

# CSAC



CALIFORNIA  
**STUDENT AID**  
COMMISSION



# Breaking Down Barriers for College Students to Access Federal Food Benefits

**SHEEO Policy Conference – August 10, 2022**

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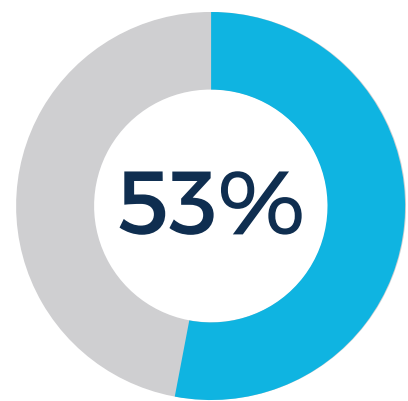
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# 3 million+ Californians enrolled in Post Secondary Education



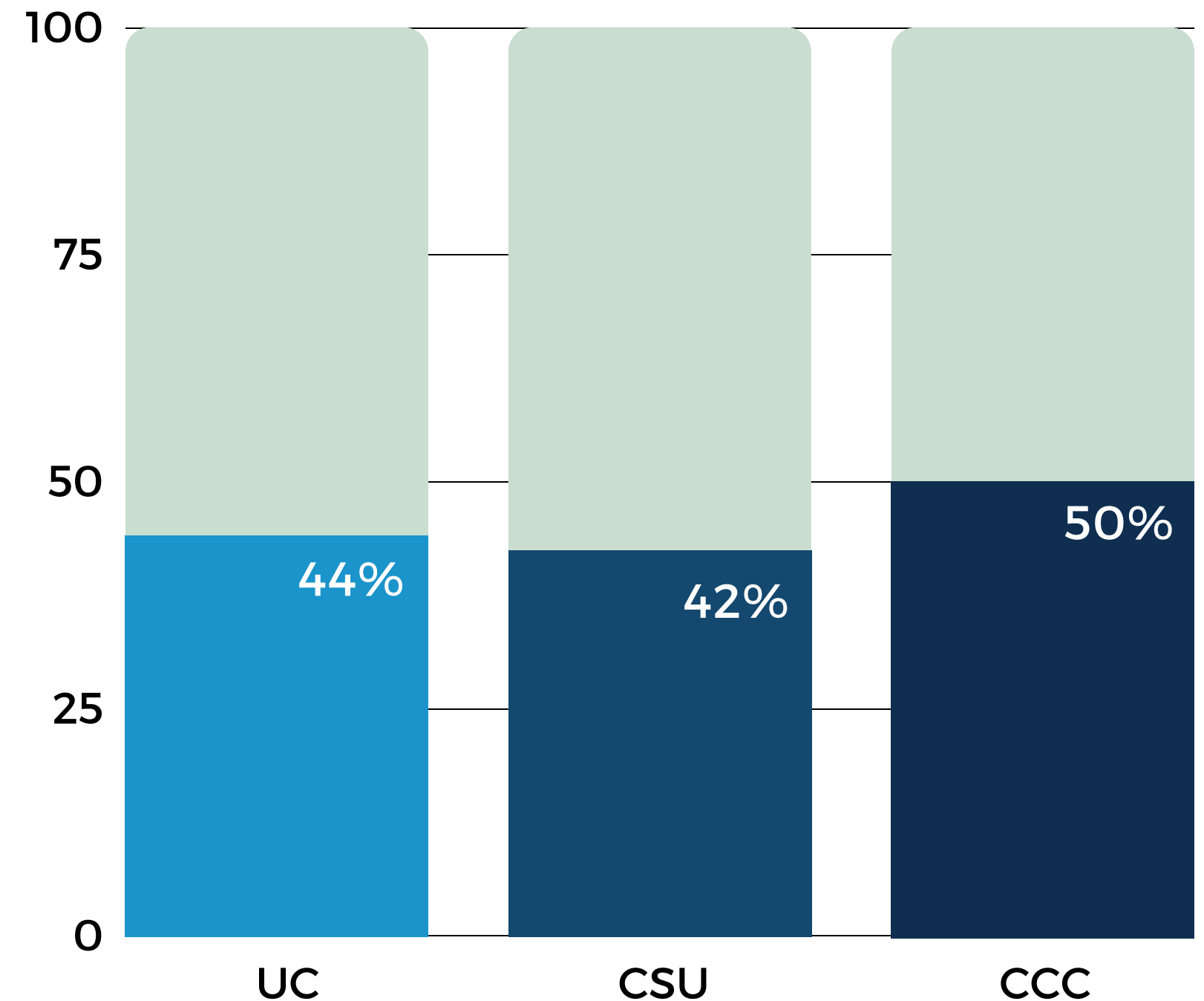
of students reported  
**Experiencing  
Food Insecurity**

