

CalFresh Rules for Seniors and People with Disabilities

Beginning June 2019, SSI/SSP recipients will be eligible for CalFresh (SSI/SSP benefits will NOT decrease as a result).

CalFresh rules include opportunities to maximize benefits and simplify the application process for people in specific situations. Below you'll find an overview of CalFresh rules that apply to seniors and people with disabilities (including newly eligible SSI/SSP recipients) with specific examples that represent common situations.

SSI/SSP recipients currently living in households where other household members are receiving CalFresh will automatically be added as an additional recipient at the next recertification or semi-annual report. If adding the SSI/SSP recipient would result in a reduction or total loss of CalFresh benefits (due to the increase in total household income from the SSI/SSP benefits), they will receive Supplemental Nutrition Benefits (SNB) or Transitional Nutrition Benefits (TNB). For more information about SNB and TNB, check the policy guidance at www.cdss.ca.gov/CalFreshSSI.

CALFRESH RULES THAT WILL APPLY TO ALL SSI/SSP RECIPIENTS	
	<p>Maximize CalFresh with Uncapped Shelter Deductions:</p> <p>For households with an elderly or disabled person (all SSI recipients), there is no cap on the shelter deduction.</p> <p>ACTION: Clients should inform their CalFresh Eligibility Worker about their shelter costs.</p> <p><i>For more information:</i> http://calfresh.guide/income-deductions-for-calfresh-households/</p>
	<p>Maximize CalFresh with Standard Medical Deduction:</p> <p>Households that include an elderly or disabled person may deduct medical expenses from their income. If the household incurs \$35.01 or more per month in medical expenses, they can get the Standard Medical Deduction (SMD) of \$120 per month. If actual medical expenses are over \$155 per month, the household can choose to deduct their total medical expenses instead of using the standard medical expense deduction. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor's visit co-pays or transportation to/from appointments (including personal mileage, public transportation or paratransit tickets/passes) • Medications (both prescription and non-prescription) • Dentures, hearing aids, prosthetics, wheelchairs, glasses, etc. • Costs for obtaining/maintaining service animals <p>ACTION: Clients should submit receipts and bills from out-of-pocket medical expenses if they exceed \$35 per month, or all expenses if they exceed \$155 per month. Receipts can be provided at any point during or after application and certification to start claiming the deduction and receiving a boost in benefits.</p> <p><i>For more information:</i> http://calfresh.guide/medical-expense-deductions/</p>

CALFRESH RULES THAT WILL APPLY TO ALL SSI/SSP RECIPIENTS



Waived gross income test:

Households that include an elderly or disabled person are NOT subject to the gross income test (200% FPL). They are only required to meet the net income test (100% FPL).

ACTION: None necessary, the county will automatically do this at application.

For more information: <http://calfresh.guide/income-limits/>



Simpler application and recertification process!

If all household members are elderly (age 60 or older) and/or disabled and have no earned income, the ESAP rules apply. This makes it easier to get and stay on CalFresh. This includes:

- Waived recertification interview (interview only at initial application)
- Recertification at 36 months (instead of 12), with SAR-7 at 12 and 24 months
- Making use of data matching to reduce client-provided verifications

ACTION: None necessary.

For more information: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2017/17-34.pdf>



Receive reasonable accommodation:

People with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation at any time in order to access CalFresh and fulfill program rules and requirements.

ACTION: Inform CalFresh Eligibility Worker if client needs an accommodation. This can be requested at any time.

For more information: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2018/18-90.pdf?ver=2018-07-31-142643-887>



Ask Authorized Representative to apply for CalFresh on SSI recipient's behalf:

A non-household member can apply for benefits, attend the CalFresh interview, and provide the CalFresh office with necessary information on behalf of a household. They can also use the EBT card on the recipient's behalf. This person is called an Authorized Representative (AR). The AR can do anything the CalFresh household recipient can do.

ACTION: Let the County know who the desired AR is and bring their proof of identification.

For more information: <http://calfresh.guide/authorized-representatives/>



Use CalFresh benefits at participating restaurants:

In some counties, the Restaurant Meals Program allows people who are homeless, elderly, and/or disabled to purchase hot prepared foods at participating restaurants using their EBT cards.

ACTION: None necessary, the county will automatically code the EBT card to work at participating restaurants.

