

2023 Farm Bill



What's Needed to End Hunger in the U.S.

As Congress works to reauthorize the Farm Bill, Feeding America urges lawmakers to strengthen federal nutrition programs — programs that work in tandem with food banks across the country to provide food assistance to families and individuals facing hunger.

Especially as groceries become more expensive and supply chain disruptions continue, food banks alone cannot meet the elevated demand for food support. Congress must strengthen our nation's commitment to ending hunger by strengthening critical anti-hunger programs in the 2023 Farm Bill.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Our nation's food banks, and programs like TEFAP and CSFP that support them, are lifelines for families who struggle to put food on the table. **Charitable donations alone can't ensure that families get enough to eat — we need the government to do its part to keep food bank shelves full.**

- **Strengthen TEFAP Funding**

TEFAP is a means-tested federal program that provides food at no cost to individuals in need through organizations such as food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters. As demand for food remains high at food banks, a reliable and continuous stream of TEFAP foods is essential. TEFAP also has a strong impact on the farm economy. TEFAP purchases give U.S. growers and producers an average of 27 cents per dollar (U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service). By contrast, just around 16 cents of every retail food dollar goes back to farmers.



TEFAP moves food from farms to food banks to families.

- **Lawmakers must reauthorize and increase to \$500 million per year mandatory funding for TEFAP food purchases, adjusted for inflation.** This would double the annual amount of funding for TEFAP entitlement commodities set by the farm bill. This level of investment will ensure the flow of TEFAP foods remains steady throughout the food assistance network and support the U.S. agricultural economy.
- **Congress should also 1) reauthorize and increase to \$200 million per year discretionary funding for TEFAP storage and distribution and 2) reauthorize \$15 million per year in discretionary funding for TEFAP infrastructure grants.** These funds will help food banks offset the cost of storing and transporting USDA foods, especially in rural communities. They will help cover expenses like refrigeration and fuel.

- **Reauthorize and Streamline Reporting for CSFP**

Every month, CSFP provides nutritious food boxes to around 760,000 seniors who are low-income and aged 60 years and older. CSFP helps to combat the poor health conditions often found in seniors who are experiencing food insecurity and who are at risk for hunger.

Partnerships with Growers and Producers

Annually, around 70 billion pounds of food does not make it from farm to plate in the United States. Feeding America network food banks partner with growers, producers, food companies, retailers, and restaurants to ensure this nutritious food is connected to those facing hunger. **Congress must act to increase food donations to communities in need.**

- **Increase Funding and Streamline State Participation in the TEFAP Farm to Food Bank Program by Removing the State Match and Allowing States to Prioritize Projects for Donated Food or Food Purchased at Low Cost From Local Growers and Producers**



For every meal the Feeding America network provides, SNAP provides nine.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is the cornerstone of the nation's federal nutrition programs, providing over 41 million people in the U.S. with monthly food benefits via a grocery debit card. To provide increased access to food benefits, **Congress must protect SNAP's funding and structure while addressing systemic barriers to benefits.**

- **Strengthen SNAP Benefits**

SNAP benefits should be set at an adequate level (i.e., based on the Low-Cost Food Plan) so families can purchase healthy foods. Strengthening SNAP benefits would also help seniors, people with disabilities, people working low-wage jobs, and others who are most likely to qualify for the minimum benefit. Finally, Congress should strengthen SNAP's well-designed structure that allows a gradual phase-out from benefits to income, and reduce the "benefits cliff."

- **Simplify and Streamline Eligibility and Enrollment Processes**

Current eligibility rules and enrollment processes can be complicated and confusing, particularly for seniors, college students, and immigrants. For households with seniors or people with disabilities, enrollment criteria vary widely in implementation and do not reflect mobility and transportation challenges. Congress should improve SNAP access for seniors, college students, immigrants, and others who do not qualify for or are unable to participate in SNAP due to eligibility and enrollment barriers.

- **Strengthen Efforts to Support Work**

For many seeking employment, SNAP can be one of the few resources available for receiving food support during a job search. The harsh policy that ceases food assistance after only three months is complex and error-prone. Additionally, it has resulted in increased food insecurity while not proving to positively impact employment. Without expanding current work requirements, Congress can help SNAP participants find work by removing the time limit on benefits to allow participants to find work, improving state employment and training programs, and ensuring recipients are offered training opportunities that align with best practices.

- **Ensure Parity in Food Assistance for U.S. Territories and Sovereignty for Native Communities**

U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are excluded from SNAP. The capped Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) block grant available in those territories has highly restrictive eligibility requirements, lower monthly benefits, and greater nutrition aid instability compared to SNAP. In consultation with the territories, Congress should provide a pathway to successfully transition from NAP to full participation in SNAP.

Additionally, American Indians and Alaska Natives experience food insecurity at a much higher rate than white people. Therefore, Congress should work with tribal stakeholders to strengthen food security in Native communities, including by allowing Tribal governments to administer federal programs and allowing SNAP participants to also receive Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits.

QUESTIONS

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, EMAIL
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