

SB 882 (Wiener)

CalFresh: Simpler for Seniors



Opportunity

More than 4 million low-income households are food insecure, having limited, inconsistent, or uncertain access to the food they need to live a healthy life. The number of older Californians experiencing hunger continues to grow at an alarming number and rate. Nearly forty percent of low-income Californians over the age of sixty are food insecure -- **a 21 percent increase in the last 15 years**.¹

CalFresh is the most effective anti-hunger program for the people it reaches. But, only 19 percent of eligible older adults (Age 60 or over) are served by the program. California ranks last in the nation when it comes to enrolling eligible older adults in CalFresh, even when accounting for newly-eligible SSI recipients.

The complex and overly burdensome application and reporting processes contribute to low CalFresh enrollment among older adults.² By easing the burden of enrolling and retaining CalFresh benefits, **we can ensure older adults can live hunger free and age in place with dignity.**



Legislative Action

SB 882 would simplify the CalFresh application for many older adults and people with disabilities, and eliminate burdensome, ongoing reporting requirements that cause many households to lose nutrition assistance, even though they remain eligible. It would also ensure all applicants and participants can complete the application and recertification interview processes by phone, including the required client signature.

Why This Matters

The state should use all the tools it has to **make it easier for food-insecure older adults and people with disabilities to connect and stay connected to CalFresh.**

**CalFresh Can
Do More**

Over 900,000 older Californians miss out on the nutrition benefits of CalFresh. With our population becoming older and less food secure, now is the time to act.

¹ UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. (2001-2016) California Health Interview Survey Data. Retrieved from <https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/chis/data/Pages/GetCHISData.aspx>

² Fact Sheet, "California: SNAP Matters for Seniors," Food Research & Action Center and AARP, 2016 data, available at https://www.frac.org/wp-content/uploads/senior_facts_CA.pdf