

President's FY 19 Budget Slashes SNAP and the Safety Net for Low-Income Californians

President Trump's FY 19 budget doubles down on deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, known as CalFresh in California) proposing over \$213 billion in SNAP cuts over ten years. The budget articulates a staggering 30% cut to the nation's signature anti-hunger program—abandoning decades of bi-partisan commitment to addressing hunger, and outlining a harsh vision that would increase hardship for millions of Californians.

California is one of the wealthiest states in our nation, yet far too many Californians struggle with hunger. At a time when over 4 million Californians, including over 2 million children, are struggling with food insecurity, we should be strengthening our investments in food, healthcare and other core programs, rather than seeking cuts and restrictions that take away basic assistance.¹

The federal anti-hunger and safety net programs are California's first line of defense against hunger. President Trump's FY19 budget would undermine the strength, efficiency and reach of SNAP and other critical programs that help lift millions of Californians out of poverty and achieve economic opportunity.

Cuts SNAP by over \$213 billion: The largest of the cuts is the President's so-called 'Blue Apron' food box proposal that would:

- Shift \$260 billion in food purchases from individual households to the government over ten years, dramatically reducing purchasing power, nutritional quality and choice for the overwhelming majority of SNAP households.²
- SNAP households receiving \$90/month or more in benefits would have nearly 40% of their benefits withheld and converted into a food box. ***This plan would withhold between \$24-\$29 billion dollars a year in benefits—a measure that restricts choice and client dignity, and upends SNAP's efficient and effective private-public partnerships that drove over \$12 billion dollars in economic activity in California last year alone.***³

The President's budget also includes an additional \$85 billion dollars in cuts to SNAP benefits and eligibility that would worsen health and nutrition for our state's most vulnerable including families with children, seniors and individuals with disabilities:

- Exacerbates SNAP's already harsh three-month time limits for an additional 2 million older adults by raising the age to which the time limit applies from 49 to 62 years old, if they can't meet strict monthly work requirements;
- Eliminates state flexibility to exempt at-risk individuals from the three-month time limit, even in areas of high unemployment where jobs are scarce;
- Eliminates an option that primarily aids working families by allowing SNAP households to deduct costly expenses like childcare and housing costs and streamlines SNAP with the school meal programs. These changes would harm families with school-age children and sever the automatic link for children in families who qualify for SNAP to receive free school lunches and breakfasts.
- Eliminates the SNAP minimum benefit of \$15 per month, primarily utilized by low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities—cutting benefits and worsening hunger for 2 million individuals nationwide.

¹ CalFresh Reaches Millions of Californians and Reduces Poverty <http://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/calfresh-reaches-millions-californians-reduces-poverty/>

² President's Budget Would Cut and Radically Restructure SNAP Food Benefits <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/presidents-budget-would-cut-and-radically-restructure-snap-food-benefits>

³ California Budget & Policy Center Analysis of California Department of Social Services Data for CA FY 2016 - 17

- Penalizes large families by capping SNAP benefits at the level for a household of six, effectively eliminating food assistance for additional household members; impacting 80,000 large households nationwide.
- Eliminates SNAP nutrition education program.⁴⁵

TEFAP: The President’s budget proposes \$294 million for TEFAP commodity purchases, a vital federal food and funding stream and \$54 million for TEFAP storage and distribution funds—a \$5 million reduction from FY 2018.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP): Eliminates the Commodity Supplemental Food Program which will increase hunger and hardship for hundreds of thousands of low-income older adults.

Child Nutrition Programs: \$23 Billion to fully fund school breakfast, lunch and afterschool programs

- \$11.7 billion for the National School Lunch Program (a decrease of \$1.4 billion from FY 2018, due to the use of carryover funding from FY 2017.)
- \$5.1 billion for the School Breakfast Program (an increase of \$274 million from FY 2018) and;
- \$3.9 billion for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (an increase of \$100.6 million from FY 2018).⁶

Summer EBT: \$23 million to continue summer EBT demonstration projects at current levels.

WIC: \$5.75 billion to fully fund WIC

The budget proposed to eliminate the following programs: Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, SNAP Nutrition Education, School Meal Equipment Grants, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).

The President’s FY 19 budget outlines a cruel and punitive vision for our state’s most vulnerable residents that slashes SNAP and other core programs that help all Californians lead healthy lives and reach their full potential. As food banks, we know that 19 out of 20 emergency meals come from federal nutrition programs—we could never meet the need in our communities without SNAP.⁷ We urge every member of the California Congressional Delegation to protect and strengthen SNAP and reject cuts, block grants or any structural changes to SNAP and other federal nutrition programs in the budget, Farm Bill or any other legislative vehicle.

⁴ Office of Budget and Program Analysis, 2019 USDA Budget Explanatory Notes - Food and Nutrition Services <https://www.obpa.usda.gov/32fns2019notes.pdf>

⁵ President’s Budget: A Backward-Looking Proposal to Increase Hunger and Hardship <https://cfpa.net/presidents-budget-proposal-would-worsen-poverty-and-hunger/>

⁶ FRAC’s Review of President’s Proposed FY 2019 Budget <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/presidents-fy19-budget-frac-analysis.pdf>

⁷ Bread for the World http://www.bread.org/sites/default/files/downloads/2014_churches_hunger_fact_sheet.pdf