CalFresh & Medi-Cal: College Students

College Students may be eligible to receive CalFresh

In order to be eligible for CalFresh benefits, college students between the ages of 18 and 49 years old who are enrolled at least half-time (varies by degree requirements, often 7.5 units) must meet any one of the following:

- Working and getting paid at least 20 hours per week (total of 80 hours per month)
- Have been approved for federal work study
- Responsible for a dependent child under age 6 or dependent child 6 to 11 and no adequate childcare is available
- A single parent responsible for care of a dependent child under age 12
- Enrolled in CalWORKs
- Receiving TANF funded Cal Grant A or B
- Going to school through the Job Training Participation Act (JTPA)
- Participating in Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS)
- Medically verified as unable to work or participating in Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS).

If a student doesn’t think they meet one of these criteria, it’s okay to apply anyway. For example, a twenty-three year old able-bodied student taking 12 units living off student grants and loans while not working may not be eligible, but has the right to apply. Remember, a student can also apply for other people in the home.

A student has to provide verification of their enrollment status, including the number of units, and verification of financial aid.

If a student has questions about their situation prior to applying, they can contact Social Services. In order to know if they could be eligible, they would need to apply and interview.

If a college student is under 22 and living with their parents, their parent(s) must be included on the CalFresh case.

College Students are likely eligible for Health Care Coverage

Generally, a college student will be eligible to some form of health care coverage. The questions are who can apply for the student and who is included in the student’s household.

Factors that affect applications:

- Is the student a tax dependent?
- Does the student live with parents?
- How old is the student?

It is possible that the student can apply for themselves and have the parents’ income counted, or that they can apply for themselves and the parents’ income isn’t counted, or that the parents need to apply for the student. Call the Social Services office if you have questions.
Responding to Student Questions and Concerns

I'm on my parent's Medi-Cal case in another County. What do I do?
It is possible that reporting the change of residence address is all that is needed. It is also possible that a new application is needed. Call Social Services for assistance figuring out which route to go.

Do I have to include my parents?
For CalFresh anyone under the age of 22 has to include any parent(s) living in the same home.

For Medi-Cal, factors include:
- Your age
- Whether you are a tax dependent
- Whether you live with your parent(s)
- Whether you still consider your parent’s home your permanent home if your permanent home is in another county, and,
- Whether your parents live in the same county, another county, or outside of California.

Students living on their own who are not tax dependents are able to apply on their own.

Students 18 and older are able to apply on their own, however, they may need to provide their parent’s information.

Often, Medi-Cal will require parents’ information, even if you make the application. More rarely, for some special Medi-programs a parent may need to make the actual application for you for Medi-Cal benefits if you are under 21.

Do I have to get proof of my loans, grants, and scholarships?
For CalFresh verification will be requested. The Social Services office can provide a form that can be used if needed. Financial Aid Award letters and proof of enrollment showing units can be submitted. Social Services can get this from Humboldt State University on behalf of the student without any special form.

For Medi-Cal it is possible that income can be electronically verified without any paper verification. Medi-Cal counts the “Adjusted Gross Income” on a tax return, with some exceptions.

Do I have to report my property or provide proof?
In most cases there is no property limit for CalFresh, however property needs to be reported when doing the interview.

For most students, property verifications are not needed. Some applicants may need to provide property verifications for special programs.

Why is my friend’s CalFresh and Medi-Cal status different?
There are a lot of rules for Medi-Cal and CalFresh, and the rules are different. Situations may seem the same and be very different for our programs. If you are denied, you will get a Notice of Action explaining why. If you don’t understand the reason, call Social Services. It is possible to reassess a denial.