



# California Association of Food Banks

## 2024 STATE POLICY AGENDA

We thank the Administration and Legislature for the critical investments made to prevent hunger throughout the pandemic. With the ending of COVID-era anti-hunger supports like CalFresh Emergency Allotments, combined with record spikes in food prices, hunger is again on the rise. Today, nearly one in four California households are faced with the toxic stress and health consequences of food insecurity, with shocking disparities for communities of color: 49% of Black and 33% of Latine families with children report food insecurity, compared to 21% of White families with children.

Food banks continue to face near record demand, and most are still serving 1.5 more community members than they were pre-pandemic. We know that it took a decade for food insecurity to return to 2008 levels following the Great Recession. Hungry families cannot wait, and we must build toward a more equitable, hunger-free future now.

### **Bolster the Emergency Food Network & Drive an Equitable Recovery**

#### » CalFood: \$60 Million Ongoing

Appropriate ongoing minimum funding of \$60M General Fund for CalFood (\$52M in addition to \$8M in baseline annual budget) starting in 2025-26, when current one-time funding runs out.

#### » State Disaster Food Assistance Program (SDFAP): \$3M One-Time & Permanent Authorization

Appropriate \$3M and establish permanent authorization for SDFAP to ensure that California is prepared and able to respond quickly when disaster strikes and communities need immediate food resources.

### **Strengthen the Anti-Hunger & Anti-Poverty Safety Net**

#### » Maximize the Potential of CalFresh

- › Increase CalFresh benefit adequacy to reflect the high cost of living in California and inadequate federal benefit levels.
- › Protect un- and under-employed Californians from the harsh federal “work for food” ABAWD time limit.
- › Expand access to CalFresh for college students, who face disproportionate barriers to enrollment because of the harmful federal student rules.
- › Food for All — Expand CalFresh to all Californians regardless of immigration status.

#### » School Meals

- › Build on California’s historic success by continuing to invest in school meals, as well as make further investments to prevent child and adult hunger when schools are closed.
- › Ensure robust implementation of Summer EBT starting in 2024.

#### » Strengthen the Anti-Poverty Safety Net

- › Build on California’s leadership in preventing diaper and period poverty, including sustaining and expanding the successful Diaper Bank Program and Menstrual Products Pilot.
- › Address SSI / SSP benefit adequacy by ensuring grant increases are enacted and establish grants above the Federal Poverty Level. Revive and refund the Special Circumstances Program to support SSI recipients when emergency costs arise.
- › Reimagine CalWORKS’ ability to fight hunger by centering family choice, eliminating punitive policies, and maximizing aid needed to exit poverty.



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