



# Know Your Rights

## 3 Month Time Limit For Some Adults on CalFresh

Some adults **ages 18 through 64** on CalFresh must be exempt from or do work, education or training activities to get CalFresh for more than 3 months between June 1, 2026 and January 1, 2029. Your county calls this “Time Limits or “ABAWD” rules, and the activities “work or community engagement.” This rule also applies to the state CFAP food benefits program through September 2027.

### Does The Time Limit Apply to Me?

The county must first check to see if you need to meet the rules before they can start applying them. They will do this screening when you apply. If you are already getting CalFresh, the county will do this when you do your next Recertification. Many adults **do not have to meet** (are exempt from) the rules.

**You only have to meet these rules – or tell your county you are exempt – if the county sends you a [CalFresh Notice Of Work Rules](#) that lists your name in Section 2.**

### You Have a Right To...

- Tell the county if you are exempt or meeting the Time Limit Rules (see next page for details)
- Have the county act on reports from you before your next CalFresh benefit goes out. You can upload a document reporting your change through your [BenefitsCal](#). If you don't have an account the upload button is [here](#).
- Ask the county worker to help you get verification
- [Appeal](#) if the county incorrectly reduces or ends your food benefits. Get free advice or help from legal aid services: find your county office(s) [here](#)



Fill out [this form](#) from the California Association of Food Banks to share your story about how the time limits are impacting you.

## If the County Says You Must Meet the Time Limit Rules, Check if You Are Exempt

You are exempt (don't have to meet the rules) if you have any of the reasons below.

### Work or School Reasons:



- Make \$217.50 or more/week at work
- Get or applied for unemployment benefits
- In school or training program half time or more



### Health Reasons:

- Have a short or long term health issue (physical or mental) that makes it hard to work 30 or more hours/week
- Don't have a regular place to sleep at night, or have other personal circumstances that impact your physical or health *and* that make it hard regularly do an average of 80 hours/month of work
- Pregnant
- Get a disability benefit or payment like SSI, EAEDC, Worker's Compensation, or Paid Family
- Medical Leave
- In substance use treatment program
- Get services from MassAbility, DMH, DDS, MA
- Commission for the Blind, MA Commissioner for
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing



### Family Reasons:

- In a case with a child under 14 (even if child isn't eligible for SNAP)
- Care for a child under 6, or a child or adult is disabled or needs your care (even if not living together or related)
- Get CalWORKs cash benefits (for families with children under 18 or will graduate before 19)



### Personal Reasons:

- Experienced domestic violence, harassment, assault, stalking, or have other safety concerns
- Alaska Native, or a member of an American Indian, Native American, Urban Indian, or California Indian tribe (or has a parent or grandparent who is a member)

## Tell the County if You Meet the Rules By Any Combination of the below for an average of 80/hours/month

- Doing paid or unpaid work. Examples of unpaid work include internships, work exchange (like doing chores for reduced rent) or caring for family or friends who aren't disabled or under age 6)
- Going to school/in training (less than ½ time)
- Volunteering or doing community service

Note: Tell the county if you had a **good reason you couldn't meet the rules** (like transportation issue, personal or family emergency, illness). This can help you stay on SNAP.

## → You Must Exempt or Meet the Rules to Get CalFresh More Than 3 Months

### How to tell the county you are exempt, met the rules, or had a good reason not to

Fill out [this exemption form](#) or explain the information to DTA in a written, signed statement (handwritten note is fine) and send it in by:

- Online turning in the exemption request through [BenefitsCal](#)
  - *If you have an account*, log in to your account and go to "Support Requests" - mark all the exemptions that apply to you and click to submit.
  - *If you don't have an account*, save the filled out exemption form as a PDF or take a picture of it. Upload the exemption request. Make sure your case identifying information is on whatever you upload. From the [BenefitsCal](#) homepage, click the [upload documents](#) button. Look for a document category related to "ABAWD" or time limits. Print/capture the image of the receipt.
- Call 1-877-847-3663 and enter your zip code to reach a CalFresh worker at to your county office, or call directly using this [county office directory](#)
- Go to a [local office](#) to speak with a CalFresh worker or use a lobby kiosk to scan a document into your case record.
- Mail to your [local office](#), making sure to list your application or case number, name and date of birth.