

2025 Federal Priorities

FIGHT HUNGER IN CALIFORNIA

In our nation of abundance, no one should go hungry. Nearly 4 million households can't afford basic needs—most have at least one working adult. 1 in 3 Californians faces or is at risk of poverty-related hunger, and Californians have made clear they need more help, not less, to afford groceries. Yet the new Congress is advancing proposals that would make deep cuts to SNAP and the federal nutrition programs. Meanwhile, the layoffs of thousands of federal employees, and rapidly deteriorating economic conditions highlight that Congress should be strengthening SNAP's powerful counter-cyclical role to guard against a recession, instead of advancing devastating cuts to benefits that will hurt our grocers and food economy.

Urgent: Protect SNAP's Anti-Hunger & Economic Benefits to California Families

In 2024, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) supported 5.5 million Californians—nearly 1 in 8 people. SNAP brought \$12.5B in federal food benefits, \$22.5B in total economic activity, and supported 173,000+ jobs statewide.

SNAP, our nation's most vital anti-hunger program, provides essential support to low-wage workers and families. But the end of effective COVID-era improvements caused a hunger cliff for 5.4 million Californians, slashing \$500 million in monthly benefits—an average of \$180 per household. Though the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill directed the USDA to update to the Thrifty Food Plan, and yet SNAP benefits remain inadequate for a healthy diet, averaging just \$6.20 per person per day.

The Senate and House resolutions instruct congressional committees to slash at least \$230 billion from SNAP. Californians are clear: Congress must protect and strengthen SNAP and reject any cuts or structural changes.

Congress Must Strengthen, Not Cut, SNAP's Power to Fight Hunger & Boost the Economy

SNAP is our nation's first and best line of defense against hunger. For every 1 meal that food banks distribute, SNAP delivers 9. SNAP is a proven public-private partnership that boosts the purchasing power of households with low-incomes to improve food security and health. The 2025 Budget Reconciliation, Farm Bill, and any other legislative actions must strengthen funding levels and policy changes commensurate with the critical level of hunger in California.

» **Oppose cuts or structural changes that would undermine anti-hunger programs, including to restrict choice**, worsen hunger, and damage sectors across our food and farming economy: grocers, farmers, truckers, and others.

California Legislative Anti-Hunger Priorities in the 119th Congress

- » **SUPPORT: Improving Access to Nutrition Act** H.R. 1510 Lee/S. 2435 Welch (118th)
 - › Repeals SNAP's harsh and counterproductive three-month time limit for out-of-work Americans and improves SNAP access for families working their way up the economic ladder.
- » **SUPPORT: Enhance Access to SNAP Act** H.R. 3183 Gomez/S. 1488 Gillibrand (118th)
 - › Eliminates the outdated and unfair SNAP restrictions for college students.
- » **SUPPORT: Closing the Meal Gap Act** H.R. 3037 Adams/S. 1336 Gillibrand (118th)
 - › Replaces the Thrifty Food Plan with the more appropriate Low-Cost Food Plan as the basis for SNAP allotments.
 - › Streamlines the SNAP Standard Excess Medical Deduction for persons who are older adults or have disabilities.
- » **SUPPORT: Lift the Bar Act** H.R. 4170 Jayapal/S. 2038 Hirono (118th)
 - › Ensure the reach of SNAP for lawfully present immigrants by undoing restrictions that deny eligibility and have a chilling effect on participation.
- » **SUPPORT: Hot Foods Act** H.R. 2512 Meng, Fitzpatrick/S. 1202 Bennet (119th)
 - › Permanently ends the prohibition on purchasing hot and prepared foods in SNAP
- » **SUPPORT: RESTORE Act** H.R. 3479 Cohen/S. 1753 Booker (118th)
 - › Repeals the SNAP Drug Felony Ban and codifies a USDA waiver allowing individuals to apply for SNAP 30 days prior to their release from incarceration.
- » **SUPPORT: Hunger-Free Future Act** H.R. 2489 Shontel (119th)
 - › Preserves the Thrifty Food Plan methodology to continue future SNAP benefit adjustments, ensuring that changes are not made to SNAP that would increase food insecurity.
- » **SUPPORT: Hands Off Medicaid and SNAP** HR. 2753 Boyle (119th)
 - › Prohibits using the budget reconciliation process to cut benefits or remove individuals from Medicaid and SNAP.
- » **OPPOSE: America Works Act** H.R. 1581 Johnson (119th)
 - › Expands harsh SNAP time limits to 65 years and parents/caregivers of children 7 years or older and repeals state exemptions.
- » **OPPOSE: Healthy SNAP Act of 2025** H.R. 479 Brechen (119th)
 - › Adopts punitive rules to limit food choice for recipients of SNAP.

Protect and Bolster the Emergency Food System

Food banks remain essential for millions of Californians facing the lasting impacts of the COVID era, natural disasters, and rising costs. As demand stays high, food banks are straining—especially with the cancellation of effective federal commodity programs. Support must be **protected** and **increased**, not cut in Budget Reconciliation or any other legislative vehicles.

» **Farmers Feeding America Act** H.R. 6203 Salinas, Panetta / S. 2713 Casey (118th)

› Provides \$500 million annually in additional funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) entitlement commodities, roughly doubling the total size of the program, and will authorize additional funding for TEFAP Storage & Distribution to better support food banks.

FY 2025-26 Budget & Appropriations Priorities

» **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):**

› Protect dignity and choice in SNAP by preventing pilots, research, or any related proposal to limit what SNAP recipients can buy with their food benefits.
› Include a permanent extension of USDA authority to reimburse stolen SNAP benefits.

» **School & Summer Meals:** Adequately support state agencies to operate Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), the first federal entitlement program in a generation, and ensure that children in rural and underserved areas have access to nutrition during the summer by:

› \$126 million to waive the administrative match requirements.
› \$50 million for technology and implementation grants to support states, territories, and Indian Tribal Organizations.
› \$10 million for school meal direct certification grants to reduce paperwork for schools.
› \$35 million in school equipment grants to prepare healthier and more cost-efficient meals on site.

» **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) food purchases:**

› Reauthorize and double annual mandatory funding for TEFAP food purchases, adjusted for inflation.
› Reauthorize and increase to \$200 million annual discretionary funding for TEFAP storage and distribution.
› Reauthorize \$15 million in annual discretionary funding for TEFAP infrastructure grants.

» **Commodity Supplemental Food Program:** Maintain the current \$390 million, or as USDA deems necessary to support the national caseload.

» **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants & Children (WIC):** Fund WIC at \$7.75 billion to serve anticipated caseloads while accounting for rising costs of delivering high quality nutrition services. The appropriation should include set-asides for:

› WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (\$90 million).
› Infrastructure and technical assistance (\$16 million).
› Management information systems (\$50 million).
› Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to provide WIC participants fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables (\$30 million).

» **Child Care Meals:** \$10 million for the Child and Adult Care Food Program's nutrition and wellness education. Funds are crucial to support the USDA's role providing materials, training, and support to states and program operators to bolster nutrition among child care providers.

» **21st Century Community Learning Centers:** \$2.09 billion for the program, which is the largest source of funding for afterschool and summer programs.

» **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations:** Allow tribal governments the flexibility to administer federal nutrition programs as decided by the tribe, and improve SNAP access for tribal populations, including allowing participation in both SNAP and FDIPIR.

» **Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP):** Authorization and funding for Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to transition from NAP to SNAP (H.R. 253 / S. 949). The choice and path to transition should be by the territories.

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