

## California Community Colleges Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Guidebook

College student hunger is a pressing concern. Researchers find that up to one-third of community college students regularly experience very low food security.<sup>1</sup> (Wisconsin HOPE Lab, 2017). There is a significant body of research linking student health—both behavioral and physical—to academic retention and success. Hunger and housing problems cause students to miss classes and school activities, avoid buying required textbooks, and even drop classes.<sup>2</sup> In a recent survey of more than 43,000 students, 42-44 percent of students receiving D's or F's in college had very low food security, compared to only 24 percent of students receiving A's.<sup>3</sup> With growing awareness of these challenges, more and more colleges have begun to implement basic needs support programs on campus.

Federal and state benefits programs such as CalWORKs and CalFresh are powerful tools for addressing hunger. **Many California Community College (CCC) students have low income status and are eligible for these benefits.** When colleges participate in these programs as benefits retailers, students can use their EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card to buy groceries and other items on campus. **However, most CCC are not currently set up to accept EBT cards at campus stores or dining halls.** This creates a missed opportunity to support these students.

### Part 1: Introduction to the EBT Guidebook

In 2017, 70 community colleges responded that 56% of students were food insecure.<sup>4</sup> In a Fall 2017 survey conducted by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, results indicated **strong campus buy-in to address basic needs insecurity.** The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office recognized the impact of unmet basic needs on student wellness and success, and the critical role community colleges can play to address food security, and assembled the **CCC EBT Guidebook to help CCC understand and pursue the process for accepting EBT benefits at campus stores, dining halls, and other point-of-sale (POS) locations.** It is intended as a practical document with step-by-step guidance, tips, and tools you can use.

The *Guidebook* focuses on helping colleges apply to accept EBT benefits at POS locations. If you are interested in learning about comprehensive approaches to CCC student hunger and homelessness, visit the California Community Colleges Health & Wellness website: <http://www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org/basic-needs-initiative/>

<sup>1</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (March 2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

<sup>2</sup> Dubick, J., Mathews, B., & Cady, C. (October 2016). *Hunger on Campus: The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*. College and University Food Bank Alliance and partners.

<sup>3</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. (April 2018). *Still Hungry and Homeless in College*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

<sup>4</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Broton, K. M., & Hernandez, D. C. *Addressing Basic Needs Security in Higher Education: An Introduction to Three Evaluations for Food and Housing at community Colleges*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office created the *EBT Guidebook* using resources linked throughout this document, as well as information and insights provided by Daren Lynne, Director of Special Projects & Academic Support, Los Angeles City College Foundation. Ms. Lynne was integral to the food security efforts of Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) and Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD).

The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office anticipates the *EBT Guidebook* will be a useful and valuable resource in your work to support student wellness.<sup>5</sup>

## Part 2: Overview of Key Concepts

EBT, CalFresh, and SNAP are different terms that are often used interchangeably, which can be confusing. This section provides a brief overview of terms discussed in the *EBT Guidebook*.

**Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)** is an electronic system through which states issue benefits. Benefits programs that are issued through EBT include, but are not limited to: CalFresh; CalWORKs; Medi-Cal/Medicaid; and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program.



People who receive cash or nutrition benefits use an **EBT card** to pay for items at participating retailers. EBT cards look like debit cards, use a magnetic stripe and Personal Identification Number (PIN) like debit cards, and are designed to be discreet. An EBT card is used for all the programs described in this *EBT Guidebook*.

**EBT cash** benefits are intended to provide financial assistance for necessities such as rent, utilities, and food and other household essentials. People who receive EBT cash benefits can use their EBT card to pay for these items in participating stores; they can also withdraw money at ATMs. Any item that can be legally purchased with currency can be purchased with EBT cash benefits, but some types of stores are excluded (see Tool 1 for more about eligible stores).

EBT cash programs include state general assistance; refugee assistance; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), known in California as **CalWORKs** (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids). To receive CalWORKs benefits, a person must be pregnant or the parent of a child under 19, have low or very low income, and meet other requirements.

**CalFresh** is California’s implementation of SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.<sup>6</sup> CalFresh provides monthly benefits for households with low income to pay for food, food products, and food-producing plants or seeds. (For a list of eligible and ineligible items, see Tool 1.) CalFresh recipients do not need to be eligible for other financial assistance or social services programs to participate in CalFresh. CalFresh eligibility is based on household size, income, and monthly expenses. There are also certain eligibility requirements that are specific to students. According to [GetCalFresh.org](http://GetCalFresh.org), as many as 2 in 5 students are eligible for CalFresh.

