CalFresh Handbook :: 63-01.02
The CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program

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Summary:
This handbook provides information regarding a component of the CalFresh Program, the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP).

I. General:
CalFresh benefits may not be used to purchase prepared or ready-to-eat meals, as a general rule. CalFresh households are expected to prepare their own meals; therefore, benefits are generally used to purchase uncooked food or seeds/plants to grow food for the household.

The RMP allows CalFresh benefits to be used to purchase prepared or ready-to-eat meals to increase food access for elderly, disabled and homeless households. These households are frequently unable to prepare cooked meals for themselves due to health issues or the lack of cooking facilities.

Participation in this program is limited to counties authorized by the State of California to administer the program. Participating restaurants must have a Memorandum of Understanding with a participating county and authorized by USDA Food and Nutrition Services as a Meal Provider. As of 2012, Alameda County is an authorized county and is working with local restaurants to assist our elderly, disabled and homeless recipients with food access.

II. Authorizing Individuals as Eligible
Eligibility is limited to households whose members are:

- Over 60;
- Disabled*;
- Homeless; or
- The spouse of an elderly, disabled, or homeless member.

These households may use their CalFresh benefits to purchase prepared or ready-to-eat meals under the RMP. Once a household has established eligibility, the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system must be updated to reflect this change.

*Disability for CalFresh is limited to individuals who:

- Receive disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency because of a disability that is considered permanent, under §221(i) of the Social Security Act.
- Receive Interim Assistance benefits pending receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), as long as the disability or blindness criteria will be evaluated as stringently as under Title XVI of the Social Security Act. Interim Assistance can be paid as either GA or CalWORKs. These individuals should be disabled based on Medi-Cal disability rules.
- Receive disability-related medical assistance under Title XIX (Medi-Cal) of the Social Security Act.
- Meet criteria pertaining to Veteran's Benefits or Railroad Retirement paid as disability benefits. They are:
- Veterans with a service-connected or nonservice-connected disability rated by the Veteran’s Administration as total or paid as total by the Veteran's Administration under Title 38 of the United States Code.
- Veterans considered by the Veteran's Administration to be in need of regular aid and attendance or permanently housebound under Title 38 of the United States Code.
- Surviving spouses of veterans who are considered by the Veteran's Administration to be in need of regular aid and attendance or permanently housebound or surviving children of veterans considered by the Veteran’s Administration to be permanently incapable of self-support under Title 38 of the United States Code.
- Surviving spouses or surviving children of veterans who are considered by the Veteran's Administration to be entitled to compensation for a service-connected death or pension benefits for a nonservice-connected death under Title 38 of the United States Code and who have a disability considered permanent under §221(i) of the Social Security Act.
- Persons who receive an annuity payment under
  1. §2(a)(1)(iv) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 and are determined to be eligible to receive Medicare by the Railroad Retirement Board; or
  2. §2(a)(1)(v) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 and are determined to be disabled based upon the criteria used under Title XVI of the Social Security Act.

III. CalWIN Entries to Update EBT

When a household becomes eligible, Eligibility Technicians (ET) will update EBT through CalWIN reflecting the changed status. This will also need to be done if the household loses eligibility for the program (i.e. a homeless individual who finds housing).

To change the status, the ET will go to the CalWIN Maintain Card Requests window, and add a “Y” in the Referred for Restaurant Meals field. See example below-
Save the record and the EBT system will update overnight.

Send the household Restaurant Meals Program Participation approval notice, form 63-56, to inform the recipient that they are eligible for the RMP. This will also advise them that their current EBT card may continue to be used at grocery stores, farmer’s markets, and other locations that can transact CalFresh benefits.

The Restaurant Meals Program Participation notification, form 63-56, is available in CalWIN and must be manually generated. Form 63-56 is found in Client Correspondence under Print a Form/Other Client Correspondence manually.
If a homeless household becomes ineligible, the CalWIN system should be updated with a “N” in the *Referred for Restaurant Meals* field. Send the Restaurant Meals Program Participation change notice, form 63-57, to inform the recipient that they will no longer be able to purchase prepared or ready-to-eat meals under the RMP.

The Restaurant Meals Program Participation change notification, form 63-57, is available in CalWIN and must be manually generated. Form 63-57 is also found in Client Correspondence under Print a Form/Other Client Correspondence manually.

**References:**

MPP 63-102 (e) (2)

ACIN I-31-04, I-13-07, and I-71-11