

UC Students & Cal Fresh Eligibility

November 2015



The **UC Student Association** is the official voice of over 240,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from all ten UC campuses. It is our mission to advocate on behalf of current and future students for the accessibility, affordability, and quality of the UC system. Learn more about our work at www.ucsa.org.



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Are students really food insecure?

According to the College and University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA) Postsecondary enrollment patterns show that college students increasingly do not fit the perception of the typical college student (18-22 years old with support from home). What has long been termed the “non-traditional” student is becoming the typical college student. Many students are supporting families and working full-time while attending college. These students are often food insecure, or one missed paycheck away from being food insecure. As college costs have risen, and wages for the vast majority of workers have remained constant or decreased, “traditional” college students are also struggling due to less support from home. Food insecurity cuts across all demographic statuses, enrollment levels, and geographic locations. Empty cupboards and scrapping by are a way a life for far too many students and these stressors have a serious impact on student success.

How has food insecurity affected UC Students?

The full extent of the problem is unknown, but a 2014 survey of undergraduates at the University of California found that 26 percent of respondent’s skipped meals “somewhat often” or “very often” to save money¹. In response to growing demand, nine UC campuses now operate food pantries, and the UC has launched the Global Food Initiative, in order to fund these pantries and address hunger through a variety of research grants. A food pantry director at UC Davis told UCSA that they have experienced an overwhelming demand for fresh fruits and vegetables, as prices for these items have gone up due to the drought.

Can Students qualify for Cal Fresh benefits?

According to the USDA², most able-bodied students ages 18 through 49 who are enrolled in college or other institutions of higher education at least half time are not eligible for SNAP benefits. However, students may be able to get SNAP benefits if otherwise eligible and they:

¹ <http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article41478480.html>

² <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>



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- Get public assistance benefits under a Title IV-A program of the Social Security Act;
- Take part in a State or federally financed work study program;
- Work at least 20 hours a week;
- Are taking care of a dependent household member under the age of 6;
- Are taking care of a dependent household member over the age of 5 but under 12 and do not have adequate child care to enable them to attend school and work a minimum of 20 hours, or to take part in a State or federally financed work study program; or
- Are assigned to or placed in a college or certain other schools through:
 - A program under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998,
 - A program under Section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974,
 - An employment and training program under the Food Stamp Act, or
 - An employment and training program operated by a State or local government.

Also, a single parent enrolled full time in college and taking care of a dependent household member under the age of 12 can get SNAP benefits if otherwise eligible.

I want to apply for Cal Fresh, where do I start?

Cal Fresh is administered at the County level. In order to apply, [find your county's website here](#).

Complete as much of the application as you can. Your name, address and signature are necessary on the application in order to be accepted by your local CalFresh office. Your application will be accepted on the same day it is turned in, even if there is no interview on that day.

When your application has been turned in, the county welfare department will set up an [interview](#) to go over your application. Here is a [list of documents](#) you will need to bring to your interview³.

If you have a critical need for food, you may qualify for [expedited service](#) and receive your CalFresh benefits within three (3) days. Most counties consider you to be critical need if you have less than three days of food at home and less than \$100 available to you for the purchase of food.

³ <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/foodstamps/pg847.htm#exp>



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