



CALFRESH

Opens the Door

A Special Advertising Supplement



PLACER COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Building Healthier Families



Food is just the beginning. Applying for CalFresh opens the door to other county services that, when combined, help families be healthier and more secure.

CALFRESH IS JUST ONE OF MANY BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO PLACER COUNTY RESIDENTS

by Elaine Goodman

Placer County residents who are struggling to make ends meet may be eligible for funding to help put food on the table.

It's called CalFresh and it provides qualified Placer County residents with grocery money on an electronic benefits card. The card works like a debit card and is accepted at most grocery stores and even certain farmers markets. The benefit supplements the participant's food budget, helping make more nutritious options available. The amount of the benefit is based on the participant's income and the number of people in the household.

CalFresh offers peace of mind to residents who are struggling financially and may not know how they'll feed their family. With that burden eased, CalFresh recipients can focus on longer-term solutions to financial stability.

CalFresh is the modern-day version of the food stamp program of the past. Paper vouchers are no longer needed to buy groceries — instead, the CalFresh electronic benefits transfer card, or EBT, is a discreet way to use the funds. The card is recharged automatically each month as long as the user remains eligible. The card can be used to buy a wide range of groceries and even items such as seeds for vegetable gardens.

Nutrition education is a key part of CalFresh, and the program connects participants to a variety of resources to help participants eat healthier. Classes are offered through partners, including the University of California, which runs a CalFresh Nutrition Education Program. In addition, a website called EatFresh.org is designed to help users find recipes that are healthy as well as budget-friendly.

Food is just the beginning. Applying for CalFresh opens the door to other county services that, when combined, help families be healthier and more secure. These other services include:

Medi-Cal: Health coverage for low-income adults, pregnant women and children.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC): Provides nutrition education and checks to buy foods that target the nutritional needs of women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or just had a baby; infants; and children under age 5 (including foster children).

CalWORKs: Financial assistance for families with children under 18.

In most cases, someone who qualifies for CalFresh also meets the requirements for Medi-Cal. Applying for CalFresh and Medi-Cal can be done at the same time, requiring just one form. And many times working families with children under age 5 will qualify for WIC, helping stretch their food dollars even further. And when a CalFresh application is approved, eligible children in the household are automatically signed up for free or reduced-cost school lunches.

Once someone has applied for one assistance program, the county's application process for other programs is streamlined. Applying for CalFresh and Medi-Cal doesn't even require a visit to a county office. Applications can be completed online, by phone or by mail. But a benefit of applying for CalFresh in person is that the application can often be processed in the same day.

Read on to learn about how other Placer County families are being made stronger through CalFresh.

HELP FOR PLACER COUNTY RESIDENTS WHO NEED IT

Our mission at Placer County Health and Human Services is to provide support to those who are eligible and need assistance. Unfortunately, almost half of those individuals who are eligible for CalFresh benefits do not apply. This is particularly true for some of our communities' most vulnerable residents, including low-income seniors, veterans and families. We want to provide information about the current application process. As noted in this publication, there are many doors one can enter to obtain CalFresh. Individuals can apply

online and be interviewed over the phone without coming into the office. This is particularly helpful for working families. There are also organizations in the community (see page 8) that can help with the application process.

An additional benefit to receiving CalFresh is that it opens the door to many other programs such as Medi-Cal, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition assistance and free or reduced school lunch programs. Persons applying for CalFresh are asked if they are interested in health

care. If they are and they are approved for CalFresh, in most cases they will be automatically enrolled in Medi-Cal without further application. If they have children who attend school, their children will be automatically enrolled in the school lunch program. Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, just had a baby, or have infants and/or children under age 5 can receive additional nutritional benefits through the WIC program. Placer County has staff that provide first-rate, compassionate service. The application process is

usually quick, taking less than 30 days. In fact, we are usually able to issue benefits on the same day for those who apply in our office.

Our goal is to make Placer County a place where residents thrive and are healthy. Nutrition is a key part of health, so if you need help in that area, please apply.





Amber Knighten and her five children needed help after having to relocate to Lincoln. Nutrition assistance brought them to Placer County Human Services, where they learned they were eligible for CalFresh, CalWORKs and Medi-Cal.

