

CalFresh Voices



Despite California's economic and agricultural riches, 2 million children and nearly 5 million adults across our state live in households with uncertain or inconsistent access to the food they need. No one should go without the food necessary to lead a healthy, productive life.

Participating in **CalFresh** reduces food insecurity and helps move Californians out of poverty. But CalFresh fails to reach three in ten eligible households. Even with some long-sought, hard-fought improvements, we are still among the **very worst states** at connecting households in need with federal food assistance. We can, and must, do better.

A new proposed law, **SB 285**, would set a path forward by:

- 1** Establishing statewide goals for CalFresh participation and supporting continuous improvement;
- 2** Streamlining the enrollment process from start to finish;
- 3** Ensuring accurate translations of all CalFresh forms; and
- 4** Making targeted improvements for seniors through a simplified application.

The insights below were gathered from **CalFresh applicants and participants**. Their experiences illustrate the many stresses endured by low-income Californians and the many barriers created by the confusing, burdensome CalFresh application process.

"The price of everything continues to go up but my pay continues to go down. We struggle every month just to make it. I hate to ask for assistance, but I don't know what else to do."


- GetCalFresh User, Butte County

"It's a lot of pressure when you're trying to run your house, you're trying to feed people, and you've just got all your daily stresses just doing this to you... And then the wages that they pay a lot of us - it's not helping. There's no break... You're surviving, that's it."

- CalFresh Recipient (SNAP-Ed Focus Group)


"It's (CalFresh) just a big stress relief... That's a big burden off your back."

- CalFresh Recipient
(CalFresh Focus Group)




"I shorten all the meals to last through... I make small meals. [If my kids say] I' m hungry. [I say] okay, well, tomorrow. Just go to sleep or get water."

- CalFresh Recipient
(CalFresh Focus Group)



"At first I was embarrassed to ask for help... It took away the tremendous stress I've was under, and the utter despair I was feeling, and allowed me the time I needed to get back on my feet."

- GetCalFresh User, Marin County



"CalFresh enabled us to continue to eat healthy food even when we were not sure how we were going to pay our bills."

- CalFresh Recipient
(CalFresh Focus Group)

"And then just like my [SNAP] office isn't open when I get off work, so then I'll find a way to get off early someday, like work extra hours Monday in order to - but not everyone can do that." - CalFresh Recipient (SNAP-Ed Focus Group)



For more information visit cfpa.net/sb285

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