For more information: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFresh/Restaurant-Meals-Program>

SSI INDIVIDUAL OR SSI COUPLES LIVING ALONE

Most SSI recipients (individuals living alone or couples), will be newly eligible for CalFresh on June 1st, 2019. They will need to apply over the phone, in person, or online.



Maximize CalFresh with Homeless Shelter Deduction:

The homeless shelter deduction allows people who are homeless to deduct a flat \$143 from their gross monthly income.

ACTION: Inform the CalFresh Eligibility Worker about any expenses related to shelter costs.

For more information: <http://calfresh.guide/can-a-homeless-person-get-a-deduction-for-shelter-expenses/>

FOR EXAMPLE: Henry is 68 years old, and an SSI/SSP recipient who lives alone in a studio apartment in Oakland. He receives \$931.72 per month in SSI/SSP, and that is his only income. He has decided not to use an Authorized Representative, but since he is over the age of 60 and living alone, he qualifies for the ESAP rules (which will make re-certifying his benefits easy). Every month he has \$36 in medical expenses (prescriptions, transportation to the doctor's office, incontinence supplies), so he'll get the \$120 Standard Medical Deduction. He pays \$700 per month in rent (with utilities included), which he'll be able to deduct from his SSI/SSP income. He will qualify for \$192 in CalFresh benefits per month. And since he lives in Alameda County, which is a county participating in the Restaurant Meals Program, he'll be able to use his CalFresh benefits at participating restaurants to buy prepared meals.

FOR EXAMPLE: Gladis is a 52 year old SSI/SSP recipient who is currently homeless and living in her car. Although she does not pay rent, she does pay for gas for her car and occasionally she stays in a motel. She receives \$931.72 in SSI/SSP benefits, and when she initially applied for CalFresh, she was approved for \$15. But her Eligibility Worker let her know that if she has more than \$35 per month in out-of-pocket medical expenses, it might increase her CalFresh benefit. She has a service dog and every month she spends \$25 on dog food, as well as \$12 per month on over-the-counter vitamins that are prescribed by her doctor. After she provides receipts for these expenses, she qualifies for the Standard Medical Deduction, and her CalFresh benefits increase to \$40 per month.

SSI CHILD LIVING WITH PARENT(S) AND SIBLING(S) WHO ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING CALFRESH

Some SSI recipients will be living in a household where other members are already receiving CalFresh. At their next reporting deadline for CalFresh, these households will be asked to provide information for the SSI recipients living in their household – and then their CalFresh amount will be automatically recalculated.



Maximize CalFresh with Child Dependent Care Deductions:

CalFresh households may deduct the actual costs they pay for child or adult dependent care, if it is necessary to allow a household member to:

- Accept or continue work; or
- To attend school or training to prepare for work

ACTION: Households should report any dependent care costs to the county, and they can be “self-certified” so no additional verifications are necessary.

For more information: <http://calfresh.guide/income-deductions-for-calfresh-households/>



Continue receiving food benefits as a whole household with SNB or TNB:

For some households, adding the SSI recipient and their income to the existing CalFresh household may increase their CalFresh benefit. For other households, it may lead to a partial or total loss of their CalFresh benefit. These households will be eligible to receive a state-funded nutrition benefit, either the Supplemental Nutrition Benefit (partial loss) or the Transitional Nutrition Benefit (total loss).

ACTION: Household should report information about household members who receive SSI on their next report. Ensure that the household continues to comply with annual CalFresh reporting requirements (if they stop receiving CalFresh benefits, they will not be able to get back on SNB or TNB when they re-apply for CalFresh).

For more information: http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2019/19-15_ES.pdf

FOR EXAMPLE: Maria is 9 years old and is an SSI/SSP recipient. She lives with her parents and 12-year-old brother who are already receiving CalFresh benefits. Maria receives \$836.15 per month in SSI/SSP benefits, and her parents earn \$2,000 per month from their jobs. Her family is already receiving \$239 in CalFresh benefits per month, and when Maria and her SSI/SSP income is added to their household, it looks like their CalFresh benefit would actually go down to \$48. But, thanks to the Supplemental Nutrition Benefit, they will be able to get \$116 added to their CalFresh benefit each month. It will be important to make sure this family keeps up with their annual reporting requirements, because SNB cannot be re-gained after a household stops receiving CalFresh. Make sure their phone number and address are always up to date with the county to ensure they can complete their reporting requirements as necessary.