Benefits Give Lincoln Family Peace of Mind

FAMILY TURNS TO CALFRESH FOR SUPPORT

by Susan Winlow

Amber and Travis Knighten didn't know what to do in 2010 when Travis' dreams of an Air Force career careened to a halt.

Travis and Amber, now 26 and 29, lived in Missouri with their young children when the U.S. Air Force culled its force in a date-of-separation rollback program.

"He was planning on it being a career," Amber says.

The change in plans led to a bumpy path for the family, but through CalFresh and related programs in Placer County, they've found a way to make ends meet while they continue to get back on firm ground.

After Travis' departure from the Air Force, they moved to Lincoln to be with Amber's family. Unable to quickly find jobs, they decided to go back to school. With children to feed and clothe, Amber says they turned to CalFresh for help.

"It was a little tough because I wanted to do it on my own. But having the kids, I needed to squash my pride, basically, and do what I needed to do," she says.

The couple went to the Placer County Health and Human Services location in Rocklin to find out if they qualified for CalFresh. They talked about their situation to staff and filled out paperwork for the program. They waited in the office for the results and staff approved them on the spot for multiple benefits.

Already in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Amber says they were approved for CalFresh, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and Medi-Cal.

"It was a blessing," Amber says of the medical benefits.

All the benefits combined have given Amber peace of mind, she says, instead of being "stressed out" wondering how "I'm going to get this paid or how I'm going to get that paid."

"It was a little tough because I wanted to do it on my own. But having the kids, I needed to squash my pride, basically, and do what I needed to do."

Amber Knighten, Lincoln resident

"It was pretty easy," Amber says of the process.

Now, along with Travis' job repairing phones, the benefits give the family of seven, including a set of twins, a way to stretch a small income and boost their quality of life. It allows Knighten to provide needed clothes and school supplies, and for the family to maintain a healthy diet. They can also ensure proper medical care for the family, especially important since the twins have asthma that has resulted in frequent hospital stays.

She also says using the benefits is easy because it's all on an electronic benefits transfer, or EBT, card.

"Years ago they used to have the actual [food] stamps," she says. "It's not that way anymore, so it just looks like a regular credit card you're swiping."

She urges families who find themselves in a similar situation to just jump in.

"It is scary at first," Amber says. "But everyone in the Placer County Rocklin office are sweethearts and will do everything they can to help you out."

HOW TO APPLY FOR CALFRESH BENEFITS

WHO QUALIFIES?

Placer County residents may be eligible for CalFresh if they or their family members are legal U.S. residents and meet income requirements. Currently, the gross monthly income limit for a family of four is \$3,976.



DOCUMENTS YOU'LL NEED

- ❑ **One form of identification**, such as a photo ID. Driver's license is preferred, but other identification may be accepted such as library cards, school or work identification, a pay stub, or a check cashing card.
- ❑ **The applicant's address** within Placer County and documentation of the address, if available.
- ❑ **Social Security numbers** for household members, or documentation showing that SSN has been applied for.
- ❑ **Documentation of immigration status**, immigrant sponsorship or disability status.
- ❑ **Income documentation**, such as pay stubs or letters from employers, for anyone in the household who receives income. Applicants don't need to provide documentation of their monthly expenses, but those who do might qualify for a larger benefit.



GET STARTED!

Apply online: You can apply for CalFresh online at www.mybenefitscalwin.org or from your phone at www.getcalfresh.org. GetCalFresh.org is a free service from the nonprofit organization Code for America. The application can also be downloaded and mailed or submitted in person.

Apply by phone: For more information or to apply by phone, call the toll-free number, 1-888-385-5160.





Rocio Herrera likes to cook nutritious meals for her family. CalFresh helps keep her pantry stocked in the winter months, when her husband's seasonal work ends.
PHOTO BY KIM PALAFERRI

Help When They Need It

FEEDING A FAMILY OF FOUR ISN'T A WORRY ANYMORE FOR TAHOE VISTA FAMILY

by Edgar Sanchez

Each October, construction work in the high Sierra comes to a halt with the return of rain, followed by snow. The seasonal stoppage leaves heavy machine operator Juan Herrera unemployed until the spring.