<sup>5</sup> Although this *Guidebook* mainly refers to students, we wish to acknowledge that some faculty and staff also participate in these benefits programs. Food insecurity is a widespread issue that cuts across social and cultural categories.

<sup>6</sup> SNAP was formerly known as “food stamps,” but this term should not be used, because it is outdated and stigmatizing. It is mentioned here only to provide a frame of reference for readers.

The **Restaurant Meals Program (RMP)** is a long-standing program that allows CalFresh recipients who are homeless, disabled, or 60 years of age or older to use their CalFresh benefits to buy hot, nutritious, prepared meals. The purpose of this program is to provide reduced-cost meals to people who may not have the tools or ability to cook food at home.

The *EBT Guidebook* uses “**benefits retailer**” to describe any store, restaurant, or college that participates in EBT cash, CalFresh, or the Restaurant Meals Program. In other words, these are retailers that are set up to accept EBT cards as payment for food or other items.

### Part 3: Deciding to Become a Benefits Retailer

Before your campus begins the application process for any of these benefits programs, it is helpful to consider why, how, and with whom you will partner to become a benefits retailer (see Tool 2 for potential partners).

With your partners, reflect on how becoming a benefits retailer complements your college’s overall commitment to student health and wellness. Your college may have an advanced student food security strategy already in place, or it might be just beginning to explore this issue. Understanding the needs of your students, identifying your goals, and honing your strategy from the beginning will help you later in the process, as you reach out to other stakeholders, decision-makers, and the community (see Tool 3 for ways to develop your strategy).

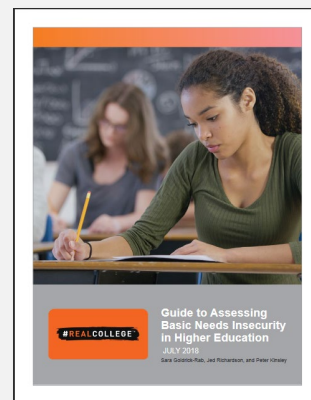
**The list below provides steps that may help clarify your planning process.** However, it’s also important not to lose momentum at this stage. Ideally, you will balance your broad, campus-level perspective with practical steps toward becoming a benefits retailer.

#### Planning Steps:

- ✓ Research the current state of benefits at your college. For example, does your campus already accept EBT cash? Are efforts underway at the district level to roll-out the Restaurant Meals Program?
- ✓ Bring the right partners to the table (see Tool 2).
- ✓ Achieve buy-in among decision-makers (see Tool 3 for strategies and data sources). On many campuses, you will need support from the Office of the Vice President of Student Services. Other key decision-makers may include administrative services and dining management.

#### Key Resource: Survey Guide

Check out the [Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education](#) (2018) from The Hope Center to learn how to use surveys to assess basic needs insecurity on your campus. Campus-level data can help you develop a focused argument for becoming a benefits retailer.



- ✓ Consider how cash or food benefits fit into your college’s strategic plan, commitment to student health and wellness, and/or food security approach. Why should your campus become a benefits provider?
- ✓ Do a preliminary assessment of the resources (people, time, training, etc.) your campus will need to pursue the application or implementation process. This *EBT Guidebook* can help you with this assessment.
- ✓ Decide which program(s) you will pursue. For example, will you begin with becoming an EBT cash provider, or will you pursue EBT cash and the Restaurant Meals Program simultaneously?
- ✓ Work with partners, as applicable, to establish agreed-upon next steps and realistic timelines.

## Part 4: Accepting EBT Cash

The simplest way for colleges to begin accepting benefits is by becoming an EBT cash retailer. This allows students to buy food and other items on campus with their EBT card using their cash benefits, such as CalWORKs.

Retailers do not need special state or federal government approval to begin accepting EBT cash. This is one reason why EBT cash is often the easiest route for schools.

For official information, visit the [California EBT Project Office](#) website and review the pages for merchants.

