

**California Department of Food and Agriculture**  
**2022 California Nutrition Incentive Program – CalFresh**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Q:** I'm looking to partner with 4 stores that are registered with only one EIN number and all stores together have 400 employees. Would that automatically disqualify them as a "small business"?

**A:** Yes, unfortunately businesses with more than 100 employees do not qualify as a small business.

2. **Q:** I am a small business applying for funding, I don't currently have a FNS/SNAP authorization – can I apply?

**A:** No, a small business must already be authorized to accept SNAP (CalFresh) to apply.

3. **Q:** One of our Certified Farmer's Markets is already receiving grant funds for an incentive program similar to CNIP-CalFresh. Are they eligible for this grant as well?

**A:** If the market is already receiving grant funds for a similar program, it gets a little tricky but is possible. The market would have to set up very clear accounting guidelines to make sure the two grants are completely separate so none of the grant funds or duties overlap (e.g. be very specific about how to account for which grant is paying for which person's staff time, which incentives, etc.). Depending on the duration of the other grant funds, you could also consider separating the grants by time (e.g. the first grant ends March 2023, so the CNIP grant begins April 2023). You'll also need to be clear in the application why additional funds beyond the current funds are needed.

4. **Q:** What do you mean the incentive needs to be tied to a snap dollar purchase?

**A:** The incentives (which can only be spent on fresh, California-grown produce) can only be earned if the participant makes a SNAP-eligible purchase with their SNAP benefits. So, for example, a shopper can buy any SNAP-eligible food item with their SNAP dollars and earn incentives to spend on fresh CA-grown produce. Applicants can limit the items eligible to earn incentives to just CA-grown produce, (example: a shopper can buy fresh, CA-grown produce and earn incentives that can be spent on fresh, California-grown produce, or can a shopper

purchasing fresh, CA-grown produce with their SNAP benefits can receive a 50% discount). Preference is given to models that encourage the most produce consumption (earning incentives by spending SNAP dollars on produce).

5. **Q:** Should we apply only with a list of final sites for incentive distribution, or may we create "placeholders" in our application for prospective site partners, and include outreach and assessment activities to determine new sites in our proposal?

**A:** To be determined sites may be included in the proposal and outreach/assessment should be included in this case.

6. **Q:** Is there a database or handy source I could use to find the percentage of the population that is eligible for CalFresh in my specific city or county?

**A:** CDFA-F2F does not know one source that provides exact SNAP eligibility numbers at CA city or county levels, though you might check whether your local food bank, hunger relief organization, or food policy council, if there is one, publishes that info. Just provide information about community needs as best possible. Past applicants to CNIP have pulled data from sources including the below (though there is no need to use all these sources in one application):

- the US Census/American Community Survey;
- Feeding America publications;
- CA Department of Social Services (including from <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/data-portal/research-and-data/calfresh-data-dashboard>);
- the UCLA CA Health Interview Survey (<http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/chis/Pages/default.aspx>);
- the USDA ERS Food Access Research Atlas (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>); and
- county public health department reports, among other sources.

In some cases applicants use census income data as compared to CalFresh eligibility thresholds to estimate eligibility; and some applicants have laid out poverty, income, food insecurity, cost of living, and diet-related disease rates to describe the context for CalFresh eligibility.

7. **Q:** Is there a cap on the amount of incentive funding we can apply for?

**A:** There is no cap on the amount of incentive funding - it should just be reasonable for the project. As a reminder, CDFA reserves the right to make partial awards.

**8. Q:** What kind of documentation is acceptable to verify a store meets the small business criteria?

**A:** Documentation for small businesses should show their annual revenue meets the specified criteria with financial statements that could include:

- independent auditor's report
- balance sheet
- statement of income/cash flows
- profits & losses statement
- tax return

**9. Q:** Could a model of earning incentives through purchase of California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables, and redeeming incentives on any fresh fruits and vegetables, be eligible?

**A:** No, incentives must be redeemed only on California-grown fresh fruit and vegetables, as described in the RFP. (Incentives can be earned through purchase of any CalFresh eligible food items, or programs can choose to limit to just California-grown fruits and vegetables if desired. Priority will be given to applicants where a majority of incentives are earned when purchasing fruits and vegetables, as described in the RFP.)