



# FACT SHEET

## AB 612 (WEBER)

### INCREASE ACCESS TO CALFRESH ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUSES

#### Summary

##### ASSEMBLY BILL 612 (WEBER)

AB 612 increases access to the CalFresh and the Restaurant Meals Program. The bill authorizes the Department of Social Services to enter into a statewide MOU with the Chancellor's Office to permit all 114 colleges with eligible facilities to accept EBT cards (CalFresh) at their campus cafeterias and restaurants.



#### PROBLEM

- The process to become an authorized SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) retailer and accept EBT cards on campus is long, bureaucratic and requires negotiating agreements with various agencies, including county, state and federal agencies.
- Colleges must apply to be a Restaurant Meal Program vendor individually, a process that diverts valuable staff time and resources that could be spent supporting students.
- It can take 18 to 24 months to become an approved EBT vendor.
- Over 60 colleges are located in a county that do not have a Restaurant Meals Program and thus are ineligible to provide access to CalFresh to their students.

#### AFFORDABILITY FACTS

- 50% of community college students reported experiencing some type of food insecurity.
- Food insecure students are more likely to report they are at risk of dropping out due to financial concerns.
- An estimate of 57% of students eligible for CalFresh are not enrolled in the program.
- 55% of students with children experience food insecurity

#### SOLUTION

- EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) cards allow students to use their SNAP benefits at retailers who accept these EBT cards as a form of payment, similar to purchasing something using a credit/debit card.
- Colleges can minimize food insecurity for students by allowing them to use their CalFresh benefits on campus.
- Visibility and acceptance of EBT cards on campus can increase knowledge of the availability of food aid benefits for students.



# INCREASE ACCESS TO FOOD AID ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

## **AB 612 (Weber) Increases Access to CalFresh food benefits for California community college students. Specifically, the bill:**

Authorizes the Department of Social Services to enter into a statewide memorandum of understanding with the Chancellor's Office to permit all 114 colleges with eligible facilities to become an authorized SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) retailer and accept EBT cards (CalFresh) at their campus cafeterias and restaurants.

### **AB 612 (Weber) will:**

- Will cut red tape and significantly ease the process in which a college can become an approved vendor.
- Permits all colleges, including those who are not in a county that offers the Restaurant Meals Program, to be eligible to accept EBT on campus.
- Support a systemwide effort to destigmatize CalFresh by considering it another form of student financial aid. Barely one in five food-insecure students at California Community Colleges receive CalFresh and students eligible for work-study are also eligible for CalFresh.

## **Definitions**

### **ELECTRONIC BENEFITS TRANSFER (EBT)**

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) is an electronic system that allows a recipient to authorize transfer of their food benefits from a Federal account to a retailer account to pay for products received.

### **CALFRESH**

CalFresh is a nutrition program that can help households buy healthy foods. Nationally, the program is called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

### **RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM**

The Restaurant Meals Program is a Nutrition Assistance program that allows participants to use their EBT card to purchase prepared meals from participating restaurants.