

PRESS RELEASE

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For the First Time Ever, CalFresh Food Benefits Available to Eligible Senior and Disabled SSI/SSP Recipients

June 1st expansion helps increase food access for an estimated 29,000 eligible Orange County households

Orange County, Calif. (May 20, 2019) – May is CalFresh Awareness Month and the County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA) is pleased to announce that starting June 1, 2019, the State of California’s CalFresh food assistance program will be expanded to include eligible older adults and people with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment (SSI/SSP) benefits. SSI/SSP benefits will not change as part of the expansion.

SSI is a federally-funded program that provides monthly income support to eligible individuals who are 65 years or older, blind or disabled. SSP is the state program which augments SSI. Both SSI and SSP benefits are administered by the Social Security Administration.

Under the expansion, CalFresh food benefits can help eligible SSI/SSP recipients stretch household budgets, enabling individuals and families to afford nutritious food such as fruit, vegetables and other fresh and healthy options. CalFresh food benefits are delivered to recipients on their Golden State Advantage Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) debit card, which can be used at any grocery store, farmers market or Restaurant Meals Program participating restaurant that accepts EBT.

SSA staff are prepared to help eligible SSI/SSP recipients apply for CalFresh food assistance and expect to serve up to 29,000 new SSI/SSP recipient households in Orange County. The County of Orange, and all California counties, have been working diligently to launch this historic program expansion.

The County of Orange Social Services Agency (OCSSA) provides Adult Services, Aid Programs, eligibility for public assistance benefits, Children & Family Services and Family Self-Sufficiency programs to the County’s residents. OCSSA employs nearly 4,400 staff across Orange County. For more information, visit us at <http://ssa.ocgov.com/>.



Households that already receive CalFresh and currently have a member of their household excluded because they receive SSI/SSP do not need to re-apply or contact the County. Counties will contact those households when their next report is scheduled.

The addition of an SSI/SSP recipient to an existing CalFresh household may impact household food benefits. For currently participating households that experience a change in benefits due to SSI/SSP income counting toward their CalFresh case, additional state-funded nutrition benefits may be available. As always, recipients can contact SSA to ask questions or report changes at any time.

There are multiple ways to connect with SSA for new households to apply:

- **Click-** www.MyBenefitsCalWIN.org or www.GetCalFresh.org to apply online,
- **Call-** (800) 281-9799 to apply by phone, or
- **Come in-** locate your local county office at <http://ssa.ocgov.com/locations>

Reasonable accommodations and services in multiple languages are available at all offices.

Existing Orange County CalFresh households should direct questions to their assigned case worker. Those recipients without an assigned caseworker may contact SSA toll-free at (800) 281-9799.

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