



CALIFORNIA
ASSOCIATION OF
FOOD BANKS



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 Ever²

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

Federal Food Assistance Is Declining



California experienced a major reduction in federal food commodities in 2025. **The Emergency Food Program is trending at 40% less food than in 2024**, limiting food banks' ability to provide:



Eggs



Produce



Meat



Dairy



Nuts

¹ cafoodbanks.org/citations

² November 2025 survey of California food banks; percentages based on respondents

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 producers¹

✓ Enables purchase of rarely donated items (eggs, meat)

Mitigate Harm Caused by H.R. 1

- **Appropriate \$14M one-time** in 2026–27 to sustain CalFresh Outreach application assistance.
- **Establish state-funded benefits** and employment and training supports for CalFresh recipients subject to federal ABAWD time limits.
- **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

- **Create a statewide SUN Bucks** online application while protecting student data privacy.
- **Maintain per-meal reimbursement** for School Meals for All.
- **Appropriate \$16.5M** to sustain the Diaper Bank Program.
- **Support SSI/SSP recipients** with ongoing COLA, grants above the Federal Poverty Level, and an Emergency Grant Program.

"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



Bolster California's Emergency Food Network

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



California Association of Food Banks

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



 Member Food Bank

www.cafoodbanks.org

Learn More

cafoodbanks.org/hunger-legislation-tracker

Questions?

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