

People Who Are Homeless

Characteristics unique to people who are homeless

People who are homeless face unique challenges maintaining a mailing address and finding transportation. Their CalFresh application process differs from a standard application in the following areas:

- Reporting and Recertification Housing deductions

People who are homeless:

- Can get CalFresh even if they live in a shelter and get free meals there. [7 C.F.R.* § 273.1(b)(7)(vi)(E); MPP § 63-402.46.]
- Do not have to have any place to cook or store food to get CalFresh. [7 C.F.R. § 273.3(a); MPP § 63-402.46.]
- Are more likely to be eligible for CalFresh Expedited Service (ES).

What is the relevant CalFresh regulation?

An individual is homeless if s/he:

- Has no fixed, regular place to sleep at night.
- Lives in a shelter, an armory, or a welfare hotel.
- Lives in a halfway house.
- Is living for less than 90 days in someone else's home.
- Lives somewhere that people do not usually live, such as a doorway, lobby, bus station, hallway, car, or subway.
- For details, see the following: 7 C.F.R. § 271.2; MPP § 63-102(h)(2)(a)-(d) (definition of "homeless individual").

Living in a shelter:

- Residents of Shelters for Battered Women: (MPP § 63-503.46)

- Women or women with children who temporarily reside in a shelter for battered women and children may apply for and have their own CalFresh case.
- Residents of Drug/Alcoholic Treatment and Rehabilitation Programs (MPP § 63-503.47)
 - For licensed facilities:
 - The CalFresh application must be made by an authorized representative of the facility. Individuals may not have access to their own benefits; the authorized representative from the facility may use their benefits to purchase food on their behalf.
 - Unlicensed Center / Transitional Homes:
 - Individuals can apply for and have their own case; however, they must have access to purchase and prepare their own meals.

How is the regulation applied to CalFresh applicants?

People who are homeless:

- Do not have to file "QR 7s" (quarterly reports). But to get this exception, the entire household must be homeless. [7 U.S.C. § 2015(c)(1)(A)(ii); 7 C.F.R. § 273.21(b)(1)(ii); MPP § 63-505.214.]
- Are considered a change-reporting household, meaning that they need to report within 10 days:
 - Changes in total monthly income more than \$50, other than changes in General Assistance/General Relief.
 - Change in address.
 - If there is a change in the amount of any court order child support paid by a member of the household for a child not living in the home.

For more information on change reporting for homeless households please contact your CWD.

- Are eligible for a \$143 housing deduction. No proof needs to be shown beyond "reasonable expectation" of need to pay to receive the \$143

shelter deduction. If housing costs (including utilities) pass \$143, and there is a form of verification, the individual can still claim them. http://www.cdss.ca.gov/getinfo/acin04/pdf/I-73_04.pdf

For details see: <http://foodstampguide.org/can-homeless-people-get-a-deduction-for-shelter-expenses/>

Based on the regulation, what unique steps must occur to accommodate this special population?

Prescreening: There are no unique steps to prescreening. Individuals just need to meet the income guidelines.

Eligibility:

Identification

- The CalFresh eligibility worker will verify the identity of an applicant or recipient. [7 C.F.R. § 273.2(f)(1)(c)(vii); MPP § 63-300.5(e)(3).] But a photo I.D. is not the only way of proving identity. No one will be denied CalFresh simply because the person does not have a photo I.D. [7 C.F.R. § 273.2(f)(1)(c)(vii) (“any documents which reasonably establish the applicant’s identity must be accepted, and no requirement for a specific type of document...may be imposed.”)] To prove identity, an applicant can use such things as a work or school I.D., an I.D. card for health benefits, or an I.D. from another social services program such as CalWORKs [TANF]. An applicant can also use wage stubs, a birth certificate, or a voter registration card. [MPP § 63-300.5(e)(3).
- If an individual does not have an ID, the eligibility worker will assist the individual to obtain adequate documentation/identification.

This may include the possibility of a two-step process, such as assisting the individual in getting a birth certificate.

- The CalFresh eligibility worker can also verify a person’s identity by calling someone, such as a shelter worker or an employer, who can confirm their identity. Under the CalFresh rules, a phone call to someone who can confirm a person’s identity is called a “collateral contact.” [7 C.F.R. § 273.2(f)(1)(c)(vii); MPP § 63-300.5(h)(2).]

Voter’s registration may be the easiest acceptable ID to secure.

People who are homeless do not need to have an address in order to receive benefits. [7 C.F.R. § 273.3(a); MPP §63-401.5.] The eligibility worker will work with the individual to establish a place where the documents will be mailed. [7 C.F.R. §§ 273.2, 273.3(a) ; MPP § 63-401.5.]

Benefit Retention: In order to maintain benefits, individuals need to complete any change reporting. CalFresh households that are homeless or become homeless shall continue to receive benefits from the county of application as defined by MPP 63-401. If a household reports residency in another county, the CWD may transfer the household to the new county, if appropriate, using the Inter County Transfer procedures outlined in the ACL.

The client must remember when their recertification is due. Without an address they may find that they have been cut off and not know why.

Emergency CalFresh: Individuals may be eligible for Emergency or “Expedited” CalFresh if they meet one of the following circumstances:

- The household has less than \$150 in gross monthly income and has \$100 or less in “liquid resources.” [MPP § 63-301.511; 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(i)(1)(i)] “Liquid resources” are cash, checking or savings accounts, savings certificates, and lump sum payments such as income tax refunds or back payments of social security or CalWORKs; or
- The household’s monthly housing costs (rent or mortgage, and the standard utility allowance) for the month are more than the sum of its liquid resources and gross income for the month. [MPP § 63-301.513; 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(i)(1)(iii)] Note: Since people who are homeless cannot afford housing, they all should qualify for expedited service.
- The household is made up of migrant farm workers who do not currently have and/or are not expecting work for the month. [MPP § 63-301.512, 503.43; 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(i)(1)(ii), 273.10(e)(3)(ii), (iii)] [MPP § 63-301.51, 503.43; 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(i)(1)(ii), 273.10(e)(3)(i), (iii)] [MPP § 63-301.51, 503.43; 7 C.F.R. § 273.2(i)(1)(ii), 273.10(e)(3)(i), (iii)]

