. C330
Fremont, CA 94536
510-795-2428

Eden Area Multi-Service Center

24100 Amador St.
Hayward, CA 94544
510-670-6000

Livermore Office

3311 Pacific Ave.
Livermore, CA 94550
925-455-0747

Enterprise Self-Sufficiency Center

8477 Enterprise Way
Oakland, CA 94621
510-263-2420

North County Self-Sufficiency Center

2000 San Pablo Ave.
Oakland, CA 94612
510-891-0700

All locations are open Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Parking available onsite.



Have questions or
want an application
mailed to you?

Call 510-263-2420 or
888-999-4772