
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No:	AB 612	Hearing Date:	June 12, 2019
Author:	Weber		
Version:	March 19, 2019		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Lynn Lorber		

Subject: CalFresh: Restaurant Meals Program

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and Human Services. A "do pass" motion should include referral to the Committee on Human Services.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the existing authority for the Department of Social Services to enter into a memorandum of understanding to prevent hunger among college students who are homeless to include the California Community Colleges (CCCs), and expands participation in the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) to include qualifying food facilities that are located on a campus of the CCCs.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Requires each public and private postsecondary educational institution that is located in a county that participates in the RMP to apply to become an approved food vendor for participation in this program. (Education Code § 66025.93)
- 2) Specifies that an institution is not required to create, operate, or maintain an Electronic Benefits Transfer system on behalf of on-campus food vendors, and an approved food vendor participating in the RMP, as specified, and a county in which the program is operated, shall meet the requirements of the RMP. (EC § 66025.93)
- 3) Defines "qualifying food facility" as a facility that sells prepared food for onsite consumption, and specifies that "on-campus food vendors" does not include any vendor that does not sell prepared food for onsite consumption or that sells food from a mobile food facility, as specified. (EC § 66025.93 (d))
- 4) Defines "restaurant" to include an on-campus qualifying food facility, an eat-in establishment, a grocery store delicatessen, and a takeaway-only restaurant. (EC § 18919)
- 5) Establishes the RMP within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to allow eligible homeless, disabled or elderly SNAP (CalFresh in California) recipients to purchase hot, prepared food from participating

restaurants. (United States Code, Title 7, § 2020)

- 6) Authorizes the Department of Social Services (DSS) to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Chancellor of the California State University (CSU) in order to allow a qualifying food facility located on a CSU campus to participate in the Restaurant Meal Program (RMP), even if the CSU campus is located in a county that does not participate in the RMP.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Expands the existing authority for the DSS to enter into a memorandum of understanding to prevent hunger among college students who are homeless to also allow DSS to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (CCCs), or both the Chancellor of the CSU and the Chancellor of the CCCs.
- 2) Expands participation in the CalFresh RMP to authorize any qualifying food facilities that are located on a campus of the CCCs to participate.
- 3) Requires the DSS to implement the provisions of this bill by all-county letters or similar instructions, until regulations are adopted.
- 4) Requires the DSS to adopt regulations implementing this bill by February 1, 2021.
- 5) States legislative intent to help reduce food insecurity for students by removing legal barriers and logistical obstacles to CCCs participating in the CalFresh RMP and increasing student access to food aid.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “The process to become an authorized retailer of CalFresh requires negotiation agreements with various entities, including county, state, and federal agencies. Colleges must apply to be a RMP vendor individually, a lengthy process that diverts valuable staff time and resources that could be spent supporting students. In addition, over 60 colleges are located in a county that does not have a RMP and thus are ineligible to provide access to CalFresh to their students. Fifty percent of community college students reported experiencing food insecurity. Colleges can minimize this issue by permitting students to use their CalFresh benefits on campus.”
- 2) ***RMP.*** The RMP is an option within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program to allow eligible elderly, homeless, or disabled SNAP (CalFresh in California) recipients to purchase hot, prepared food from participating restaurants.

The RMP is restricted to people who are elderly, homeless, or disabled. This bill does not expand eligibility for the RMP to students who are not elderly,

homeless, or disabled. Committee staff understands that eligibility is determined by the federal United States Department of Agriculture, and therefore state statute cannot expand eligibility for the Restaurant Meal Program (RMP) to students who are not elderly, homeless, or disabled. As a result, *this bill would apply only to individuals (including students) who are elderly, homeless, or disabled.*

This bill does not limit participation in the RMP on postsecondary education campuses to eligible students. Therefore, *all eligible recipients (elderly, homeless, or disabled), regardless of whether or not the recipient is a student on that campus, would be able to access the approved food facilities on campuses.* Committee staff notes that a member of the general public may currently access a food facility on a campus without being a student, faculty or employee of that campus.

This bill does not modify or expand eligibility for CalFresh; a person accessing a Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) on a postsecondary education campus would have to be enrolled in CalFresh.

- 3) **Existing efforts.** There are several systemwide and campus-based efforts to meet the housing and hunger needs of students. Examples include:
 - a) The California State University (CSU) has a Basic Needs Initiative that includes an emergency housing or vouchers for off-campus housing, assistance with long-term housing arrangements, and emergency grants or funds.
 - b) The Hunger Free Campus Initiative was launched following its funding in the 2017-18 Budget Act. SB 85 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 23, 2017) established the “hunger free campus” program and appropriated \$2.5 million to the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges (CCCs) to provide grants to community college districts to be used to address student hunger at community colleges.
- 4) **Related Budget activity.** The Governor’s May Revision proposes \$15 million ongoing General Fund to augment the University of California’s existing efforts to address student hunger and housing needs, and \$15 million one-time General Fund to support the CSU’s Basic Need Initiative.

The Conference Committee on the Budget is deliberating an item related to student hunger and homelessness, as follows:

- a) The Senate proposes \$14.5 million Proposition 98 General Fund one-time to address student hunger, \$0.5 million Proposition 98 General Fund one-time to conduct an assessment on college-based food programs, and \$9 million to address student homelessness.
- b) The Assembly proposes \$20 million Proposition 98 General Fund one-time to address basic needs and \$10 million Proposition 98 General Fund

one-time for rapid rehousing.

- 5) ***Fiscal impact.*** According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill could impose:
- a) Ongoing General Fund (GF) costs of \$509,000 for the Department of Social Services (DSS) to hire four staff to administer the program (costs would be slightly higher in year one, at \$539,000 (GF), to implement the program).
 - b) One-time Proposition 98 (GF) costs of \$5,000 for California Community College (CCC) campuses that choose to opt into the program for equipment and vendor fees needed to accept CalFresh benefits (the CCC Chancellor's Office estimates 30 to 40 colleges will opt in, resulting in costs of between \$150,000 and \$200,000).
 - c) Minor, one-time (GF) costs to the CCC Chancellor's Office to develop the memorandum of understanding and assist colleges with opting into the program.
- 6) ***Prior legislation.*** SB 1275 (Stern, 2018) would have established, under the administration of the California Student Aid Commission , a new grant award program for the purpose of preventing hunger among students at public postsecondary educational institutions who are eligible for the Cal Grant B Program. SB 1275 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 832 (Weber, 2013) would have required all convenience stores and bookstores at the University of California, California State University and the CCCs to accept the use of Electronic Benefit Transfer cards. AB 832 was never heard.

SUPPORT

Community College League of California (sponsor)
 Alliance for Children's Rights
 Cabrillo Community College District
 California Catholic Conference
 Cerritos Community College District/Cerritos College
 Citrus College
 Compton Community College District
 Desert Community College District/College of the Desert
 Disability Rights California
 East Los Angeles College
 Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District
 Kern Community College District
 Los Rios Community College District
 Mt. San Antonio Community College District
 NextGen California
 South Orange Community College District
 Southwestern Community College District

OPPOSITION

None received

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