### Steps to Become an EBT Cash Retailer

- ✓ Determine whether you have the right equipment in place in your cafeteria and/or stores. EBT cards require the use of a PIN, so your point-of-sale (POS) equipment must have a PIN pad.
- ✓ If needed, purchase and install POS terminals with PIN pads.
- ✓ Contact your credit card vendor to ensure your agreements allow for processing of EBT transactions. You and your processor must be compliant with the Quest Operating Rules: <https://web.nacha.org/quest/quest-operating-rules>
- ✓ If needed, work with your credit card vendor to update your agreements.
- ✓ Contact your third-party debit transaction processor. Ask them to have the California EBT IIN (Issuer Identification Number: 507719) added to the debit card transaction set of your POS equipment.
  - If the processor asks for a federal or state government number, they are referring to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) number. You do not need an FNS number, because you are planning to accept EBT cash benefits, not CalFresh/food benefits. Tell them to fill the FNS number field with seven zeroes (0000000).

- ✓ At the locations where you will accept EBT cash, train staff in advance so that they are prepared to answer students' questions, as needed (see Key Resource: Training Guide, below). For example, you may want to let staff know that:
  - Your location now accepts EBT cash, which is not the same as SNAP/CalFresh.
  - It's important not to stigmatize or single out students who pay with EBT cards; staff should treat students paying with EBT like anyone else using a debit card.
  - Students must have their EBT card with them, and their PIN, in order to use EBT as payment.
  - Students may use EBT cash for food and any other item that can be legally purchased with cash (see Tool 1 for eligible and ineligible purchases).
  - If you provide cash back for debit card purchases, you can also provide cash back for EBT cash purchases.
- ✓ Test your ability to accept EBT cash as payment. For example, inform a small group of interested students that they can now use EBT cash, and test for one month.
- ✓ Market your college as an EBT cash retailer to your whole campus (see Part 7 for more information).

## Part 5: Applying for the Restaurant Meals Program

Several counties participate in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP), which allows people who are homeless, elderly, or disabled to use their CalFresh benefits to buy meals at restaurants, cafeterias, and other prepared-food vendors. To participate in the RMP, a CCC must be located in a participating county and must have a qualifying food facility on campus.<sup>7</sup>

Recent state laws have been passed to try to get more higher education institutions to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program.<sup>8</sup> As of 2017, if a college is located in an RMP county and the college operates a qualifying food facility on campus, **the college is required to apply** to become an approved RMP vendor. If a college is located in a RMP county, but all food facilities on campus are operated by outside vendors, the college is **only required to provide information** to their vendors about the RMP and how to apply. (For a list of CCC campuses located in RMP counties, visit [New Tools to Reduce College Campus Hunger: AB 1747 \[Weber\] Implementation Fact Sheet.](#))

For official information and to apply, visit the [California Department of Social Services Restaurant Meals Program](#) website.

<sup>7</sup> [AB 1894](#), signed into law in September 2018, allows any California State University (CSU) to participate in RMP, even if the CSU is not located in a participating county. This law does not apply to CCC.

<sup>8</sup> [AB 1747](#), effective January 1, 2017. For more information, review [All County Letter No. 16-112](#).

