

Run a Household Through the Safety Net

POSC 459 — Social Welfare Politics and Policy

Week 6 · Wednesday, September 30

No class meeting. Click through these slides and do the exercise.

Due tonight, 11:59 p.m.

Today, instead of class

What	Run one hypothetical household through two benefit screeners
Time	About 45 minutes
Turn in	2 screenshots + 150–250 words
Points	10 (attendance and participation)
Due	Tonight, 11:59 p.m. , on Canvas

Why do this?

- Every eligibility question is a rule about **who deserves help**
- Today you meet those rules the way a family does: one question at a time
- What you find is evidence for **Paper 2**, due Friday

The two programs

	EITC	CalFresh (SNAP)
What	Tax credit, paid as a refund	Money for food, on an EBT card
For	Low- and moderate-income workers	Low-income households
Run by	IRS	USDA, through the counties
Reaches	19% of Americans	14% of Americans

Shares: Desmond, p. 93. CalFresh is California's name for SNAP.

Find your household

Your last name	Your household
A-H	A: single parent, two children
I-R	B: married couple, one child
S-Z	C: full-time CSUF student

Use the household, **not yourself.**

Household A · last names A–H

Who	Single parent, 31. Children ages 4 and 9
Work	30 hours a week at \$17.50
Income	\$27,300 a year = \$2,275 a month
Home	Anaheim. Rent \$1,800, utilities included
Taxes	Head of household. Kids lived at home all year
Also	U.S. citizens with Social Security numbers. No other income, savings, or child care costs

Household B · last names I–R

Who	Married couple, 34 and 32. One child, age 6
Work	One parent works. The other stays home
Income	\$40,000 a year = \$3,333 a month
Home	Fullerton. Rent \$2,200, utilities included
Taxes	Married filing jointly. Child lived at home all year
Also	U.S. citizens with Social Security numbers. No other income, savings, or child care costs

Household C · last names S–Z

Who	Age 21, no children. Full-time CSUF student (12 units)
Work	12 hours a week at \$16.90
Income	2025 wages: \$10,296 . Now: \$879 a month
Home	Fullerton apartment. Rent share \$900, utilities included. Buys food separately from roommates
Taxes	Files as single. Parents do not claim them
Also	U.S. citizen with a Social Security number. No Cal Grant, work-study, or EOP

Three rules before you start

- **Hypothetical household only.** Never your own information
- **Never** enter a name, address, phone, email, or SSN
- **Never** start an application. These are screeners

A site asks for personal information? **Stop.** Screenshot that page and use it.

Step 1 · IRS EITC Assistant

apps.irs.gov/app/eitc

1. Tax year: **2025**
2. Answer every question as your household
3. Not on your household card? Take the simple answer: **no**
4. Screenshot the **result page**

About 10 minutes. No login, no personal information.

Step 2 · CalFresh screener

benefitscal.com → Ask Robin → See if I qualify

1. County: **Orange**
2. Household size: **A = 3 · B = 3 · C = 1**
3. Income: the **monthly** figure on your card
4. People working: **1**
5. Screenshot the **result**

About 5 minutes. Robin says **whether** you may qualify, not how much.

While you click, keep a list

- Every question each screener asked
- The one that **decided** your result
- One it **never asked** that you expected

Step 3 • Write 150–250 words

1. What does your household get from each program?
2. Which question decided the most? What does it assume about **who deserves help**?
3. What did a screener **not** ask, and why might that matter?

Name one reading if it fits (Howard, Campbell, or Desmond, with a page).

Step 4 · Submit on Canvas

Week 6 module → "Run a Household Through the Safety Net"

- **Two screenshots (EITC + CalFresh)**
- **Your 150–250 words**

Upload as one file or several. **Due tonight, 11:59 p.m.**

How it's graded

10 points	Both screenshots + 150–250 words that answer the questions
Site broken?	Screenshot the error and write anyway. Full credit
AI	Green: allowed, no disclosure needed

Questions: **email me.** No office hour Thursday.

What happens next

Fri 10/2: Paper 2 due, 11:59 p.m.

Mon 10/5: we put households A, B, and C side by side

**Same programs. Three very
different answers.**