



# 2026 State Policy Agenda

Thank you for the critical investments in fighting hunger in California!

Over the past four years, the CalFood annual allocation of \$60 million has allowed California food banks to serve **more than 6 million people a month**—up from the 4.5 million they served during the height of the pandemic in 2021. Federal policies have substantially reduced the amount of food that food banks are receiving at a time when we know that HR 1 is increasing hunger in our communities. One in five Californians are already food insecure.

We need your support to ensure that no one else goes hungry.

– Stacia Levenfeld, CEO, California Association of Food Banks

## What We Need: \$60M Ongoing + \$50M One-Time for CalFood

Provide \$60M in ongoing General Fund support for CalFood beginning in 2026–27 (\$52M above the \$8M baseline) when current one-time funding expires. Add \$50M one-time to address increased demand from federal CalFresh cuts under H.R. 1.

## What is CalFood?

The CalFood program provides state funding to food banks to purchase, store, and distribute California-grown and produced food—supporting farmers, food banks, and families statewide.

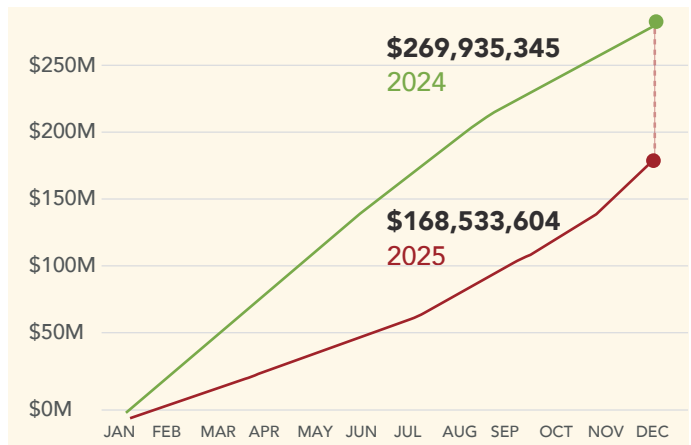
## California Food Banks Need CalFood More Than Ever<sup>2</sup>

- 92% are serving more people than last quarter
- 55% are distributing more food than last year
- 21% are serving more people with the same food supply
- 100% could immediately use additional CalFood funds

<sup>1</sup> cafoodbanks.org/citations

<sup>2</sup> November 2025 survey of California food banks; percentages based on respondents

## Federal Food Assistance Is Declining



California experienced a major reduction in federal food commodities in 2025. **The Emergency Food Program is trending at 38% less dollars for food than in 2024**, limiting food banks' ability to provide:



## Funding Advantages

- ✓ Every 1% reduction in hunger saves California \$600M in healthcare costs
- ✓ Leverages economies of scale: \$1 = 1.5 meals
- ✓ Meets diverse dietary and cultural needs
- ✓ Supports California farmers and food producers<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Enables purchase of rarely donated items (eggs, meat)

## Mitigate Harm Caused by H.R. 1

- **Budget: \$14M one-time** in 2026–27 to sustain CalFresh Outreach application assistance.
- **Budget/ AB 2299 (Calderon): Establish state-funded benefits** and employment and training supports for CalFresh recipients subject to federal ABAWD time limits.
- **Budget: Protect and fully fund CFAP for Californians 55+** regardless of immigration status, include humanitarian immigrants excluded under H.R. 1, and expand Food4All to all ages by October 2027.

## Strengthen California's Safety Net

- **Budget: Create a statewide SUN Bucks** online application while protecting student data privacy.
- **Budget:** Maintain a fully funded School Meals for All.
- **Budget/ AB 1734 (Stefani):** Fill the gap left by the federal government's cut to the national hunger survey.
- **Budget: \$16.5M** to sustain the Diaper Bank Program.
- **Budget: Support SSI/SSP recipients** with ongoing COLA, grants above the Federal Poverty Level, and an Emergency Grant Program.

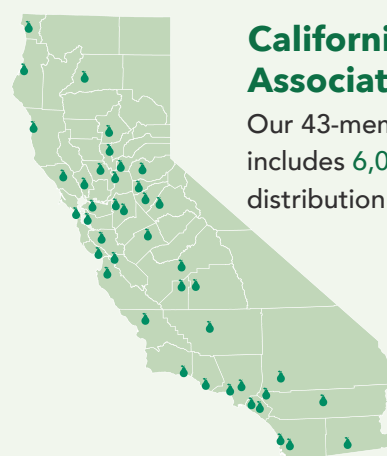
## Bolster California's Emergency Food Network

- **Budget/ SB 881 (McNerney): Extend the Emergency Food for Families Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund** (expired 2026), allowing Californians to donate tax rebates to food banks.
- **Budget/ SB 881 (McNerney): Extend the Farmer to Family Tax Credit** (expires 2027), providing a 15% state tax credit for donations of California-grown food to food banks.




*"CalFood is a vital partner to our food bank, helping us reach a growing number of children, seniors, veterans, and families in need. Demand has never been higher, and continued investment is critical to ensuring no one in our community goes hungry."*

- Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County



### California Association of Food Banks

Our 43-member food bank network includes 6,000+ community distribution partners.

 Member Food Bank

[www.cafoodbanks.org](http://www.cafoodbanks.org)

Learn More

[cafoodbanks.org/hunger-legislation/tracker](http://cafoodbanks.org/hunger-legislation/tracker)

Questions?

[policy@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:policy@cafoodbanks.org)



**CALIFORNIA  
ASSOCIATION OF  
FOOD BANKS**