## Steps to Apply for RMP

- ✓ Check to make sure your county participates in the RMP: [Alameda](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Orange](#), [Riverside](#), [Sacramento](#), [San Diego](#), [San Francisco](#), [San Luis Obispo](#), [Santa Clara](#), or [Santa Cruz](#).
- ✓ Make sure your campus has qualifying food facilities. To qualify, food facilities must: sell prepared food that is intended to be consumed on-site, provide a lower-cost meal option, have more than 50 percent of total sales in food, and not be exclusively a carry-out facility (such as a concession stand).<sup>9</sup>
- ✓ Confirm with campus stakeholders that an RMP application is not already in progress.
- ✓ Consider whether your campus will apply independently, with other colleges in your district, with your contracting food vendor(s), or at the district level.
  - For example, LATTC started the RMP process as a single campus. Their Culinary Arts and Professional Baking program provides fresh food daily to their cafeteria and campus restaurant, so they had qualifying food facilities. They then added two other LACCD campuses that also had culinary instruction programs providing food services for the campus cafeteria, and, finally, they added six other LACCD campuses with food services provided by a contracted vendor.
- ✓ Contact [county social services](#) to inquire about their process for becoming an RMP provider. Most of the county-specific RMP webpages, linked above, provide a phone number or email address for the social services division or staff member to contact. Your county will be able to work with you to submit your application, and they may have an enrollment packet for you.
  - If applicable, discuss with your county social services department whether your college should apply for RMP independently, with other colleges or vendors, or as a district.
- ✓ If any concerns about the RMP arise after discussing it with the county, examine these issues with your key stakeholders or decision-makers. Determine whether these issues are resolvable, more information is needed, or your strategy needs to shift.
  - For example, after meeting with the county, LATTC had concerns that there would be a large number of people who were not students coming to campus regularly for the RMP. They explored how the county advertises RMP-participating institutions, and found that the information was listed in a lengthy document on the county website. LATTC determined that it was unlikely that many people who were not students would find this information and come to campus just for the RMP.
- ✓ If you will be applying with multiple campuses, your district, or vendor(s), complete Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with these other parties.
- ✓ Sign an MOU with the county. The MOU will spell out the county's responsibilities and your college's responsibilities, such as providing low-cost meals and publicizing the program among students.
- ✓ Because CCC are state entities rather than nonprofit or for-profit restaurants, your college or district's legal department may advise or request changes to the county's standard RMP MOU.
- ✓ Complete the [USDA Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program Application for Meal Services](#) (FNS 252-2) and submit it to the county. Application items include:

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<sup>9</sup> For more information, review [All County Letter No. 16-112](#).

- Copy of a government identification card and Social Security card for owners or officers. Note that you will need to provide identification information for an individual responsible person at your college; your county may be able to advise whom that person should be (for example, at LATTC, this was their Vice President of Administrative Services).
- Current Business License/Seller Permit
- Current Public Health Operating Permit
- ✓ The county may have additional documentation that they require from all applicants or from higher education institutions in particular.
  - For example, LATTC's application included supplemental items:
    - LACCD Combined Cost of Goods Sold Report for the previous year
    - Campus maps showing the cafeteria locations
    - Healthier Options Checklist demonstrating that there are healthy (whole grain, fruit and vegetable) and reduced-price options available
    - Sample Menu of Healthy Options, Monday through Thursday for breakfast and lunch
- ✓ When ready, the county will submit your application to the USDA.
- ✓ If your application is approved, the USDA will send you an FNS number. Send a copy of your approval to the county.
- ✓ Contact your POS vendor to integrate EBT into your existing payment processing machines, or sign up for flat-rate processing with a third-party EBT vendor (e.g., [www.goebt.com](http://www.goebt.com)). This step can only be completed once you have your FNS number.
- ✓ Advertise the RMP on campus. Post signs or decals in your participating locations. The county will also list your college as an RMP vendor on its website and/or outreach materials. See Part 7 for more outreach strategies.

#### **Highlighted College: Los Angeles Community College District**

Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Los Angeles City College, and Los Angeles Valley College have worked to successfully become an EBT cash, RMP, and CalFresh retailer over the last four years, and these activities represent just one component of the college's comprehensive, ongoing student support efforts. Other current strategies include:

- Weekly pop-up food pantries conducted on campus in partnership with a faith-based organization, feeding 1,000-2,500 students in a single day (advertised through social media on Twitter handle @LATTCCares and Instagram #LATTCCares, #LACCCares)
- Creating a "core list" of food items with Office Depot to receive reduced-price snacks for students
- Working with contracted vendors (Pacific Dining) to provide breakfast and lunch support to students during midterms and finals, such as a breakfast burrito, peanut butter sandwich, yogurt

Speaking at the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office 2018 [Basic Needs Summit](#) was a pivotal experience for Daren Lynne, who is integral to LACCD's food security efforts:



“The summit provided a place for like-minded, like-tasked, individuals to gather and discuss these issues. I now had a core group on could call on for advice, and found that I had information others needed so that they did not duplicate the effort. I want to stress that these summits or conferences are key to making sure the colleges are successful. Here at LACCD, we now realize we need to work together collaboratively to save time and resources; to identify core goals and strategies; and to provide a uniform solution, which can then be added to or subtracted from to meet the individual campus’s need/goals/resources.”

## Part 6: Applying for CalFresh

A college can also apply to become a CalFresh retailer, which allows students to use their **CalFresh** benefits on campus to buy groceries. However, it is less common for CCC to become CalFresh providers than EBT cash retailers, due to the application criteria.

