



2023 Farm Bill Priorities

In our nation of abundance, no one should go hungry. Yet in California today, 1 in 5 people are food insecure, and [deep disparities remain for Black and Latinx people \(28.9% and 27.5% respectively\) who experience food insecurity at double the rate for white people \(14.3%\).](#)

Last year, SNAP helped to support 4.6 million Californians – that’s nearly 1 in 8 people. [SNAP brought \\$11 billion in federal food benefits, \\$20 billion in total economic activity, and 272,000 jobs statewide.](#)

Thankfully, following Congress’s direction, USDA successfully implemented the 2018 Farm Bill, including a long overdue update to the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). Unfortunately, [SNAP households are facing a hunger cliff](#) now that the Emergency Allotments have ended, causing an average drop of [\\$82 per person per month.](#)

Even with the TFP update, SNAP benefits are still inadequate to maintain a healthy diet: SNAP benefits in California average approximately [\\$6 a day](#). Congress shouldn’t repeat past mistakes from previous crises and should mitigate the unprecedented hunger cliff make the following permanent improvements to strengthen SNAP.

Strengthen SNAP:

- **Improve SNAP benefit adequacy** to help SNAP participants meet their household’s dietary, cultural, and other food needs: [H.R. 3037](#) (Rep. Adams)/[S. 1336](#) (Sen. Gillibrand), Closing the Meal Gap Act.
- **Increase equitable access to SNAP for critical populations:**
 - Repeal the three-month time limit on SNAP for certain **working age adults who face discrimination and other barriers to consistent employment:** [H.R. 1510](#) (Rep. Lee)/ [S. 2435](#) (Sen. Welch), Improve Access to Nutrition Act.
 - Equalize SNAP access for **low-income college students:** [H.R. 3183](#) (Rep. Gomez) / [S. 1488](#) (Sen. Gillibrand), Enhanced Access to SNAP Act (EATS Act).
 - Reverse the racially discriminatory policy of prohibiting SNAP to **immigrants** by repealing the five year bar for SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid:[H.R. 4170](#) (Rep. Jayapal)/ [S. 2038](#) (Sen. Hirono), LIFT the BAR Act.
 - Repeal the lifetime ban on individuals with a past felony drug conviction from receiving SNAP in the RESTORE Act [H.R. 3479](#) (Rep. Cohen) /[S.1753](#) (Sen. Booker)

- **Make permanent proven efficiencies provided during the pandemic to streamline SNAP access and administration:** reductions in interviews and client reporting requirements, allow telephonic signatures without requiring state request, elimination of mid-certification period reports, standardization of same-day card issuance, and streamlined verification.
- **Improve Disaster SNAP:** permanently allow remote interview options so that the program can be more responsive to ensure benefits are easy to access during natural disasters (e.g. droughts and wildfires) as well as prolonged crises such as pandemics.
- **Limit overpayment claims** to a look-back period of only one year and raise the threshold for which states can pursue claims.
- **Expand the accessibility of using SNAP to purchase hot and prepared food and meals:** [H.R. 3519](#) (Rep. Meng) / [S. 2258](#) (Sen. Bennet), the Hot Foods Act. This will increase accessibility to nutritious meals for people who have limited food preparation space or physical ability.
- Create a national Technical Assistance Center supporting states and vendors to expand the **Restaurant Meals Program** and allow SNAP application assistance to include restaurants participating in RMP.

Fully Resource the Emergency Food System and Build on Recent Innovations:

- **Improve TEFAP** so that food bank shoppers can access **more nutritious, culturally responsive food with dignity:**
 - **An additional \$900M** for TEFAP food purchasing ([Rep. Panetta](#))
 - **\$200M annually** for TEFAP storage and distribution
 - **Raise the minimum income eligibility threshold to 250%** in order to maximize participation by low-income populations with regards to local needs and costs of living.
 - **Make TEFAP flexibilities permanent:** waive the requirement to collect personal information and allow other food distribution models like drive throughs and home delivery by proxies.
- Continue funding programs to **support the distribution of food purchased from local and Black, Indigenous, and other socially disadvantaged farmers** to secure food that meet local needs and invest in local food economies.
- **Enhance the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, including:**
 - **Increase the income guidelines beyond the current 130%** of the federal poverty level.
 - **Develop a Pilot Project serving persons with a disability of all ages.**
 - **Expand commodities product selection.** Pilot strategies to include additional food options such as fresh or frozen alternatives.

End Exclusionary Policies that Harm Native Americans/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians:

- **End the prohibition on dual enrollment** in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and SNAP.
- **Dedicate a 20% USDA set-aside within each of USDA's existing program authorities** to support Tribal organizations, Tribal governments, Native non-profits, and Native producers. This will ensure proper access to federal programs with increased access in adequacy of support to help close gaps in Native food security.
- **Give Tribal governments the full authority to function as government agencies** in administering federal nutrition programs, including TEFAP, CSFP, SNAP.

Questions:

Becky Silva (becky@cafoodbanks.org)

Itzúl Gutierrez (itzul.gutierrez@cafoodbanks.org)