



SFHSA's Benefits and Services

Overarching messaging about applying, eligibility, and documents

Eligibility

If you are concerned you can't get government benefits because of your immigration status: just go ahead and apply; everyone's situation is different, and you may be able to get many benefits and services. If the worker says you aren't eligible, ask them what other services you can get.

Green Card/Citizenship/Immigration Status

For many of the benefits you can get through SFHSA, if you are eligible for the benefit, accepting it won't affect your future citizenship or be considered public charge. Every case is different. If you have questions, call the Bay Area Legal Aid Free Advice Hotline **(800) 551-5554**.

If you are concerned that getting government benefits might affect you becoming a U.S. citizen or getting your papers in the future, the programs you'll want to consider carefully and get legal advice on are the financial assistance programs for families (CalWORKs) and single adults (CAAP, the County Adult Assistance Programs), SSI, and institutional long-term care such as a nursing home that's paid for by Medi-Cal. Every case is different. If you have questions, call the Bay Area Legal Aid Free Advice Hotline **(800) 551-5554**.

It is safe to apply and receive support for all other benefits as they aren't considered ongoing financial assistance and are not considered public charge:

- CalFresh
- Medi-Cal
- One-Time Emergency Funds (called CalWORKs Diversion) at SFHSA
- Childcare
 - At SFHSA ask for "CalWORKs Diversion Child Care"
 - Please note that receiving typical CalWORKs/CalWORKs Child Care could be considered public charge. CalWORKs Diversion Child Care would not be considered public charge.
- Children's Council
- Wu Yee
- And many other programs.



Every case is different. If you have any questions, call the Bay Area Legal Aid Free Advice Hotline **(800) 551-5554**.

Sponsor

If you are concerned about your sponsor's name or information being involved in your application process for government benefits, the SFHSA benefits that don't request you provide your sponsor's information are:

- Medi-Cal
- One-Time Emergency Funds received through CalWORKs Diversion
- Child Care received through CalWORKs Diversion

Documents

If you are concerned that you don't want to apply because you don't have all the documents ready, just start the process. Some programs like CalFresh and Medi-Cal only require your name, address, and signature to start the application. The worker at SFHSA will tell you what documents you need and how long you have until you must provide them.

About SFHSA Benefits:

One-time payment, financial assistance for families ("CalWORKs Diversion relief funds and CalWORKs Diversion childcare"):

- One-time payment and childcare to help your family meet its needs or to survive a short-term crisis, such as money to fix your car or pay past-due bills.
- Getting these funds will not negatively affect your status or if you want to get your papers and become a U.S. citizen in the future.
- We do not request you provide sponsor information for this program. No sponsor information or client immigration status information is shared with other agencies.
- This benefit has the same eligibility requirements as CalWORKs but is not considered on-going financial assistance and therefore is not considered public charge.

On-going cash payments, financial assistance plus services for families ("CalWORKs"):

- On-going cash assistance, childcare, and services for families.
- To determine eligibility and level of benefits, SFHSA will verify immigration status with USCIS for noncitizens and sponsored LPRs applying for CalWORKs. You can decline to provide sponsor information and still get 12 months of CalWORKs if you are eligible. If it is dangerous for you to share sponsor



information, please tell the SFHSA worker. You can still get up to 24 months of CalWORKs if eligible.

- If you are eligible for CalWORKs, you can receive CalFresh and Medi-Cal benefits as well. Other services of CalWORKs include free diapers, childcare, education and employment services, housing, free phones and service, discounted internet service and devices, and transportation discounts. There are also counseling services for those who have experienced domestic violence and/or substance abuse.
- SFHSA also has an Income Generation program for people who are not U.S. citizens and do not have work papers, where they can receive small business development support and coaching.