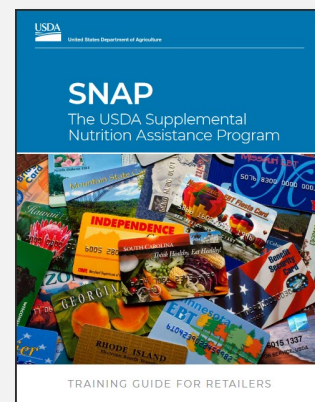
For official application requirements, visit the USDA website for [SNAP Retail Food Stores and Farmers Markets](#).

### Steps to Apply as a CalFresh Retailer

- ✓ Determine whether your campus store(s) is/are eligible to accept CalFresh benefits. Stores must meet one of two criteria to be eligible.
  - Criterion A: maintain a continuous stock of a certain variety and quantity of staple foods, including perishable foods. Staple foods are non-prepared foods in these four categories: fruits and vegetables; meat, poultry or fish; dairy products; and breads or cereals. Stores must stock at least three units of three staple varieties in each of these four categories, including at least three units of one perishable food in at least two categories.
  - Criterion B: have more than fifty percent of total gross retail sales from the sale of staple foods. (This criterion often applies to stores that sell one type of staple food, such as butchers.)
  - There are additional requirements for these categories. Visit [SNAP: Is My Store Eligible?](#) for up-to-date requirements and examples.

### Key Resource: Training Guide

The USDA provides a 20-page [SNAP Training Guide for Retailers](#) ([Spanish version](#)) with detailed information about SNAP program rules. CalFresh retailers are strongly encouraged to review this guide. It covers topics such as respecting people who pay with EBT; processing EBT at POS; handling coupons, bag or bottle fees, and taxes; and more.





- ✓ Register for a [USDA eAuthentication account](#).
- ✓ Return to “[How Do I Apply to Accept Benefits?](#)” to login and begin your application. You will need:
  - Basic information (name of applicant, date when your location opened, location name, location address, etc.)
  - Ownership information
  - Actual or estimated sales for the past year across various item types (e.g., staple foods, hot and cold prepared foods, nonfood items like soap or paper)
  - Number of varieties of each staple food category (e.g., number of kinds of fruits and vegetables)
  - Information about how many units you stock of each variety of staple foods
  - Information about how many perishable foods you stock in each staple food category
  - Supplemental information about your location’s open days, equipment, and bank
- ✓ After submitting your application, you will need to submit supporting documentation such as:
  - Copies of your Social Security card, Tax ID permit, and/or driver’s license. As with the Restaurant Meals Program, you must submit this information for an individual person with responsibility for these services at your campus. If they leave the organization, you must update your information on your USDA account.
  - Copy of your business tax return
- ✓ Once approved, you will receive a SNAP retailers license, training manual, and IT/set-up specifications. Visit the [SNAP Retailers Store Training Information](#) page to view the training guide and watch a training video.
- ✓ As with EBT cash and RMP, you will need to work with your existing payment processing vendor or a third-party EBT vendor to set your POS to accept CalFresh.
- ✓ Within 30 days of your accepted application, a USDA Inspector will conduct an unannounced audit of your location. The Inspector will confirm that you have the type, variety, and quantity of staple foods that you claimed in your application.
- ✓ There are many strategies and resources available to market your college as a CalFresh retailer. See Part 7 for suggestions.

#### **Highlighted College: Humboldt State University (HSU)**

Finding that 19% of their students reported having CalFresh benefits, HSU embarked on the application process to become a CalFresh retailer. They successfully achieved this process, conducting over 11,000 EBT transactions amounting to more than \$100,000 in sales in 2016-2017. HSU [Oh SNAP!](#), the college’s student-driven food program, helped support outreach to students and reduce stigma around EBT.

For more information about how HSU became a CalFresh vendor, including the challenges they faced, view their presentation from the 2018 CSU Basic Needs Initiative Conference: [EBT Implementation: Humboldt State University](#)

## Part 7: Marketing Your College as a Benefits Retailer

Once you are ready to begin accepting EBT payments, you will want to **share the news with your whole campus community!** This section focuses on outreach and engagement strategies.

