

mRelief FAQ

What is mRelief?

mRelief is an easy-to-use platform on web and text messaging that helps low-income Americans find out if they qualify for social services. This February, they launched in partnership with the California Department of Social Services and San Francisco County Human Services Agency to bring innovative program screening technology to California. The web and text messaging-based app will screen interested people for potential eligibility for CalFresh, CalWORKS or cash aid and subsidized child care in both English and Spanish. According to a California Food Policy Advocates Report, more than 68,000 San Franciscans are eligible for but not receiving CalFresh.

How It works?

The screening tool helps people find out if they are likely to qualify for these important programs, with roughly 10 simple questions which take less than 5 minutes to answer. On the mRelief.com platform, families can find out they are likely to qualify by simply answering questions on a form. On the text messaging platform, families can find out if they are likely to qualify by texting “hello” to 74544. They can use keywords to indicate their program(s) of choice such as texting “food” for CalFresh also known as food stamps or “cash” for CalWORKS also known as cash assistance. After completing questions, families will be directed to an actionable next step. People who likely are eligible will be informed about the easiest and fastest way to submit a complete application. People who likely are ineligible will be referred to appropriate alternative assistance nearest to their ZIP code.

Other Services

Along with debuting a shortcode number that processes 100 text messages per second through Twilio, mRelief also will be doing smart follow-up with people who are likely eligible, such as sending application resources, and offering an application assistance center if a client ever gets stuck in the process. A CalFresh eligible family must prove identity, residency, income, and immigration status for all household members applying for the benefit. Thus, mRelief’s tool will provide customized information on what is needed based on a family’s unique status and reminders on documents needed. These verifications were determined through a partnership with CDSS, SF County and research conducted with support from the Knight Foundation.

More About mRelief

mRelief, which launched in 2013, has a mission to restore dignity by transforming access to social services. The organization’s focus is addressing the \$13 billion in unclaimed food stamps in America each year. The organization uses data published by the USDA on data.gov to inform low-income families about their likely eligibility. In Illinois for example, food stamp applicants need to fill out an 18-page application or sit through a 90-minute phone call, and submit as many as 10 required documents. In other states, the application can be more than 20 pages

long and involve hours at the public aid office. mRelief has built an easy-to-use platform that allows families to find out if they are likely to qualify for food stamps by answering 10 simple questions in less than five minutes via text or website. Over 100,000 families in 42 states have used mRelief to secure food stamps or other public support.

More About California Department of Social Services

The mission of the California Department of Social Services is to serve, aid, and protect needy and vulnerable children and adults in ways that strengthen and preserve families, encourage personal responsibility, and foster independence. CDSS has more than 4,600 employees who are responsible for the oversight and administration of programs serving California's most vulnerable residents.

More About SF County Human Services Agency

The Human Services Agency (HSA) of the City and County of San Francisco serves as the central resource for public assistance in the City. Our mission is to promote well-being and self-sufficiency among individuals, families and communities in San Francisco. HSA was formed in 2004 with the merger of two previously existing City departments, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Aging and Adult Services. The Office of Early Care and Education joined the HSA umbrella in 2014. HSA is now comprised of these three departments, each of which is overseen by a Mayoral appointed commission (The Human Services Commission, Commission on Aging and Adult Services, and the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Any additional questions can be e-mailed to support@mrelief.com