SSI SENIOR LIVING WITH THEIR ADULT CHILD(REN) WHO IS(ARE) CURRENTLY RECEIVING CALFRESH

Some SSI recipients will be living in a household where other members are already receiving CalFresh. At their next reporting deadline, these households will be asked to provide information about SSI recipients living in the household – and then their CalFresh amount will be automatically recalculated.

	<p>Maximize CalFresh with Adult Dependent Care Deductions:</p> <p>CalFresh households may deduct the actual costs they pay for child or adult dependent care, if it is necessary to allow a household member to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept or continue work; or• To attend school or training to prepare for work <p>ACTION: Households should report any dependent care costs to the county, can “self-certify” so no additional verification is necessary.</p> <p>For more information: http://calfresh.guide/income-deductions-for-calfresh-households/</p>
	<p>Continue receiving food benefits as a whole household with SNB or TNB:</p> <p>For some households, adding the SSI recipient and their income to the already existing CalFresh household may increase their CalFresh benefit. For other households, adding the SSI recipient and their income will lead to a partial or total loss of their CalFresh benefit. These households will be eligible to receive a state-funded nutrition benefit, either the Supplemental Nutrition Benefit (partial loss) or the Transitional Nutrition Benefit (total loss), which will help offset the loss of CalFresh.</p> <p>ACTION: Household should report information about household members who receive SSI on their next report. Ensure that the household continues to comply with annual CalFresh reporting requirements (if they stop receiving CalFresh benefits, they will not be able to get back on SNB or TNB when they re-apply for CalFresh).</p> <p>For more information: http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2019/19-15_ES.pdf</p>
	<p>Option to apply as a separate household to maximize CalFresh:</p> <p>An elderly household member (and his/her spouse) who is living with others may qualify as a separate household, if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Both elderly AND disabled, and• Unable to purchase or prepare meals separately because of a disability, and• The income of the other members with whom the individual resides does not exceed 165% of the FPL. <p>ACTION: The individual(s) may be able to apply on their own.</p> <p>For more information: http://calfresh.guide/households-receive-calfresh-benefits/</p>

FOR EXAMPLE: Patricia is 73 years old, has a disability, and lives with her adult son and his wife. Patricia receives \$931.72 per month in SSI/SSP. Her son and his wife earn \$1,950 per month from their jobs, and they receive \$99 in CalFresh benefits. They pay \$1,500 in rent each month, and Patricia pays \$500 of it. Since Patricia is both elderly and disabled, and cannot purchase or prepare meals on her own, and her son and his wife earn less than 165% of the Federal Poverty Level, she decides to apply for CalFresh as a separate household. She qualifies for \$121 in CalFresh benefits, and she designates her son as her Authorized Representative so that he can use her EBT card to buy groceries on her behalf.

SSI INDIVIDUAL LIVING IN AN INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Most SSI recipients (individuals living alone or couples), will be newly eligible for CalFresh on June 1st, 2019. They will need to apply over the phone, in person, or online.



Get CalFresh even when living in an institution:

In these institutional settings, SSI recipients are eligible for CalFresh:

- Residents of federally subsidized housing for the elderly
- Residents of public or private nonprofit shelters for homeless persons
- Disabled/blind people living in group residential home with 16 residents or less
- People living in drug/alcohol treatment/rehabilitation program center
- A woman living in a shelter for victims of domestic violence

(In most other institutional settings, they are not eligible for CalFresh.)

ACTION: SSI/SSP recipients who are residents of institutions should still apply for CalFresh, and tell the CalFresh Eligibility Worker about the institution they live in. Some institution can help the SSI/SSP recipient apply for CalFresh.

For more information: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2018/18-90.pdf?ver=2018-07-31-142643-887>

FOR EXAMPLE: Ronald is 76 years old, and is an SSI/SSP recipient. He is living in a Group Living Arrangement (GLA) for vision impaired individuals with 9 other residents. He receives \$451.72 a month in SSI/SSP and \$500 in Social Security, and pays \$315 a month in rent. The GLA does provide some of the meals for their residents, and he has decided to apply on his own without using an Authorized Representative. He is currently paying \$40 per month towards a dental bill that is outstanding. The ESAP rules will make it easy for him to recertify his benefits. He was able to ask for a reasonable accommodation due to his vision impairment, and the county helped him by providing the necessary forms in Braille. He qualified for \$110 in CalFresh benefits.