An act relating to CalFresh. An act to add Section 66027.7 to the Education Code, and to add and repeal Section 18901.57 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to CalFresh.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST


Existing law provides for the CalFresh program, under which supplemental nutrition assistance benefits allocated to the state by the federal government are distributed to eligible individuals by each county.

Existing law requires each campus of the California State University and the California Community Colleges, and requests each campus of the University of California, to include on the internet website-based account for an enrolled student notification of, and a link to information on, specified public services and programs, including the CalFresh program. Existing law, until January 1, 2022, also encourages the Regents of the University of California, requires the Trustees of the California State University, and authorizes the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to designate as a “hunger-free campus” each of the institutions’ respective campuses that meet specified criteria, including having a campus employee designated to
help ensure that students have the information they need to enroll in CalFresh.

This bill would require the State Department of Social Services to establish a pilot program in up to 10 counties that voluntarily apply and are selected by the department to place a CalFresh eligibility worker on campuses of public institutions of higher education in the county for the purpose of enrolling more students in CalFresh. The bill would require the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to, and would encourage the Regents of the University of California to, no later than July 1, 2021, and in consultation with the State Department of Social Services and county human services agencies, establish a CalFresh student outreach text messaging program to provide students who are not enrolled in CalFresh with a link to an internet website with information on applying for CalFresh benefits and to provide students with the name and telephone number of the CalFresh eligibility worker on their respective campus, if one is available.

Existing federal law provides for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, formerly the Food Stamp Program, under which supplemental nutrition assistance benefits allocated to the state by the federal government are distributed to eligible individuals by each county. Under existing law, households are eligible to receive CalFresh benefits to the extent permitted by federal law. Existing federal law provides that students who are enrolled in college or other institutions of higher education at least 1/2 time are not eligible for SNAP benefits unless they meet one of several specified exemptions, including participating in specified employment training programs.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to remove obstacles to the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community College systems coordinating with the State Department of Social Services to provide CalFresh benefits to low-income college students and students who are former foster youth.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 66027.7 is added to the Education Code, to read:

66027.7. No later than July 1, 2021, the Trustees of the California State University and the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges shall, and the Regents of the University of California are encouraged to, in consultation with the State Department of Social Services and county human services agencies, establish a CalFresh student outreach text messaging program to do all of the following:

(a) Ask students if they are enrolled in CalFresh.
(b) Provide students who are not enrolled in CalFresh with a link to an internet website with information on applying for CalFresh benefits.
(c) Provide students with the name and telephone number of the CalFresh eligibility worker on each campus, if one is available.

SEC. 2. Section 18901.57 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18901.57. (a) The department shall establish a pilot program in up to 10 counties that voluntarily apply and are selected by the department to place a CalFresh eligibility worker on campuses of public institutions of higher education in the county for the purpose of enrolling more students in CalFresh.
(b) Each county that receives funds under the pilot program shall submit to the department an annual report on the effectiveness of the pilot program on increasing or facilitating CalFresh enrollment for students at public institutions of higher education.
(c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2025, and as of that date is repealed.

SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to remove obstacles to the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community College systems coordinating with the State Department of Social Services to provide CalFresh benefits to low-income college students and students who are former foster youth.