Overview of SNAP Budget and Regulations

Understanding the financial framework and policy guidelines of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



FRESNO STATE | Central Valley Health Policy Institute

Agenda

SNAP policy and the Central Valley

01 CalFresh at a glance
02 Why SNAP matters

03 Federal, state, and regional policy landscape

04 Financial vulnerability and budget impact

05 SNAP in the Central Valley

06 Ethical implications

07 Policy recommendations

08 Call to action

CalFresh at a Glance

CalFresh is California's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

5.4M
Californians served each month[1]

~3M
households enrolled[2]

$13.3B
in federal benefits, 2025–26[1]

Recent federal changes under H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (2025)[3]

Restricted deductions

Internet costs excluded; utility allowance narrowed

Narrowed immigrant eligibility

Many lawfully present noncitizens lose access

Expanded work requirements

Stricter work rules and time limits for adults

Why SNAP Matters

Food security

Reduces hunger and food insecurity for low-income families

Health outcomes

Supports chronic disease management, mental health, and overall nutrition; linked to lower health care costs[4,5]

Household and economic stability

Stabilizes household budgets and brings federal dollars into local grocers and farms[5]



The Policy and Fiscal Landscape

Federal, state, and regional effects of H.R. 1

FRESNO STATE | Central Valley Health Policy Institute

The Policy Landscape

Federal

- H.R. 1 slows benefit growth, narrows eligibility, and shifts costs to states
- ≈$186 billion in federal SNAP savings over federal fiscal years (FY) 2025–2034[6]
- California loses $2.3–$5.1 billion per year[7]

State

- Federal share of administrative costs drops from 50% to 25% in October 2026[2]
- State and counties absorb ≈$680 million per year[2]
- Benefit cost-sharing of up to $2 billion per year possible from October 2027[2]

Central Valley

- High poverty and food insecurity make SNAP essential
- Large vulnerable populations
- Rural access challenges
- Economic and public health consequences

Who Is Most Financially Vulnerable



Households most at risk

Families with children, older adults, and immigrants face the largest losses



Limited retail access

Rural residents have fewer full-service grocery stores nearby



Higher transportation costs

Longer trips to reach stores take a bigger share of tight budgets



Strained rural health systems

SNAP cuts add pressure where rural hospital margins are already thin

California's CalFresh Budget Impact

$2.3–5.1B

lost in federal funding each year[7]

≈$680M

in new yearly state and county administrative costs, beginning October 2026[2]

Up to $2B

per year in state benefit costs from October 2027 if payment error rates stay high[2]

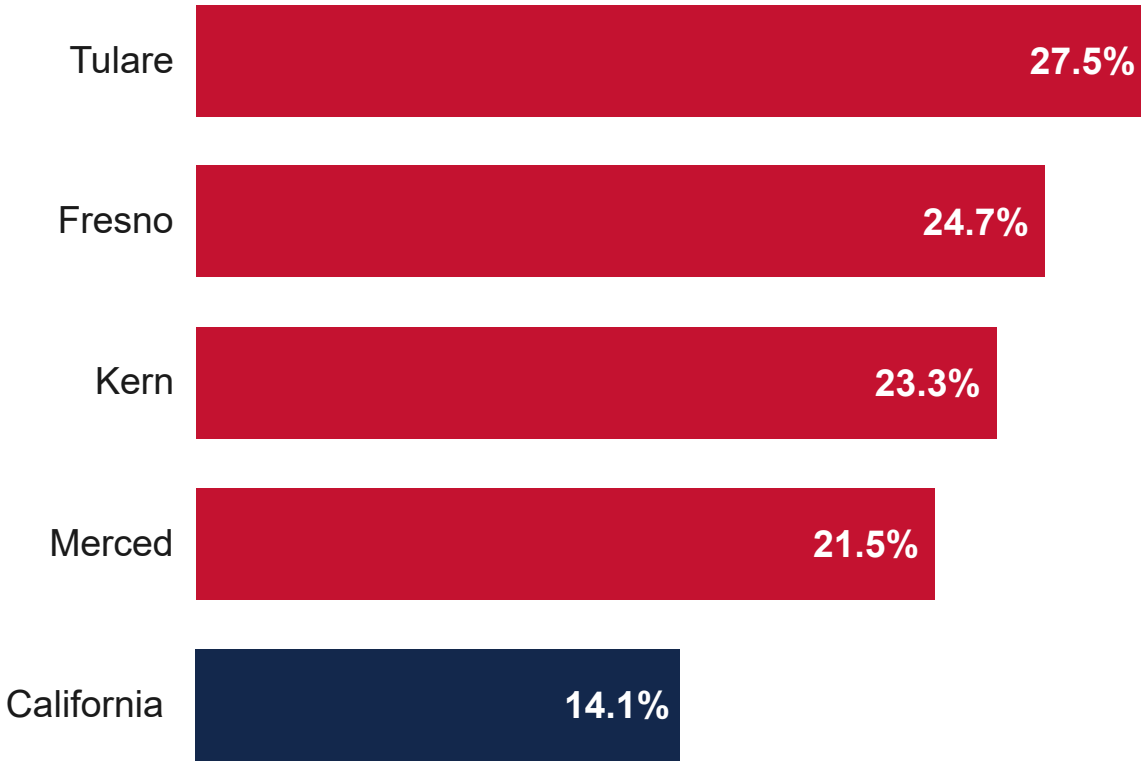
≈1M

Californians at risk of losing CalFresh entirely[7]

Lost benefits reduce grocery spending statewide, affecting retailers, agricultural markets, and county safety-net systems.

