



Assembly Bill 1049 (C. Rodriguez)

Removing Sponsor Deeming from the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP)

Problem: Unnecessary requirements decrease access to CFAP

Sponsor deeming is a complicated rule in the state-funded California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) that creates barriers for low-income immigrants seeking access to food assistance. Sponsor deeming adds a portion of the income and resources of an immigrant's sponsor when determining eligibility for benefits, even if the sponsor is not actively able to provide financial support to the sponsored immigrant.

Sponsor deeming within CFAP creates an unnecessary burden for the state and stigmatizes eligible immigrant families' use of public benefits. A research report produced by the Urban Institute found that one in six adults in immigrant families with children avoided public programs because of concerns with the status of their green card. Sponsor deeming contributes to the existing "chilling effect" brought on by other federal requirements like public charge, exacerbating material hardships for immigrant families by reducing their benefits and decreasing their rates of enrollment. Legal services providers have reported misapplication of deeming rules by eligibility workers due to the complexity of the deeming process, such as lack of screening for exceptions, which further limits access and prevents CFAP from reaching its intended population.

Solution: Increase access to CFAP by removing sponsor deeming

AB 1049 would eliminate sponsor-deeming requirements from CFAP and improve access to food assistance for low-income immigrant Californians. By removing this unnecessary rule, the state can ensure that eligibility is based solely on an applicant's actual financial situation. Beyond simplifying the eligibility determination process, AB 1049 would increase participation in the CFAP program by alleviating the chilling effect that discourages immigrants from applying due to fears of immigration-related consequences. Without this barrier, more families would feel safe accessing essential food assistance, leading to improved food security and overall well-being.

Streamlining CFAP eligibility rules would not only support immigrant households but also strengthen California's economy by ensuring that more residents can afford nutritious meals, reducing healthcare costs, and fostering healthier communities. AB 1049 would align CFAP with California's commitment to fighting hunger and supporting vulnerable communities by reducing administrative complexity and increasing enrollment among eligible immigrant families.



About Food4All

Food4All is a campaign to include all income-eligible Californians in food assistance benefits, regardless of immigration status.

TAKE ACTION

Join us in securing a state investment to provide food benefits to all income-eligible Californians who are ineligible for CalFresh due to their immigration status.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Nobody should experience hunger because of their immigration status. No exceptions! No exclusions! No delays!

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