County Adult Assistance Programs (“CAAP”):

- On-going cash assistance, health insurance benefits, shelter and housing, transportation discounts, employment and education services and more for single adults and couples aged 18 – 65 without dependent children.
- People who are not U.S. citizens and do not have work papers, can receive CAAP only if they are catastrophically ill.
- As part of determining eligibility for noncitizens applying for CAAP, SFHSA will verify sponsorship with USCIS. SFHSA does not contact your sponsor. If you cannot locate your sponsor or your sponsor has abandoned you, please let us know. If it is dangerous for you to contact your sponsor to provide sponsorship information, please tell the SFHSA worker. You can still get CAAP if eligible.

Child Care:

There are many ways families can get help with childcare in San Francisco. Please contact the Children’s Council at **(415) 343-3300** or Wu Yee Children’s Services at **(415) 677-0100** so they can help you identify the best option for your family’s needs.

CalWORKs participants can get childcare and families applying for CalWORKs can get childcare while applying for CalWORKs or attending a CalWORKs orientation. Current or former CalWORKs participants may also be eligible for free childcare or childcare subsidies while working, job training, or in school. You may also be able to get childcare through SFHSA that doesn’t require you provide sponsor information and is not considered public charge through a benefit called “CalWORKs Diversion Child Care.” Call SFHSA about CalWORKs Child Care and CalWORKs Diversion Child Care at **(855) 557-5100**.



Extra money for food; food stamps/EBT/SNAP (“CalFresh”):

- Every month, an EBT card is automatically reloaded with money for use in grocery stores and small markets, online with Safeway and Amazon/Whole Foods, and at farmers markets.
- Restaurant meals can be purchased with EBT cards by people experiencing homelessness (do not have a stable place to live or are staying with a friend), people with disabilities, and adults 60 and over. See attached [list of participating restaurants](#).
- Getting these funds will not negatively affect you in the future if you want to get your papers and become a citizen.
- SFHSA will verify immigration status with USCIS for noncitizens applying for CalFresh. If you do not want to have to provide sponsor information or noncitizen information to SFHSA, you can apply on behalf of your child/ren or other household members who are citizens or Non-Sponsored Immigrants.
- If you are not able to get CalFresh because of your immigration status, you may be able to get extra money for food through a state program called the California Food Assistance Program. Ask about this and other food help available when you talk to an SFHSA worker.
- Beyond offering extra money for food, CalFresh recipients may also be able to get free diapers, transportation discounts, free phones and service, and discounted internet service and devices.
- Another perk of CalFresh is [Market Match](#). This allows EBT cardholders to double their food money when they buy fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and other farm-direct outlets.

Health care coverage and medical services (“Medi-Cal”):

- Free or low-cost health care and medical services. It covers dental, vision, and other medical services.
- Undocumented Californians of all ages can get full-scope Medi-Cal as of Jan. 1, 2024. All other Medi-Cal eligibility rules, including income limits, still apply. Those who receive limited scope, emergency Medi-Cal, will automatically get full Medi-Cal as of Jan. 1, 2024.
- Getting Medi-Cal will not negatively affect you in the future if you want to get your papers and become a citizen, unless you are receiving institutional long-term care paid for by Medi-Cal, such as a nursing home.
- If you have a sponsor, it does not affect them.
- HealthySF is available if you cannot get Medi-Cal. Call **(415) 615-4555** for more information.



- People who receive Medi-Cal can also receive free diapers, transportation discounts, free phones and service, and discounted internet service and devices.

Food assistance and resources for older people and adults with disabilities:

- The Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS) Benefits & Resources Hub is a one-stop shop for older people, adults with disabilities, veterans, & caregivers. The Hub service center is located at 2 Gough Street.
- Services are available in multiple languages and neighborhoods.
- Examples of services are:
 - Nutrition and wellness
 - Self-care, safety, and in-home supportive services
 - Medi-Cal, health insurance
 - Housing, transportation, and translation support
 - Adult learning activities
 - Help with veterans' benefits
 - Caregiver support
 - LGBTQ+ programming