



2011 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. California Association of Food Banks represents 41 food banks working together to build a well-nourished California (*list on back*). Together, we can significantly reduce hunger and malnutrition in California. Our 2011 priorities are:

Support State Programs to Improve Access to Healthy Food

California can better serve people in need of food by shoring up the State's emergency food network and simultaneously supporting California growers. Food banks across California have seen an unprecedented increase in requests, beyond anything that has been seen in a generation. Statewide, most food banks have reported a 30-50 percent increase in requests for assistance. California does not provide state support 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 increased support for emergency food programs, even in very difficult times. Meanwhile, many healthy foods remain out of reach to low-income Californians because of their high cost.

Support AB 152 (Fuentes) – Improving Access to Healthy Food

- Establishes the framework for a state emergency food assistance program for the purchase of California-grown fruits and vegetables that can be funded by contributions from the state or federal government. This will allow California food banks to purchase and distribute a greater number of fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods to low-income Californians at a future time when funds become available.
- Provides a tax credit to California growers for a portion of the costs of fresh fruits and vegetables donated to California food banks. This credit is a win-win during tough economic times, as it will assist California food banks with providing fresh, healthy food to low-income residents and support California growers.

Modernize and Simplify the CalFresh Program

The CalFresh program (formerly the Food Stamp program) is California's number one nutrition and anti-hunger program. It provides 100 percent 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 \$4.9 billion in federal funds because of excessive application and program requirements that make it hard for people to enroll and to stay enrolled.

- **Support AB 6 (Fuentes) – Semi-Annual Reporting, Fingerprint Imaging, “Heat and Eat” Initiative**
 - Removes unnecessary red tape by implementing simplified semi-annual reporting for CalFresh and CalWORKs. Simplified reporting has been shown to increase participation and reduce error rates in 48 other states.
 - Eliminates the Statewide Fingerprint Imaging System (SFIS). California is one of only three remaining states to require fingerprint images from all adult members of CalFresh households, at a cost of about \$17 million each year. Requiring fingerprint imaging has been shown to reduce CalFresh participation and is less effective in preventing fraud than other more efficient measures already in place.
 - Implements a “Heat and Eat” initiative, which would increase CalFresh benefits for some households and remove the utility costs verification requirements for all households.
- **Support AB 828 (Swanson) – Nutritional Assistance for Families Act**

Reinstates CalFresh 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 69 (Beall) – Senior Nutrition Benefits**

Creates a pilot program to identify two areas in the state to target social security recipients eligible for CalFresh and develop a streamlined application process for those seniors to enroll in CalFresh. Despite high levels of poverty, only 10 percent of eligible seniors and just 5 percent of eligible social security recipients participate in CalFresh.
- **Support SB 43 (Liu) – Food Stamp Employment and Training**

Improves access to CalFresh 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 non-profit, community based organizations like food banks or food pantries.

State Budget: Protect Populations Most Vulnerable to Hunger

As the state attempts to close a projected budget shortfall of \$24.5 billion for the 2010-12 fiscal years, the working families and seniors served by food banks must be protected from the worst of the cuts. The Governor and legislature should consider progressive revenue measures to mitigate further cuts to health and human services programs, which have already been cut deeply. These programs account for over 50 percent of proposed cuts despite the fact that they comprise less than 30 percent of annual state costs. The proposed cuts would hurt California's most vulnerable populations and force innumerable low-income families and seniors to seek assistance at already-stretched food banks.

- **Support Governor Brown's \$12 Billion Revenue Package**

The Governor's proposal for \$12 billion in sustainable revenues is essential for balancing California's budget and protecting against even more devastating cuts. The legislature must, at a bare minimum, place the Governor's proposed revenue package before the California voters.

- **Minimize Cuts to Health and Human Services Programs**

In meeting the Governor's proposed \$12.5 billion in spending cuts, the legislature must not ask California's most vulnerable individuals to bear the brunt of the pain from these cuts. The proposed service restrictions and benefit reductions in vital programs like Medi-Cal, CalWorks, SSI, and IHSS are in many cases overly harsh and will only serve to intensify hunger among seniors, children, working families, and people with disabilities.

- **More Progressive Revenue Options Should Be Part of a Budget Solutions**

Support proposals that reduce the need to further cut services and eliminate programs: passing an oil severance tax and repealing new corporate tax breaks that were part of recent budget deals would generate over \$2 billion in revenue and are a few of several revenue options that should be considered.

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CAFB Members

Alameda County Community Food Bank
Amador-Tuolumne Community Action Agency
California Emergency Foodlink
Community Action Agency of Butte County
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
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
Los Angeles Regional Foodbank
Mendocino Food & Nutrition Program
Merced County Food Bank
Napa Valley Food Bank
Placer 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 41 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.

