

# Changes to cal fresh

BETTER FOOD FOR BETTER LIVING

## Benefit Amounts – FFY 2021

### ***Fact sheet for CalFresh outreach workers***

**What is a COLA?**

- COLA stands for Cost of Living Adjustment. USDA adjusts SNAP income guidelines, deductions, and maximum allotment amounts every year based on changes to the cost of living. These adjustments go into effect every October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**There are new CalFresh income guidelines for October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021.**

- Every year the USDA adjusts the income guidelines based on the cost of living. Applicants previously denied benefits because they were over income should consider reapplying if their income falls within the new limits.
- California implements Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility, called Modified Categorical Eligibility (MCE) in California, which means that most households can have gross monthly incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). These households must still meet the net monthly income standards in order to qualify for benefits.
  - Some households are excluded from MCE and must pass the 130% gross income test:
    1. Any household member disqualified for an intentional program violation, or
    2. A head of household who does not comply with work requirements. (CA has an ABAWD waiver through 06/30/2021.)
  - Remember that 1-2 person households with a member who is age 60+ and/or someone with a disability can qualify for \$16 even if they do not meet the net monthly income standards. Households with 3+ people must still meet the net income standard.
- CalFresh outreach workers should make sure households are deducting their dependent care expenses and households with members who are age 60+ or disabled are deducting out-of-pocket medical expenses and full shelter costs.

<b>Income Guidelines</b>		
<b>October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021</b>		
<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Gross Monthly Income (200% FPL)</b>	<b>Net Monthly Income</b>
1	\$2,128	\$1,064
2	\$2,874	\$1,437
3	\$3,620	\$1,810
4	\$4,368	\$2,184
5	\$5,114	\$2,557
6	\$5,860	\$2,930
7	\$6,608	\$3,304
8	\$7,354	\$3,677
Each additional member	+ \$748	+ \$374

**Increased deductions mean clients may see an increase in their CalFresh benefits on October 1, 2020.**

- The maximum shelter deduction for households without age 60+ or disabled members increased to \$586. Remember that households with members who are age 60+ or disabled get the excess shelter deduction.
- The homeless household shelter allowance increased to \$156.74.

- The Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) increased to \$438. Households that pay for heating and cooling costs separate from their rent or mortgage are eligible for the SUA.
- The Limited Utility Allowance (LUA) increased to \$139. Households that do not qualify for the SUA but pay for at least two separate utilities other than heating and cooling are eligible for a LUA.
- The Telephone Utility Allowance (TUA) stayed the same at \$18. Households that are not eligible for the SUA or LUA but have telephone expenses, or expenses for an equivalent form of communication, are eligible for a TUA.
- The Standard Medical Deduction for households with a member who is age 60+ or disabled is \$120 as long as there are verified medical expenses between \$35.01 and \$155 per month.
- The standard deduction for households with 4 or more members:

FFY 2021 Standard Deduction October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021	
Household Size	Standard Deduction
1-3	\$167
4	\$181
5	\$212
6 +	\$243

#### Maximum Monthly Allotments will increase on October 1, 2020

- USDA makes annual adjustments to account for changes in the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan.
- Clients do not need to do anything – changes should occur automatically.
- Clients' allotments may increase based on increased deductions.

Maximum Monthly Allotment October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021	
Household Size	Maximum CalFresh Allotment
1	\$204
2	\$374
3	\$535
4	\$680
5	\$807
6	\$969
7	\$1,078
8	\$1,224
Each additional household member	+\$153

- The monthly minimum allotment will remain the same: \$16.

#### What can CalFresh outreach workers do?

- If clients were recently denied for having too much income, see if they are interested in being prescreened again or reapplying.
- Inform clients about the verifications they will need in order to take deductions and maximize their benefit amounts (e.g., child/adult care receipts, medical expense receipts, shelter costs, etc.). Make sure the county has the household's most recent expenses.
- Resources: [ACL 14-56](#), [ACIN I-65-20](#), [ESAP/SMD webinar](#)