**Students who most often reported increased food expenses**

**44%** University of California (UC)

**42%** Cal State University (CSU)

**59%** CA Community Colleges (CCC)



**17%** of Students Eligible for Cal Fresh  
**Actually Received Benefits**

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**Only 127,000 Students Receiving Cal Fresh**  
out of up to **750,000 Eligible Students**



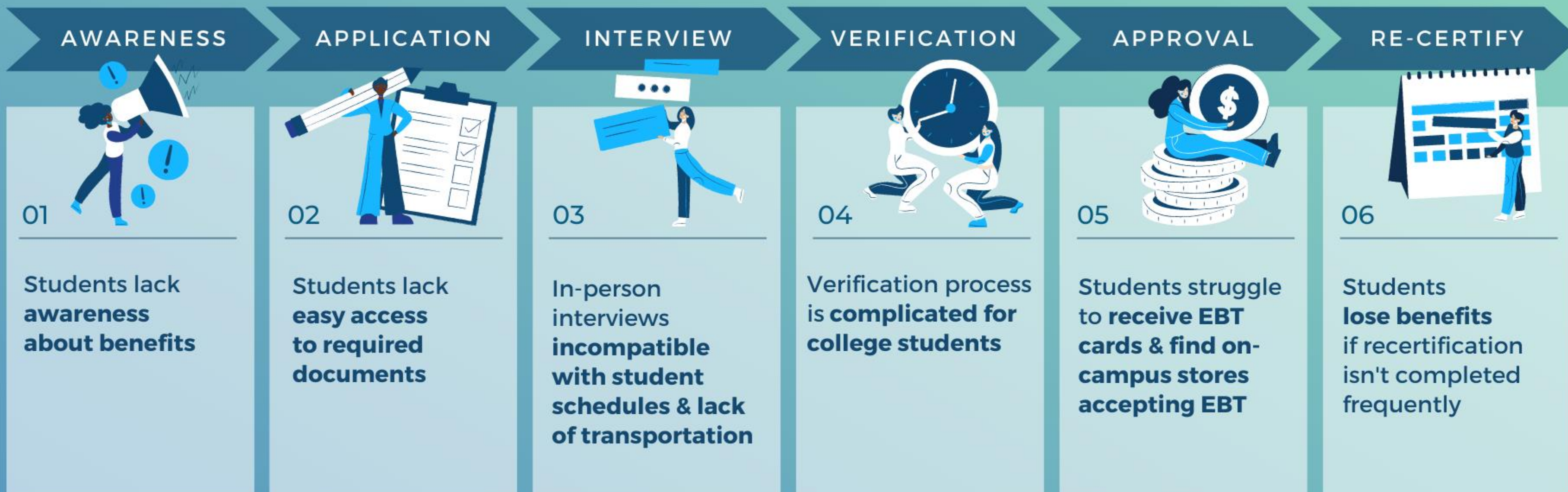
**250,000 K-12 Students** receiving **Free**  
or **Reduced price-meals** moved to postsecondary



**7 in 10 Students** lost some or all of their income  
during the pandemic



# STUDENT EXPERIENCE WITH CALFRESH (SNAP)



**When the SNAP program was established in 1977**, the United States did not contemplate the current demographics of students in postsecondary institutions. In fact, the program actively worked to keep postsecondary students out of the program under the broad-based assumption that a student's low-income status was temporary and that familial resources would support their basic needs.