You will also want to ensure that key personnel are able to speak knowledgeably with students about EBT cash, CalFresh, and/or the RMP. For example, consider the **different messaging and training needs** of different stakeholders. Sales or service staff members will need to be able to ring up purchases at POS using EBT cards. They will also need to know, for example, whether the campus store accepts both EBT cash and CalFresh. On the other hand, student services staff and counselors will benefit from knowing how to prescreen students for CalFresh. Finally, leadership staff will want to be able to articulate how being an EBT retailer fits into the campus's broader approach to addressing students' basic needs. Reflecting on what your various campus stakeholders need to know will help you develop clear, consistent messaging.

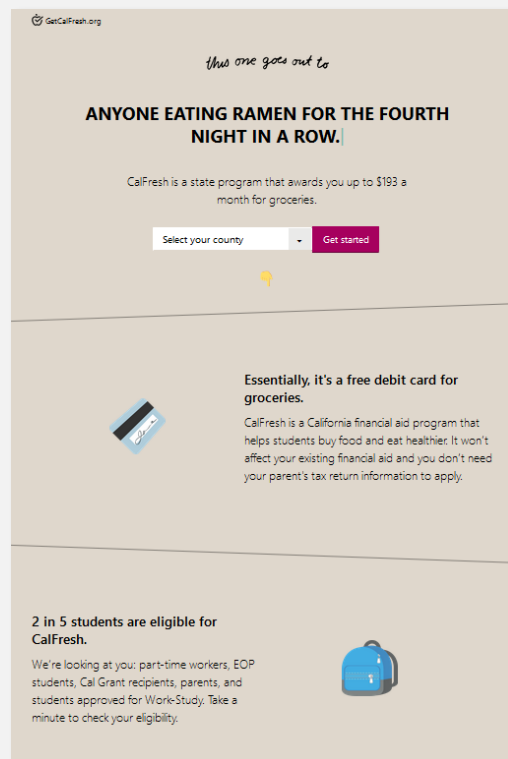
### Sample Marketing and Outreach Strategies

- ✓ Does your campus have a broader marketing strategy or umbrella campaign for student wellness or food security activities on campus? If so, work with them to leverage their communication channels and/or branding.
- ✓ Use student-friendly visuals and language to engage and welcome students. Incorporate recognizable imagery, like your school mascot.
- ✓ Post information about EBT at POS and in all relevant stores or dining halls. This helps students know they can use their EBT card without having to ask.
- ✓ Post flyers at other key locations that students experiencing food insecurity may visit, such as the campus food

### Key Resource: [Students.GetCalFresh.org](https://Students.GetCalFresh.org)

GetCalFresh.org is an official State of California CalFresh outreach partner. They are one of several online portals to connecting California residents to benefits programs. They are included here as an example of effective student marketing.

Their [Students](#) page includes engaging graphics (e.g., emojis), streamlined information, and student-friendly language. For example, under the heading “this one goes out to,” sample taglines include “Anyone who couldn’t find free pizza at a club meeting night” and “Anyone whose friend wouldn’t swipe them into the dining hall.”



pantry, financial aid office, library, and athletic center. Make sure relevant campus departments and partners (see Tool 2) are aware of this new payment option.

- ✓ Include information about EBT on your campus website, such as on the pages for dining services, campus stores, CalFresh outreach, CalWORKs, etc.
- ✓ Send email announcements to all faculty and staff to let them know that EBT cards can now be used on campus, at which locations, and for what benefits (cash or CalFresh).
- ✓ In your messaging to employees, be mindful of the fact that food insecurity doesn't only impact students. Some faculty or staff members may also participate in CalFresh, CalWORKs, or another benefits program.
- ✓ When possible, include brief information about: how to apply for benefits (see "CalFresh Outreach," below); and how students who are not eligible for benefits can receive help with food insecurity (for example, include a link to your campus food pantry).
- ✓ Avoid stigmatizing terms such as "needy," "poor," "impoverished," or "food stamps."
  - Neutral language is preferable: "cash or food benefits," "cash or nutritional assistance," etc.
  - Use people-first language whenever possible, such as "students who receive CalFresh benefits," "student-parents who participate in CalWORKs," "people who receive cash or food benefits."

