

10 Myths and Facts about CalFresh Benefits and Immigrants

1. MYTH: You have to be a U.S. citizen to get CalFresh.

FACT: Some legal immigrants can get CalFresh. If you are an “eligible immigrant”, you may qualify. Ask your local CalFresh office.

2. MYTH: Getting CalFresh hurts your chances of becoming a citizen.

FACT: If you are a legal immigrant and you get CalFresh, it will not hurt your chances of becoming a citizen.

3. MYTH: If you don't have legal status, you can't get CalFresh.

FACT: Undocumented people can't get CalFresh. But citizens and some legal immigrants who live with them can get CalFresh, including children.

4. MYTH: Children of undocumented immigrants can't get CalFresh.

FACT: Children of undocumented immigrants can get CalFresh if they are citizens or legal permanent residents.

5. MYTH: Undocumented people who ask about the CalFresh Program or live with people who get CalFresh are reported to United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS).

FACT: The CalFresh program information is confidential. But, the CalFresh office checks the immigration documents you give them with USCIS. If you are not documented, you won't be asked for your immigration documents. Other members of the household can still apply and may be eligible.

6. MYTH: If USCIS finds out you get CalFresh, you have to pay them back.

FACT: People who get CalFresh in the right amount do not have to pay them back. Make sure the information you give when you apply is correct. If you get CalFresh because of wrong information, you will have to pay them back.

7. MYTH: It hurts your sponsor if you get CalFresh.

FACT: A sponsor's income and resources are usually counted when you apply for CalFresh. But there are some exceptions. Ask your local CalFresh office. If you do not get benefits, the rest of your household may still be eligible.

8. MYTH: You can't get CalFresh even if you have a green card and work.

FACT: Many legal immigrants are eligible. Generally, if you have been in the U.S. legally for 5 years, or are a child under 18, get a disability-related benefit, or have enough work history in the U.S, you may be able to get CalFresh.

9. MYTH: You can't apply for CalFresh if you don't speak English.

FACT: Anyone can apply for CalFresh. Local CalFresh offices have applications in many languages. CalFresh workers can find interpreters to help you, or a friend or family member who speaks English can apply for you.

10. MYTH: You have to bring your own interpreter to apply for CalFresh.

FACT: Your local CalFresh office must provide translation services to complete your application.