Fight Hunger & Support California Farmers:

Fund CalFood at $120 Million

Meet Community Need & Drive Equitable Recovery

Despite federal and state interventions, food insecurity in California remains nearly double the pre-pandemic levels with deep inequities for communities of color. A shocking and unacceptable 23.5% of Black, and 34.7% of Latinx families reported food insecurity, all double the rate for White families (Schanzenbach, October 2021).

Compounding still record levels of hunger, food banks now face a federal food cliff of 72% due to a decrease in enhanced TEFAP, trade mitigation and CFAP funding, paired with a significant rise in operational costs due to supply chain challenges, with California's food bank network struggling to meet community need and in some cases rationing food during the holidays.

Thankfully, California has a proven solution – the CalFood program enables food banks to purchase California grown foods to meet their communities' diverse needs, a win-win to fight hunger and support our critical food economy in California's economic comeback.

We request an additional $62M for CalFood, for a total of $120M in the 2022-23 Budget:

- *$52 million augmentation to the $8 million in the base budget; and*
- *$10 million one-time (augmentation to $50 million in Governor's January Budget Proposal for 2022-23*

This request reflects a data-driven analysis grounded in the combined factors outlined above: sustained community demand and federal food cliff necessitate the same overall level of support as before ($110M emergency COVID-19 food and $8M for CalFood). This will continue the level of funding in the 2021-22 Budget Act by investing in CalFood, California's long-term solution for a robust emergency food safety net.

California has the solution: $120M for CalFood Will Fight Hunger, Support Recovery in Food Economy

CalFood is incredibly efficient, as food banks leverage private donations and incredible economies of scale. Each dollar enables California food banks to provide approximately five meals. Food banks use these precious dollars to purchase healthy, expensive items like proteins that are rarely donated, and meet the local needs of their communities. The San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, for example, has used their allocation to buy eggs that support complete nutrition and are culturally appropriate for the diverse communities they serve.

CalFood provides significant return on investment: even a 1% drop in hunger saves California $600 million in prevented healthcare costs, as well as supporting our hard-hit farmers and food producers in our food economy.

California is at a Crossroads: Now is the Time for Ongoing Commitment to a Hunger-Free Future

We are grateful that CalFood has been funded at $8 million ongoing since the 2017-18 Budget. While this is an important foundation, it was not sufficient to meet the need prior to the pandemic, when we had 4 million hungry Californians.

Our network survived the aftermath of the Great Recession, when public supports were prematurely cut off and it took a decade for hunger to return to pre-crisis levels. This is the critical moment for California to learn that lesson and make the ongoing investment in CalFood needed to fight hunger, support our farmers, and build toward the healthy hunger-free future we know is possible.

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FOOD BANKS

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