# Cross-sector work in CA

**CA leverages TANF to fund state financial aid for tuition** so that thousands of students annually can qualify for exemptions to the student rule

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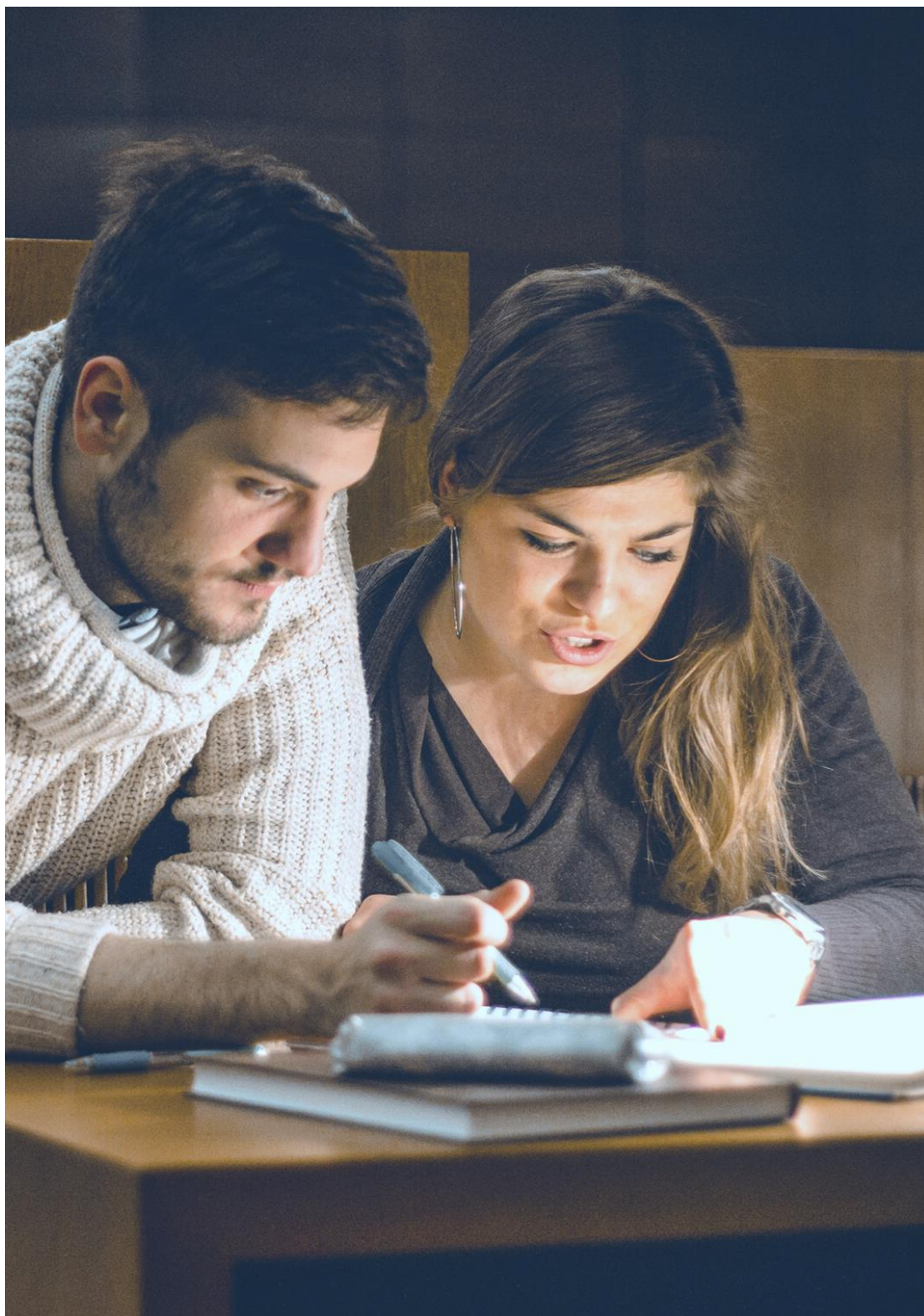
**CSAC notifies students of their TANF benefit status**

Students are provided with letters about their “Cal Grant” being a TANF-funded benefit and their potential CalFresh eligibility

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**Local collaboration bright spot: “the Compton Model”**

LA County & Compton College “opt-in” data sharing began in 2022, already resulting in a 10% increase in student participation