SNAP in the Central Valley

Share of residents receiving CalFresh, 2025



CalFresh recipients (May 2025) as a share of 2024 county population estimates[8,9]

- High-poverty counties include Fresno, Kern, Tulare, Merced, and Stanislaus
- About 1 in 4 residents in Fresno, Kern, and Tulare counties receives CalFresh, compared with about 1 in 7 statewide[8,9]
- Farmworkers, immigrants, and older adults are especially vulnerable
- Rural food deserts increase reliance on SNAP

Food insecurity in the Central Valley is both a health and an economic concern.

Service Gaps in the Central Valley



Photo: unknown author, CC BY-ND

Benefits flow to large stores

Supermarkets and superstores redeem over 80% of SNAP benefits nationally; rural residents far from these stores are at a disadvantage[10]

Nutrition education cut

Federal funding for SNAP Education (SNAP-Ed), known as CalFresh Healthy Living, ended in October 2025[3]

Greater need, fewer resources

High-risk populations face rising food insecurity as services contract

Ethical Implications of SNAP Cuts

Access to adequate food is a basic human right, and equitable access is now at risk.

The ethical dilemma

Federal budget savings versus social justice

Groups most affected by cuts[5,7]

- Children
- Older adults
- People with disabilities
- Refugees and immigrants

Policy Recommendations

Three strategies to protect health, equity, and economic stability

Recommendation 1: Maintain and Strengthen Benefits

What

- Keep benefits adequate as the cost of living rises

- Target state backfill to Central Valley households

Who

- California State Legislature
- California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
- Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

When

2027–28 state budget, before benefit cost-sharing begins in October 2027[2]

Recommendation 2: Integrate Public Health and Nutrition

01

Restore nutrition education

Fund Central Valley nutrition education to replace lost federal SNAP-Ed dollars[3]

02

Implement medically tailored meals

Provide meals designed for patients with diet-related chronic conditions

03

Partner with hospitals and clinics

Offer nutrition counseling and referrals at the point of care[4,5]

Recommendation 3: Strengthen Local Food Infrastructure

1. Support food banks and farm-to-food-bank programs

2. Incentivize local produce through the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)

3. Improve rural store access and delivery models

Central Valley food banks cannot absorb SNAP reductions alone.[3]



Photo: unknown author, CC BY-ND

Call to Action: Protect Health, Equity, and Economic Stability

SNAP cuts threaten

1. Health outcomes
2. Economic stability
3. Regional equity

Most vulnerable

- Children
- Older adults
- People with disabilities
- Immigrants
- Farmworkers

Immediate policy action to maintain access, improve infrastructure and increase rural availability is needed.

References

1. Legislative Analyst's Office. Major H.R. 1 changes affecting CalFresh. Presented to: Assembly Select Committee on CalFresh Enrollment and Nutrition; April 8, 2026. Accessed October 20, 2026. https://www.lao.ca.gov/handouts/socservices/2026/Major-H.R.-1-Changes040826.pdf
2. Legislative Analyst's Office. The 2026-27 California spending plan: CalFresh and California Food Assistance Program. 2026. Accessed October 20, 2026. https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/5208/3
3. California Association of Food Banks. CalFresh changes in H.R. 1. Accessed October 20, 2026. https://www.cafoodbanks.org/what-we-do/policy/calfresh-changes-hr1/
4. Berkowitz SA, Seligman HK, Meigs JB, Basu S. Food insecurity, healthcare utilization, and high cost: a longitudinal cohort study. Am J Manag Care. 2018;24(9):399-404.
5. Hartline-Grafton H, Plata-Nino G. SNAP: An Evidence-Based Program to Improve Food Security, Health, and Well-Being. Food Research & Action Center; August 2026. https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/FRAC-SNAP-and-Health-Report.pdf
6. Congressional Research Service. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Related Nutrition Programs in P.L. 119-21: An Overview. Report R48552. Updated July 23, 2025. https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R48552/R48552.7.pdf
7. California Budget & Policy Center. Timeline of funding cuts to Medi-Cal and CalFresh in California. Accessed October 20, 2026. https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/timeline-of-funding-cuts-to-medi-cal-and-calfresh-in-california
8. California Association of Food Banks. Estimated CalFresh Recipients by County, 2025. August 2025. https://www.cafoodbanks.org/wpcontent/uploads/2025/08/Estimated-CalFresh-Recipients-byCounty_2025.pdf
9. California Department of Health Care Services. Medi-Cal countywide average chart, SFY 2023-24, with CY 2024 county population estimates. Accessed October 20, 2026. https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/es/Documents/Enclosure-1-California-DHCS-Medi-Cal-CWA-Chart-SFY-2023-24-Q1-to-Q4.pdf
10. US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. SNAP Retailer Manage Year 2020. Accessed October 20, 2026. https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/2020SNAP-Retailer-M

Our Team



Nicole Vasquez

Research Intern



Marisol Barrios-Martinez

Research Intern



Dustin Hedrick

Research Analyst



Tania Pacheco-Werner, PhD

Director

Thank You

For more information contact tpacheco@csufresno.edu



FRESNO STATE | Central Valley Health Policy Institute