As a result, Herrera needs help feeding his family during the frigid months. For the past two or three winters, his family has turned to CalFresh.

"CalFresh has helped us tremendously when we needed help," says Juan, 37, whose family lives in Tahoe Vista.

Juan says the family's finances were particularly tight when they were contacted about CalFresh by Placer County Health and Human Services, which oversees the program locally.

His wife, Rocio, 35, mother of their four children, called the program "a blessing."

"We don't worry about food any more because we know that every month CalFresh will help us in the winter," she says. "We are grateful for its aid."

Juan and Rocio were born in Mexico. He is a naturalized U.S. citizen, she a legal resident.

Their four U.S.-born children, all boys ages 4 to 14, have also benefited from the early childhood supplemental nutrition program Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

"We don't worry about food any more because we know that every month CalFresh will help us in the winter. We are grateful for its aid."

Rocio Herrera
Tahoe Vista resident

"WIC also is great," Rocio says, "because it helps us raise healthy children until they are 5. WIC gives us advice on how to nourish them, along with food such as cereal and eggs."

After being hired by his current employer in 2008, Juan resisted assistance, supporting his family solely with his unemployment benefits

through several winters, his wife says.

"The unemployment benefits he received were not sufficient to pay all our bills," she says. "It's not like the family wasn't eating, but we had some really tough times in the winter."

"My husband finally decided to accept CalFresh."

To stretch its food dollars, the family drives the 45 miles to Reno each month to a discount supermarket, where Rocio buys fresh meat, vegetables, fruits, cereals and flour that are loaded onto her husband's truck.

The kids' favorite dish: carne asada wrapped in tortillas.

"I believe the tacos taste better because I make my own tortillas," Rocio says.

And with CalFresh, all purchases are made with the swipe of an EBT (electronic benefits transfer) card that resembles a debit card. Every transaction is fast and private.

Rocio can rest easy knowing that CalFresh will help if they need it in the future. Although currently a housewife, she says she may work as a housecleaner this fall, after her youngest son, Gabriel, enters preschool.



GET THE ANSWERS

Q: If I'm using CalFresh benefits, will everyone at the grocery checkout line know?

A: Formerly, when the program was known as Food Stamps, the benefits came in coupon books you had to tear off and redeem at the checkout. Using CalFresh is a lot more discrete today. Benefits are distributed through a plastic EBT (electronic benefits transfer) card that looks and works like a debit card in the grocery store.

Q: I have a job and can't miss work. Do I need to go to the county welfare office for an interview to apply?

A: No. Work schedules and transportation issues can make it hard to come to the office. That's why Placer County has other options. You can apply for CalFresh online at www.mybenefitscalwin.org or from your phone at www.getcalfresh.org (a free service from the nonprofit organization Code for America). You can also request an application from the county to be mailed to you. The county will contact you for a telephone interview. You can also apply by phone at 1-888-385-5160.

Q: Will I be denied other government assistance if I receive CalFresh?

A: Absolutely not. You may qualify for CalFresh while receiving other government assistance, including Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Medi-Cal and CalWORKs.

Healthy Meals for All Ages

NUTRITION EDUCATION AN IMPORTANT PART OF CALFRESH OUTREACH FOR SENIORS

by Susan Winlow

When Mary Barker makes her rounds to the Seniors First cafe sites for nutrition classes, she brings with her a wealth of information — and some pretty good food, too.

Sometimes Barker, a program educator with Placer County Health and Human Services, shows seniors how to make simple recipes, such as zucchini and feta pasta salad, using only a handful of locally available ingredients.

And sometimes she signs them up for CalFresh benefits “on the spot,” helping seniors on a fixed income stretch their food dollars a little bit further.

Jamee Horning, the executive director of Seniors First, knows that help is needed among Placer County seniors age 60 and older, who make up 23 percent of the county’s population, according to a Senior First report.

“A lot of people we serve in our cafes are in need of that extra help,” Horning says. “It’s a great location to share this.”