# January 2022 “Dear College” letter from U.S. Department of Education

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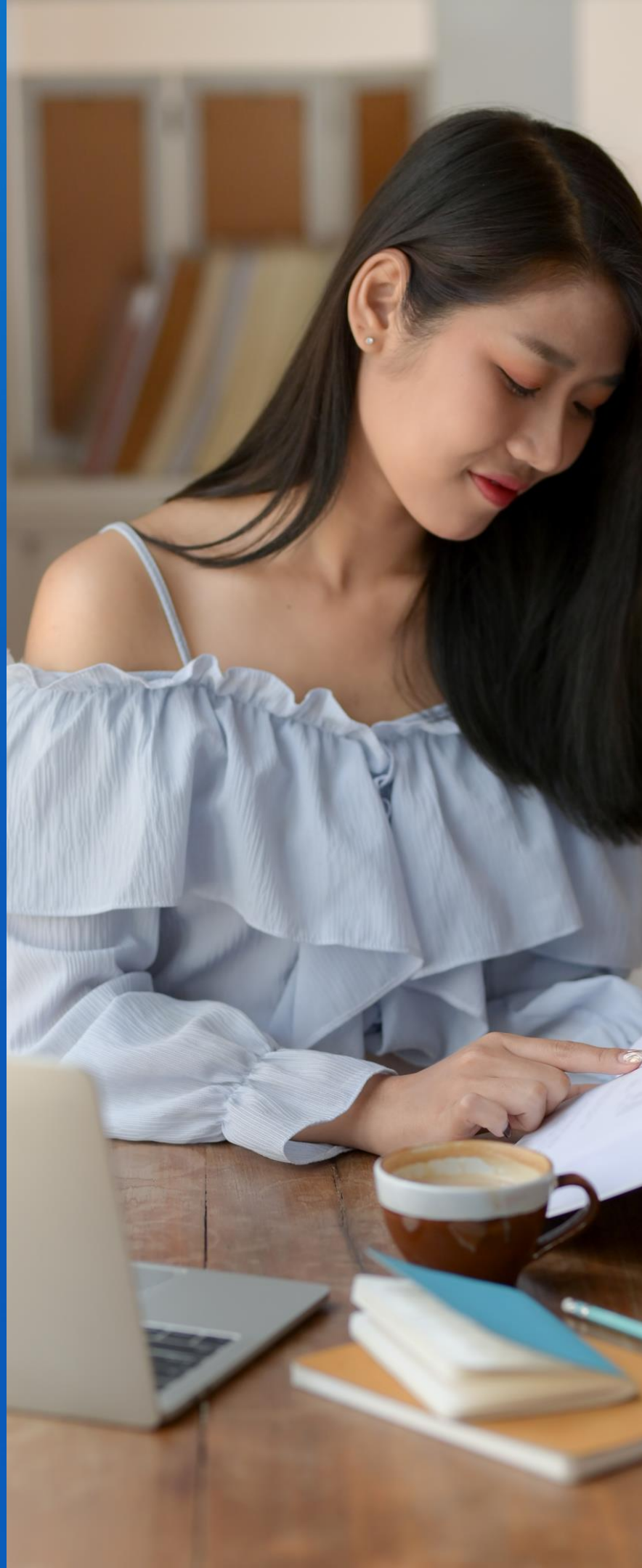


**Clear guidance that institutions of higher education may use financial aid application data to conduct outreach to students of their potential eligibility for SNAP**



**Institutions of higher education may also use FAFSA data to help verify student eligibility for SNAP, so long as they have written consent of the student**

# What else can we do to help students access SNAP?



Remove legal barriers that keep college students from SNAP access

Allow use of FAFSA data to inform student eligibility for other benefits

Clarify that state agencies can also contact students to notify them of benefits

Establish an “opt-in” box on the FAFSA to enable institutions, state agencies to share data with partners

# What else can we do to help students access SNAP?



Pilot innovative means for state/local agencies to serve college students

Fund a parallel resource for students that are not eligible for federal benefits

Ensure students can actually use their benefits on campus

Leverage existing exemptions for college students based on TANF-funded benefits, employability programs



# Resources

- 01 MOU between County of Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services & Compton Community College District for Data Sharing to Increase Cal Fresh Participation
- 02 Data Sharing Agreement (SAMPLE): Riverside County Office of Education
- 03 Cal Fresh Release (SAMPLE): Compton Community College
- 04 Agreement between Compton CCD and Everytable, PBC
- 05 “Dear Colleague” letter (GEN-22-02) Use of FAFSA Data to Administer Federal Programs
- 06 California Community Colleges: Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Guidebook (Jan. 2020)





# Thank you!

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