### CalFresh Outreach

Many students who are eligible for benefits do not apply. They may not be aware that they are qualified, they may be confused or intimidated by the application process, or they may be deterred by social stigma. A 2016 study at one campus found that only 20% of students who were eligible for CalFresh actually participated in the program.<sup>10</sup>

The [CalFresh Outreach](#) program is an important part of the State of California's efforts to educate people about benefits for which they are eligible. We provide some quick strategies and resources below to help your campus support student enrollment in CalFresh.

- ✓ [Students.GetCalFresh.org](http://Students.GetCalFresh.org) is an easy referral to provide to students interested in applying for CalFresh. It provides basic CalFresh information and links students to their county CalFresh website.
- ✓ [BenefitsCal.com](http://BenefitsCal.com) is another useful referral source. It connects users to applications for CalWORKs, CalFresh, and medical benefits in California.

### Key Resource: CalFresh Biteable

Watch this short video to learn more about the CalFresh prescreening, application, and approval processes: [Basic Needs: Helping Students Enroll in CalFresh](#). This video was created specifically for CCC administrators, faculty, and staff.



<sup>10</sup> Bianco, S., at al. (Fall 2016). Identifying Food Insecure Students and Constraints for SNAP/CalFresh Participation at California State University, Chico. Retrieved from <http://www.csuchico.edu/chc/assets/documents/chico-food-insecurity-report-2016.pdf>

BenefitsCal is available in multiple languages.

- ✓ There are several CalFresh Outreach contractors who provide training and technical assistance (TTA) to organizations that want to help people enroll in CalFresh. For 2019-2021, these contractors are [California Association of Food Banks](#), [California State University, Chico – Center for Healthy Communities](#), [Catholic Charities of California](#), [2-1-1 San Diego](#), and [Redwood Community Health Coalition](#). Find contact information for these TTA providers here: [CalFresh Prime Contractor Contact List](#).
- ✓ In most counties, there are several colleges or universities, food banks, community-based organizations, and other agencies that have already received CalFresh Outreach training. Find a list of these organizations here: [Contractors by County](#). Contact these organizations in your county to establish them as a referral source for your students.
- ✓ Your college may already have a CalFresh Outreach program in place. If so, provide their contact information in all your communications about EBT, so that students know where on campus they can go if they want help applying.

## Part 8: Conclusion

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Accepting EBT cards is just one aspect of addressing food insecurity, but it is an important one. CalFresh and CalWORKs help key community college populations such as students with low-income status, working students, and student-parents. Reducing stigma around food and cash benefits helps more students learn about and enroll in these programs. And when students don't have to go hungry or leave campus to buy food, they have more time and energy to focus on their academic success.

Becoming a benefits retailer also helps advance educational equity. The students who are most likely to experience food insecurity are often those who are also at greater risk for not graduating from college. People who are more likely to experience food insecurity include students who are former foster youth; black; lesbian, gay, or bisexual; gender non-binary; working; and/or parents.<sup>11</sup> By expanding benefit services on campus, colleges have a valuable opportunity to improve educational outcomes for historically underrepresented students.

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<sup>11</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. (April 2018). *Still Hungry and Homeless in College*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

## Part 9: Tools Appendix

Tool 1: Allowable EBT Cash and CalFresh Purchases					
Allowed with EBT Cash	Not Allowed with EBT Cash	Allowed with CalFresh	Not Allowed with CalFresh	Allowed with RMP	Not Allowed with RMP
Anything that can be legally purchased with cash can be purchased with EBT cash benefits, except from excluded stores (see right).	Purchases from businesses including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liquor stores that don't accept CalFresh</li> <li>- Casinos</li> <li>- Night clubs</li> <li>- Adult entertainment businesses</li> <li>- Smoke or cannabis shops</li> <li>- Spas or massage salons</li> <li>- Gun or ammo shops</li> </ul> For more excluded stores, visit: <a href="#">EBT Project Merchant Questions and Answers</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foods for the household to eat (fruits, dairy, bread, meat, etc.)</li> <li>- Food-producing plants and seeds</li> <li>- Candy, soda, ice cream, and other snack foods</li> <li>- Birthday or special occasion cakes</li> <li>- Energy drinks that have a nutrition label</li> <li>- Live seafood, such as lobster</li> </ul> For more detail, visit: <a href="#">What Can SNAP Buy?</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alcohol, cigarettes, or tobacco</li> <li>- Vitamins or medicine</li> <li>- Foods that are intended to be eaten in the store</li> <li>- Hot/prepared foods</li> <li>- Nonfood items, including household supplies, paper products, and pet food</li> <li>- Other live animals and birds</li> </ul> For more detail, visit: <a href="#">What Can SNAP Buy?</a>	- Hot and prepared foods	- Groceries or non-food items

Note that your POS system may be able to automatically scan and identify items that are eligible for CalFresh. This allows students to pay for CalFresh-eligible and other items all together in one purchase, using their EBT card and a separate form of payment.