Many seniors on a limited income skip the more expensive fruits and vegetables, leaving a gap in needed nutrients and vitamins. CalFresh benefits can help close that financial gap, enabling seniors, and all who qualify, to eat healthy.

“As soon as they’re lacking in certain nutrients, that’s when their health [can] decline,” Horning says.

Seniors on certain medications need to keep a healthy diet in order to take those medications, Horning adds. It’s also important after surgery or a hospital stay to maintain a healthy diet.

“Good nutrition is key to not having them return to the hospital,” she says.

CalFresh not only ensures seniors have more grocery money, but it helps educate them on the healthiest choices. The nutrition classes at the senior cafes are just one way to pick up healthy eating tips. Health and Human Services, in collaboration with other organizations, offers additional food tastings, a food and resource fair, tips for healthy eating, and recipes available at various food closets.

“As soon as [seniors are] lacking in certain nutrients, that’s when their health [can] decline.”

Jamee Horning, Executive Director, Seniors First

Good nutrition also should trump any perceived stigma associated with receiving benefits. Horning says seniors remember yesterday’s Food Stamp era. However, today’s CalFresh is an income-based program that also offers nutrition education.

“I think they’re looking to what the program was in the past and it’s not that way today,” she says. “I really encourage (seniors) to get over that and take advantage of the program because it’s awesome. It can help them make it through the month sometimes.”



Placer County Health and Human Services works with Seniors First to hold nutrition classes at the county’s senior cafes. The education efforts help older adults make healthy choices.

PHOTO BY KIM PALAFERRI

NUTRITIOUS OPTIONS IN PLACER COUNTY

CalFresh is more than food assistance. CalFresh educates participants on how to best use their benefits to make healthy, nutritious meals.

NUTRITION CLASSES

Collaboration between Seniors First and Placer County Human Services includes taste samplings of simple recipes and nutrition education by a CalFresh representative at Seniors First senior cafe locations. Offers on-the-spot CalFresh sign-ups for those who qualify.

SUPER FOOD AND RESOURCE FAIR

A periodic event that offers food and resources to residents in need. A CalFresh representative is onsite to offer information and sign-ups.

TASTE SAMPLINGS

These tasting events by Seniors First utilize foods from local food closets. A copy of the recipe is given to participants. Held twice a month at Placer County Human Services locations, 1000 Sunset Blvd., Suite 220, in Rocklin and 11452 B Ave. in Auburn.

RECIPES WITH LOCAL FLAIR

Coordinated effort with the Placer Food Bank to provide recipes and healthy eating tips from food obtained at local food closets. Recipes and tips available at food closets.

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

What is it?

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program that helps pregnant women, new mothers and children under the age of 5 eat well, be active and stay healthy. The program provides checks for the purchase of food to meet participants' nutritional needs, as well as nutrition education.

Who qualifies?

The program is for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or just had a baby; children under the age of 5; and foster children under age 5 who meet other eligibility requirements.

Income must not exceed 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Based on current levels, that's \$3,739 per month for a family of four.

How do I apply?

Participation in the WIC program starts with an in-person visit to one of four Placer County locations: Rocklin, Lincoln, Auburn or Kings Beach. The application process is streamlined for someone who's already in the CalFresh, Medi-Cal or CalWORKs program.

How does it work?

Once they're determined to be eligible for WIC, participants will receive checks to buy certain types of food. Participants then regularly visit the WIC center for nutrition education that's designed to be interactive and family-friendly.

MEDI-CAL

What is it?

Medi-Cal provides medical, dental, vision, prescription and mental health care to eligible individuals and families at little to no cost.

Who qualifies?

Someone may be eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal benefits if they are a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident alien and they meet other criteria. Others may qualify for restricted benefits.

Those whose annual income is less than Medi-Cal limits (for example, \$32,913 for a family of four in 2015) and who meet other eligibility requirements may receive Medi-Cal services at no cost. For those whose income exceeds the limits, other benefit programs may be available.

How do I apply?

Applications may be submitted online, by phone, by mail or in person. An in-person visit isn't required. Those who qualify for CalFresh assistance may enroll in Medi-Cal with the same application by stating that they're interested in receiving Medi-Cal benefits. CalWORKs recipients are automatically enrolled in Medi-Cal.

