



2021 Federal Priorities FIGHT HUNGER IN CALIFORNIA

In our nation of wealth, no one should go hungry, yet hunger is at shameful levels due to COVID-19. We call on the California Congressional Delegation to take continued action at the scale necessary to end record hunger and systemic poverty facing our state.

SNAP Delivers Unparalleled Anti-Hunger & Economic Benefits to California

Last year, SNAP helped prevent hunger for 4.4 million Californians – that's one in 9.¹ SNAP brought \$8.3 billion in federal food benefits, \$14.9 billion in total economic activity, and 112,036 jobs statewide.^{2,3}

Unfortunately, SNAP benefits are inadequate to maintain a healthy diet: SNAP benefits in California average just \$1.44 per person per meal and more than 90% of benefits are spent after only three weeks.

While Congress took key steps last year and in the Budget Reconciliation package, much more is needed given the magnitude of hunger today. We must not go back to normal but build toward a hunger-free California.

Maximize SNAP's Anti-Hunger & Counter Cyclical Power

Congress must learn the lesson of the Great Recession, providing a proportionate response to the current crisis, including to:

- » continue to increase the adequacy and duration of SNAP benefits by at least 15% until sufficient economic recovery has been realized, regardless of the public health emergency status to prevent a benefit cliff;
- » permanently strengthen SNAP by basing benefit allotments on the Low-Cost Food Plan, removing the cap on the shelter deduction, increasing the minimum benefit level, and better accounting for medical expenses incurred by SNAP participants who are older or have disabilities;
- » promote equity, including by eliminating SNAP time limits and improving SNAP access for college students, immigrants, former drug felons, and families working their way up the economic ladder; and
- » provide such sums as are necessary to ensure continuity of SNAP operations and benefits.

Strengthen SNAP Through Proactive Legislation

- » **H.R. 1753** Rep. Lee – Improving Access to Nutrition Act
 - › Repeals SNAP's three-month time limit for out-of-work Americans.
- » Enhance Access To SNAP Act (EATS Act) – Reps. Gomez, Harder, Panetta (**H.R. 4297 116th**)
 - › Eliminates the outdated SNAP restrictions for college students.
- » Allowing Steady Savings by Eliminating Tests Act (ASSET Act) – Rep. Gomez (**H.R. 5848 116th**)
 - › Eliminates asset tests in SNAP and LIHEAP eligibility, and raises SSI asset limits.
- » Closing the Meal Gap Act – Rep. Adams (**H.R. 1368 116th**)
 - › Makes numerous improvements to SNAP benefit adequacy.
- » **H.R. 1194** Reps. Carbajal, Cardenas – Expanding Access to Emergency Meals Act
 - › Ends injustice that SNAP recipients cannot receive emergency food reimbursed by FEMA.
- » SNAP COVID-19 Anti-Hunger Restaurant Relief for You (CARRY Act) – S. Murphy (**S. 3697 116th**)
 - › Enables Restaurant Meal Program access for all SNAP recipients, and streamlines the RMP application for new restaurants, during COVID-19.





California FY 2022 Budget & Appropriations **ANTI-HUNGER PRIORITIES**

- » **Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT): \$100 million** to continue current and expand Summer EBT Demonstration Projects to ensure that children have access to nutrition during the summer, building on the tremendous success of the Demonstration Projects and Pandemic EBT.
- » **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) food purchases: \$900 million** to meet record, ongoing community demand and prevent a federal food cliff. **\$100 million as authorized in the Farm Bill for TEFAP Storage and Distribution.**
- » **Commodity Supplemental Food Program: at least \$375 million**, or as USDA deems necessary to support the national caseload, and an **additional \$140 million from the FY 2021 enacted level for Older Americans Act Nutrition programs** to support older adults at highest risk during the pandemic.
- » **School Meals:** Preserve the improvements made in school meals access, nutrition standards, and the overall school nutrition environment of school meals for all. Provide **\$10 million** for school meals direct certification grants to reduce paperwork, and **\$100 million** in school equipment grants to enable school districts to build their capacity to prepare healthier, more cost-effective meals on site.
- » **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC): \$7 billion** to ensure that WIC serves anticipated caseload, and the rising costs to deliver high-quality nutrition. This should include set-asides for Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (\$90 million), infrastructure and technical assistance (\$14 million), and management information systems (\$35 million).
- » **Child Care Meals: \$10 million for the Child and Adult Care Food Program's (CACFP) nutrition and wellness education and program efforts. \$12 million for Farm to School and Early Care and Education** to continue expanding farm to early care and education settings.
- » **21st Century Community Learning Centers: Provide \$2.5 billion**, as the largest source of funding for afterschool and summer programs.
- » **WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program at \$18.5 million, and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs at \$21 million** to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- » **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations: \$200 million for administration and food purchase, \$5 million for demonstration projects to enter into self-determination contracts to procure foods, and \$5 million for traditional foods market development.**
- » **Nutrition Assistance Program** Provide funding and authorization for Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to transition from NAP to full participation in SNAP. The territories should lead and approve the path towards transition.

Andrew Cheyne, California Association of Food Banks: andrew@cafoodbanks.org
Elyse Homel Vitale, Child Care Food Program Roundtable: elyse@ccfproundtable.org
Kevin Aslanian, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations: kevin.aslanian@ccwro.org
Melissa Cannon, Nourish California: melissa@nourishca.org
Christopher Sanchez, Western Center on Law & Poverty: csanchez@wclp.org

Citations available at cafoodbanks.org/citations

