



2010 Public Policy Agenda

Over seven million Californians are not able to afford the food they need and require assistance to access healthy food. Food banks help by providing emergency food and by partnering with state and federal nutrition programs. The California Association of Food Banks represents 44 food banks working together to build a well-nourished California (*list on back*). Together, we can significantly reduce hunger and malnutrition in California. Our 2010 priorities are:

Support a State Investment in Emergency Food

California can better serve people in need of food by creating and funding a state food purchase program that shores up the State's emergency food network. Food banks across California have seen an unprecedented increase in requests, beyond anything that has been seen in a generation. Statewide, most food banks are reporting a 30-50 percent increase in requests for assistance, but in some individual programs, increased requests were up 100 percent or greater over the previous year. California does not provide annual funding for food banks, although food banks have been on the front lines of responding to emergency needs for food during this economic crisis. Several of our peer states have made significant investments in their food bank networks, even in very difficult fiscal climates.

State Budget: Protect Populations Most Vulnerable to Hunger

As the state considers measures to address further shortfalls, protect from further harm the working families and seniors served by food banks. California will have to make more tough choices regarding the state budget, but programs for those most in danger of hunger should absolutely not be cut. The legislature should consider revenue options in order avoid these harmful cuts and provide a balanced solution to our budget crisis.

- **Protect the California Food Assistance Program**

The elimination of the \$30 million California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) would cut off an estimated 23,000 immigrants in California from food aid, creating severe hardship and forcing them to seek assistance from an already-stretched network of food banks.

- **Protect SSI Benefit Levels and the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)**

Hunger among seniors receiving SSI or CAPI - many of whom live alone and are not allowed to receive food stamps - is a rising concern. Food banks are often these seniors' only option when their benefits are cut. The most recent string of SSI grant cuts will surely exacerbate this growing problem and any further cuts to SSI or CAPI will only serve to intensify hunger among this vulnerable population.

- **Protect CalWORKs from Further Cuts and Elimination**

The proposed 15.7 percent cut would reduce the maximum monthly grant for a family of three from \$694 to \$585, causing further hardship for California families. Furthermore, if California eliminates the CalWORKs programs it would leave at least 1.3 million Californians without cash assistance, child care and any opportunity to get the education and training they need to move out of poverty, as well as leave billions in federal dollars on the table.

- **Revenue Options Should Be Part of a Budget Solution**

Support proposals that reduce the need to cut services and eliminate programs: passing an oil severance tax and repealing the new corporate tax breaks that were part of recent budget deals would generate \$2.9 billion in revenue and are a few of several revenue options that should be considered.

Modernize and Simplify the Food Stamp Program

The food stamp program is the nation's number one nutrition and anti-hunger program. It provides 100% federally-funded benefits of approximately \$100 per month to almost 3 million Californians - most of them children. Nonetheless, California has one of the lowest participation rates of all the states and loses \$3.7 billion in federal funds because of red tape that makes it hard for people to enroll and to stay enrolled.

- **Support AB 537 (Arambula) - EBT at Farmer's Markets**

Allows farmers to operate an EBT system at a certified farmers' market or flea market if by 2012 the market manager has chosen to not operate the system on its own.

- **Support AB 963 (Ammiano) - Streamlining of Food Stamp, Medi-Cal and CalWORKs Renewal**

Establishes a stakeholder group that would review current renewal processes for families enrolled in Medi-Cal, Food Stamps and CalWORKs and make recommendations for streamlining.

- **Support AB 1642 (Beall)** – Food Stamp Semi-Annual Simplified Reporting
Removes red tape by implementing simplified semi-annual reporting for food stamps and CalWORKs. Simplified reporting has shown to increase participation and reduce error rates in 48 other states.
- **Support SB 1322 (Liu)** – Food Stamp Employment and Training
Improves access to the Food Stamp Program for people who are subject to work registration rules by relaxing mandatory placement requirements during economic downturns and establishing, in every county, the ability for people to meet their work requirements by volunteering for a non-profit, community based organizations like food banks or food pantries.
- **Support SB 1359 (Price)** – Food Stamp Finger Imaging Elimination and Simplified Reporting
Removes the finger imaging requirement for food stamp applicants and implements semi-annual simplified reporting requirements. The costly finger imaging system does not increase program integrity yet it can discourage program participation.

Support Food Stamp Benefits for People in Transition

Many Californians, like families losing their homes or those affected by drug addiction, have experienced hardships that pre-dated our state's current economic crisis, but are now exacerbated by it. California should support struggling families in transition by extending benefits that help make nutritious food more available and affordable.

- **Support AB 1198 (Swanson)** – Transitional Support
Reinstates Food Stamp benefits for people who have served their time for a prior drug-related felony conviction, provided they participate in a drug treatment program or certify that drug use has ceased.
- **Support AB 2018 (Skinner)** – Food Stamp Mobility
Allows food stamp recipients who move to a new county to continue receiving benefits without the burden of having to reapply for food stamps at their new county of residence.

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CAFB Members

Alameda County Community Food Bank
Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency
Community Action Agency of Butte County
California Emergency Foodlink
Community Action Partnership of Kern
Community Action Partnership of Orange County
Community Assistance Network
Community Food Bank of Fresno
Community Food Bank of San Benito County
Community Resources Council
Emergency Foodbank of Greater Stockton
Feeding America San Diego
FIND - Food In Need of Distribution
Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo
Food Bank for Monterey County
Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano
Food Bank of El Dorado County
Food Bank of Nevada County
Food Bank of Yolo County
Food for People
Food Share of Ventura County
Foodbank of Santa Barbara

Foodlink of Tulare County
Imperial Valley Food Bank
Interfaith Council of Amador
Kings Community Action Organization
Lake County Community Action Agency
Los Angeles Regional Foodbank
Madera Food Bank
Marin Community Food Bank
Mendocino Food & Nutrition Program
Merced County Food Bank
Napa Valley Food Bank
Redwood Empire Food bank
Resource Connection
San Diego Food Bank
San Francisco Food Bank
Shasta Senior Nutrition Programs
Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County
Second Harvest Food Bank of San Joaquin & Stanislaus
Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara & San Mateo
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County
Ukiah Community Center
Westside Food Bank

The mission of California Association of Food Banks is to provide a unified voice among food banks to maximize their ability to build a well nourished California. To accomplish this mission, the membership of 44 food banks focuses on increasing the visibility of hunger and its solutions, assisting Californians in accessing food assistance and nutrition programs, distributing fresh produce through the Farm to Family program and influencing public policy.