How does it work?

Once eligibility for Medi-Cal is established, the participant will receive a health benefits issuance card, or BIC. The next step is to choose one of the managed care programs offered through Placer County. Then the participant selects one of the provider's primary care physicians and makes an appointment to see the doctor. Prescription benefits are available immediately after receiving the health benefits card.

by Elaine Goodman

Extra Help

IF YOU OPEN THE DOOR FOR CALFRESH, YOU MAY FIND YOU QUALIFY FOR THESE OTHER BENEFITS

CALWORKS

What is it?

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, or CalWORKs, is a program for adults who have dependent children and are unable to work for a variety of reasons.

For example, someone might need assistance after suffering an injury that prevents them from working or because they've lost their job. CalWORKs provides short-term cash assistance and services to help participants get back on their feet and into the workforce.

Who qualifies?

To be eligible for CalWORKs, participants and/or their family member(s) must be legal U.S. residents. Documentation of income and property ownership is needed.

How do I apply?

An in-person interview is required to determine CalWORKs eligibility.

How does it work?

Benefits are awarded based on the number of eligible people in the household — adults and children. Cash benefits are provided on an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card.

For families with emergency situations, immediate-need payments of up to \$200 may also be available.

Examples of emergencies include an impending eviction, cut-off of utilities, or lack of food or housing.

CalWORKs also provides help finding a job, including skills training, assistance with résumé writing, mock job interviews and access to employment listings. Some recipients are required to participate in these activities, called Welfare-to-Work, in order to receive benefits.

CalWORKs participants are required to send in a report semi-annually to determine if they remain eligible for the program.

Apply NOW at www.mybenefitscalwin.org or call toll free 1-888-385-5160



"If we have our basic needs met, we navigate better through our transition."

Amy Kelley, Executive Director, North Tahoe Family Resource Center

Partnerships Make the Connection

NORTH TAHOE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER IS ANOTHER LINK TO NEEDED SERVICES

by Elaine Goodman

Community House is a special place in North Lake Tahoe where nonprofit organizations and county agencies come together to build stronger families and help individuals in need.

Located in Kings Beach, Community House is home to the North Tahoe Family Resource Center; Project MANA, a hunger relief agency; and Tahoe Safe Alliance, a nonprofit that works to stop domestic violence. Placer County also runs assistance programs there, including CalFresh and Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

The Community House organizations complement each other and their close proximity enhances their ability to work together.

For example, staff at the North Tahoe Family Resource Center (NTFRC) identifies clients who may benefit from Placer County's CalFresh or Medi-Cal programs, which provide grocery money and health care benefits, respectively, to those who qualify.

NTFRC staff goes a step further, actually helping clients with their CalFresh and Medi-Cal applications.

According to NTFRC Executive Director Amy Kelley, some clients might be intimidated by the county paperwork or face a language barrier. For others, it's a matter of easing concerns that their application will put family members at risk of deportation.

And with the assistance being of such crucial importance in many cases, applicants don't want to risk having benefits delayed because the paperwork hasn't been filled out correctly, Kelley says.

"If you have urgency in getting your food needs met, you don't want to do it wrong," Kelley says.

Similar CalFresh application assistance is available from other community partners throughout Placer County.

NTFRC clients have particular needs because they live in a resort community. Many are self-sufficient during Tahoe's busier tourism times, in the summer

and winter. But business slows during the spring and fall "shoulder seasons," leaving many hospitality and restaurant workers in need.

Worrying about paying medical bills or providing food for the family can "freeze families in time," Kelley says, and slow their progress in finding longer-term solutions. Providing food and health care services help families through the changes, she says.

"If we have our basic needs met, we navigate better through our transition," Kelley says. The goal is to help clients access the safety-net services and then ultimately become independent.

North Tahoe Family Resource Center's mission is to be the area's central link between individuals and families and the services and programs available to them.

The center offers a variety of training, including parenting skills, exercise classes, nutrition education and financial counseling. They help connect job-seekers with resources.

Amy Kelley of North Tahoe Family Resource Center says her organization is the Tahoe-area's central link to safety net services.

