



EMPLOYMENT &
HUMAN SERVICES

MEMORANDUM

Kathy Gallagher, Director

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To: All Staff, Code 2A

Date: October 7, 2021

From: Community Relations

Subject: Fact Sheet – CalFresh Benefits Increase

For the first time in nearly 50 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has adjusted the *Thrifty Food Plan* to reflect changes in the food marketplace, dietary guidance, consumption patterns, and current food prices. This readjustment resulted in an increase to Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

In California, this increase applies to the CalFresh program as of October 1st. The maximum CalFresh benefit for a typical family of four - excluding additional funds that are part of pandemic relief - has increased by ~~-\$~~1.20 per person per day. As a result, families may see their CalFresh benefits boosted by up to 21% over pre-pandemic benefit levels, depending on their household size.

You can learn more about the increase and what this means for Contra Costa County by viewing our [CalFresh Benefits Increase Fact Sheet](#) and the [Policy & Planning page](#) on ehsd.org.

Fact Sheet

October 2021



CalFresh Benefits to Increase On October 1, 2021

The *Thrifty Food Plan* Re-Evaluation Will Result in up to 21% CalFresh Boost to Pre-Pandemic CalFresh Benefit Levels.

On August 16, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it will increase average Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits beginning October 1, 2021. In California, this increase will apply to the CalFresh program.

Under direction from the 2018 Farm Bill, the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) was readjusted for the first time in 45 years to account for changes in the food marketplace, dietary guidance and consumption patterns, and current food prices.

What is CalFresh?

CalFresh is the name for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in California. As the nation's most important anti-hunger program, SNAP helps stretch household food budgets and allows recipients to afford more nutritious options.

CalFresh is always a critical support to those who need it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it proved to be a nutrition lifeline for an increased number of Contra Costa residents, including many who had never had the need for food assistance in the past.

66%

of CalFresh participants in California are families with children

19%

of CalFresh participants in California are families with members who are elderly or have disabilities

20% Increase

in CalFresh program enrollment in Contra Costa over pre-pandemic levels. Enrollment remains high today, as the unemployment rate has recently stalled (6.5% in August 2021), COVID remains a factor, and job availability is uneven across industries.

TO CALCULATE THE TFP, USDA:

USED THE LATEST DATA



How much groceries cost



What nutrients are in food



What Americans actually eat



What a nutritious diet looks like

MADE SEVERAL CHOICES



Calorie levels the plan supports



Range of food choices it includes



What it means to be "thrifty"

As a result, the 2021 TFP represents the cost of a practical, nutritious, cost-effective diet for a family of four with an adult male and female and two kids between the ages of 6-8 and 9-11.



Source: *At A Glance: The Thrifty Food Plan Re-Evaluation*, USDA Food and Nutrition Service. August 2021

The Thrifty Food Plan Re-Evaluation—What's Changing?

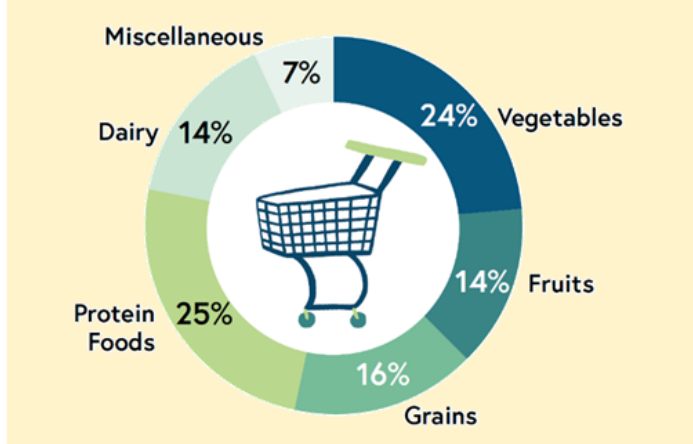
The Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) is the lowest cost of four USDA Food Plans that describe how much it costs to eat a healthy diet that aligns with food-group, -subfoodgroup, and nutrient recommendations. It is the basis for the maximum monthly SNAP/CalFresh benefit allotments and is meant to support both food security and nutrition security.

Continued on next page

Impacts and Benefits to Contra Costa Residents

To re-evaluate the Thrifty Food Plan, USDA first assessed the foods and beverages that make up a healthy, practical diet, then determined a reasonable cost at which they could be purchased by resource-constrained households.

Snapshot of a Healthy, Practical Diet



Source: At A Glance: The Thrifty Food Plan Re-Evaluation, USDA Food and Nutrition Service. August 2021

What Does This Mean for Contra Costa County?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, maximum CalFresh benefits have been temporarily boosted by 15%, but this will end when the health emergency is determined to have adequately subsided. The TFP re-evaluation concluded that the cost of a nutritious, practical, cost effective diet for a family of four is 21% higher than the 2006 TFP. As a result, the maximum CalFresh benefit in the state for a typical family of four – excluding additional funds provided as part of pandemic relief – will increase by 21%, or approximately \$1.20 per person per day.

In calendar year 2019, the average monthly CalFresh benefit issued in Contra Costa was \$208 per household. Depending on the size of the household, the benefit amount will increase up to 21%.

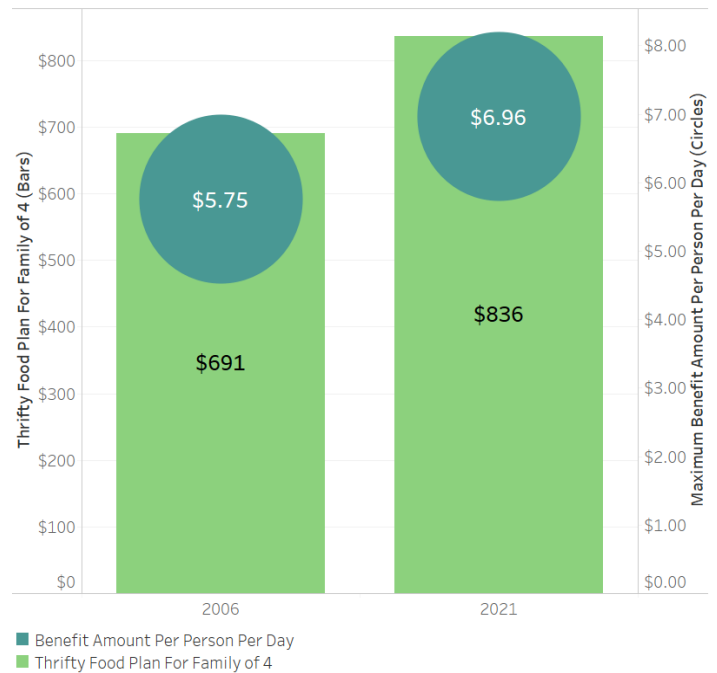
Economic Boost to the Community at Large

In addition to the support provided to individuals and families, CalFresh drives nearly \$300 million in total economic activity in the county annually, going to retail outlets, grocers, workers and goods. The 2021 increase in benefits may add more than \$30 million additional per year.

For more information, contact:
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 Interim Assistant Director, Policy & Planning Division

Maximum Benefit Per Person Per Day

Thrifty Food Plan Comparison:
 2006 versus October 1, 2021



More Than \$30 Million Additional Per Year
 in economic activity in the county,
 going to retail outlets, grocers, workers
 and goods.

