

CalFresh Program Changes

Changes to Non-Citizen Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

House Resolution (H.R.) 1, also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, was signed into law on July 4, 2025. H.R. 1 makes significant changes to the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), locally known as the CalFresh Program. H.R. 1 changes will be implemented at different times, upon the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) policy release and system automation.



As of April 1, 2026, certain non-citizens who apply for CalFresh may not be eligible to CalFresh. The ineligibility of this group of non-citizens who are currently receiving CalFresh benefits will be determined during their renewal. The non-citizens who will become ineligible to CalFresh include, but are not limited to, refugees, asylees, parolees, and individuals with deportation withheld.

CalFresh eligibility will be limited to:

1. United States (U.S.) Citizens
2. U.S. Nationals
3. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs)
Note: Different non-citizen categories fall under the LPR status and may need to meet a second eligibility requirement to be eligible to benefits.
4. Cuban or Haitian Entrants
5. Individuals who reside in the U.S. in accordance with a Compact of Free Association (COFA) agreement.
Note: COFA countries include Marshall Islands, Republic of Micronesia and Republic of Palau.

There is no change to California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) eligibility which provides state-funded food assistance to individuals who are not otherwise eligible to CalFresh benefits.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What are the non-citizen policy changes?

Under H.R. 1, only U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals, LPRs, Cuban or Haitian Entrants, and COFA citizens, which are residents of Marshall Islands, Palau, and Micronesia, will be eligible for CalFresh benefits.

2. When will this policy change take effect?

CDSS provided an implementation date of April 1, 2026, for new applicants. The policy change for certain non-citizens who are currently receiving CalFresh, will be implemented at the household's renewal as of April 2026.

3. What are the additional eligibility requirements for LPRs?

Certain LPRs without five years of lawful residence in the U.S. must meet one additional condition to be potentially eligible for CalFresh. These conditions include, but are not limited to, being under 18-years-old, being blind or disabled, having a U.S. military connection, etc.

4. Can non-citizen or undocumented parents who have U.S. citizen children apply for CalFresh?

Yes, non-citizen or undocumented parents can apply for CalFresh for their U.S. citizen children. We encourage all household members to apply and let our Eligibility Staff determine if any household member is eligible or ineligible to CalFresh benefits.

5. Will Refugees or Asylees be eligible?

They may be eligible for CalFresh when they adjust their immigration status to LPR/Green Card holder.

6. Are non-citizens able to apply now for CalFresh even if they will be losing eligibility under H.R. 1 guidelines?

Yes, non-citizens may continue to apply for CalFresh. We encourage all non-citizens to apply and let our Eligibility Staff determine if they are eligible or ineligible to CalFresh benefits.

7. When will these changes take effect for non-citizens losing eligibility under H.R. 1 who are currently receiving CalFresh benefits?

As of April 1, 2026, new applicants who fall under certain non-citizen status will be ineligible to CalFresh under the H.R. 1 policy change. However, current CalFresh households' eligibility will be re-evaluated based on this policy change at the household's renewal. At renewal, if the individual's immigration status has not changed to LPR or another eligible status, then their CalFresh benefits will be discontinued. It is important that households report changes to their immigration status at their renewal.

8. Will non-citizens losing federal CalFresh eligibility be eligible to CFAP?

Non-citizens ineligible to federal benefits under H.R. 1 policy may not be eligible to CFAP.

9. What are some resources for non-citizens who will be losing CalFresh eligibility?

Individuals can visit our Food For Thought webpage at https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/food/calfresh/food_resources.html for a list of resources, including local food banks and pantry information or call 211 for food assistance.