



NEW CALFRESH WORK RULES



What's Changing?

Some adults will need to meet new work rules to keep getting CalFresh.

When?


Changes begin June 1st, 2026.


Who?

Adults ages 18–64.

Questions?

You can reach out to the county:

 Phone: Mon–Fri, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
1-888-421-8080

 In person: Mon–Fri, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
1020 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95010
500 Westridge Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076

Am I Exempt?

You are exempt if you:

- Are under 18 or over 64
- Live with a child under 14
- Are pregnant
- Have a health condition that makes it hard to work
- Already work enough hours (min. 20 hrs/week)
- Are Native American
- Qualify for another exemption under state or federal rules



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New CalFresh Work Rules ***What You Need to Know***

Beginning June 1st, 2026, CalFresh rules are changing for some adults. This Q&A is designed to help answer common questions related to the new CalFresh work rules.

How will I know if I'm exempt?

The county will screen your case. They will identify and explain any possible exemptions you may be eligible for.

What must I do to meet the work rules?

To stay eligible, you must:

- Work at least 20 hours a week (80 hours per month), OR
- Be in an approved work or training program, OR
- Do a mix of work and qualifying activities that add up to 20 hours a week.

The county may ask for proof, like pay stubs or training forms.

What counts as work?

Paid jobs, self-employment (like cleaning homes, babysitting or landscaping), on-the-job training, work study, and some in-kind work (when someone is paid in goods or services instead of money, and the county approves it).

Does going to school count?

Yes. Attending college or university is an exemption.

Does job training count?

Yes. Being enrolled in a job training program is an exemption.

Can the county help find job training?

Yes. The county can connect you to job training programs.

Do volunteer hours count?

Yes, if the volunteer work is at least 20 hours a week (or 80 hours a month).

What if I have a disability but no disability benefits?

You may still be exempt if the health condition makes it hard to work. The county may ask for medical proof.

What happens if the rules are not met?

If you do not meet the rules and are not exempt, you can only get CalFresh for 3 months in a 3-year period. If you start meeting the rules later (by working, volunteering, or joining a program), benefits can start again before the 3-year period is over.