If your POS system cannot automatically identify CalFresh-eligible items (as is the case at many small or independent stores), students will need to pay for their CalFresh items as a separate transaction from any other items. See the USDA [SNAP Training Guide for Retailers \(Spanish\)](#) for more information.

## Tool 2: Campus Partners

Depending on the program you are pursuing (EBT cash, CalFresh, or RMP), you will want to engage other partners to provide input, assistance, or outreach support.

Which departments or team members on campus are already working to address student hunger?

Who are other natural allies in this effort? (Consider partners with whom you frequently work, committees on which you serve, etc.)

Who will need to coordinate or manage the various components of the process (for example, working with payment processing vendors)?

Who are the decision makers you need to engage?

Who else should be at the table? (For example, students can provide valuable insight on existing needs and marketing strategies.)

Stakeholders to consider:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Dining services   | ✓ Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS) |
| ✓ Administrative/invoicing services                           | ✓ TRIO Program                                    |
| ✓ Campus food pantry  | ✓ Veterans Resource Center                        |
| ✓ CalWORKs representative                                     | ✓ Foster Youth Success Program                    |
| ✓ Student support and/or basic needs workgroups or committees | ✓ Financial Aid                                   |
| ✓ Associated Student Body                                     | ✓ Student health services                         |
|   | ✓ Disability services                             |



### Tool 3: Achieving Decision-Maker Buy-in

Sample Resources		
Data Category	Sample Data Source	Sample Data
Stakeholder Support	Basic needs committees; student groups	Committee statements of support; student requests or petitions
College Plans	Strategic planning documents; mission and vision statement	“Provide workshops, tools, and clear guidance for faculty and staff on how to identify and respond to distressed students, students in crisis, students experiencing <b>food insecurity</b> or homelessness, mental health issues etc. and connect these students to appropriate and available resources” (Long Beach City College, 2017-2020 Strategic Enrollment Management Plan)
Local College or District Data	CalWORKs status data (Data Mart); campus surveys; student income data	# of students who participate in CalWORKs; % of students who participate in CalFresh; approximate # of students eligible to participate
State Data	<a href="#">Basic Needs Survey Report</a> (2018), from the CCC Chancellor’s Office	56.8% of respondents had direct contact with students experiencing basic needs security multiple times per week or every day
National Data	<a href="#">Still Hungry and Homeless in College</a> (2018), from the Wisconsin HOPE Lab  <a href="#">Hunger on Campus</a> (2016), from the College and University Food Bank Alliance (CUFBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42% of community college students experienced low or very low food security in last 30 days (HOPE Lab)</li> <li>• Among students receiving D’s and F’s, more than half were food insecure (HOPE Lab)</li> <li>• One-third of students believed hunger or housing problems negatively impacted their education (CUFBA)</li> </ul>
Sample Talking Points		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student hunger harms academic performance and retention. <i>Use national data.</i></li> <li>• Priority populations, including former foster youth and LGBTQ students, are more likely to experience food insecurity. <i>Use national or state data.</i></li> <li>• We know there is a need for this. Many of our students receive these benefits, and even more of our students are eligible to receive them. <i>Use college or district data, and statements of interest from students if available.</i></li> <li>• This is a low-cost strategy to support our students’ health and wellness. <i>This argument is especially applicable to EBT cash, which has a more minimal application and administrative burden.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The state does not charge any fees to become a benefits retailer.</li> <li>○ There are limited fees to use an EBT payment processing vendor. <i>In many cases, you will be able to work with your existing payment vendor</i></li> <li>○ The main cost is staff time to complete the application, install hardware/software, track inventory and sales (CalFresh only), and provide or receive POS training.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• By tapping into a key financial resource for our students, we may increase sales.</li> </ul>		

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**California Community Colleges Health & Wellness**

[www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org](http://www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org)

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