PHOTO BY KIM PALAFERRI

FRESH, AFFORDABLE MEALS AT EATFRESH.ORG

One goal of Placer County's CalFresh program is to promote healthy eating among its participants.

But there can be a number of hurdles to good nutrition, such as planning meals on a tight budget or dealing with children who are picky eaters.

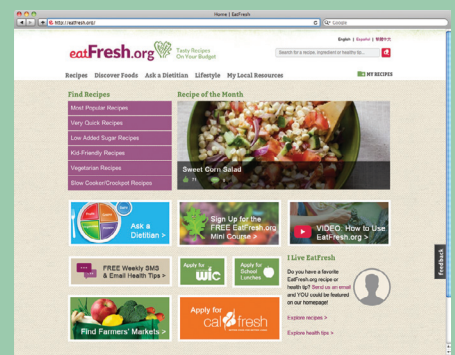
A website developed by CalFresh partners can help provide solutions to those problems.

The website is EatFresh.org and it's funded by the USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. The site is available to anyone interested in healthy eating.

The slogan for EatFresh.org is "Tasty recipes on your budget." The website contains a large library of recipes featuring healthy ingredients, along with user ratings. For example, a recipe for Tortilla Pizzas, loaded with fresh vegetables, received a thumbs-up from 146 users.

The site has advice on a range of topics, such as buying in bulk, feeding picky toddlers and introducing new foods into youngsters' diets. A dietician answers questions from readers.

The site also includes links to information on the CalFresh and WIC food programs.



CalFresh is a great complement to the center's services, Kelley says, because extra money provided by CalFresh for buying healthy food helps families "really function and thrive."

"That's enormous," she says.



Find Your Door

CALFRESH | MEDI-CAL | WIC | CALWORKS

There are many ways for Placer County residents to access benefits that can make their families healthier and stronger. Placer County Health and Human Services has made it easier than ever to apply, with options to submit applications online, by phone or in person at the many office locations and partner organizations located in your community. If you or someone you know is in need of food assistance, health coverage, employment training, or all of the above, contact Placer County Health and Human Services today.

ONLINE

You can apply for CalFresh online at www.mybenefitscalwin.org or from your phone at www.getcalfresh.org. GetCalFresh.org is a free service from the nonprofit organization Code for America. The application can also be downloaded and mailed or submitted in person.

PHONE

Call **1-888-385-5160** to start an application or request an application be mailed to you.

IN PERSON

Visit any of the county office locations or community partners (listed at right) to apply. Your eligibility will often be determined the same day.

COUNTY OFFICES

AUBURN

11552 B Ave.
Auburn, CA 95603

ROCKLIN

1000 Sunset Blvd. Suite 220
Rocklin, CA 95765

LAKE TAHOE

5225 N. Lake Blvd.
Carnelian Bay, CA 96140

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

STAND UP PLACER

700 Sunrise Ave., Suite N
Roseville, CA 95661
11985 Heritage Oaks, Suite 200
Auburn, CA 95603
530-823-6224
www.standupplacer.org

LIGHTHOUSE COUNSELING AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

427 A St., Suite 400
Lincoln, CA 95648
916-645-3300
www.lighthousefrc.com

ADVOCATES FOR MENTALLY ILL HOUSING WELCOME HOME

11768 Atwood Road, Suite 226
Auburn, CA 95604
530-878-5088
www.amihousing.org

NORTH TAHOE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

265 Bear St.
Kings Beach, CA 96143
530-546-0952
www.northtahoefrc.org

PLACER PEOPLE OF FAITH TOGETHER

6440 King Road
Loomis, CA 95650
855-223-3318
www.ppoft.org

KIDSFIRST

124 Main St.
Roseville, CA 95678
916-774-6802
11960 Heritage Oak Place, Suite 3
Auburn, CA 95603
530-887-3536
www.kidsfirstnow.org

PLACER FOOD BANK

8284 Industrial Ave.
Roseville, CA 95678
916-783-0481
www.placerfoodbank.org
(Does not take applications on site)

THE GATHERING INN

201 Berkeley Ave.
Roseville, CA 95678
916-791-9355
www.thegatheringinn.com