



Fiscal Year 2024 Budget and Appropriations Priorities

The federal nutrition programs are a critical support for tens of millions of households — including individuals of all ages — by helping them put food on the table during times of need. Investing in hunger prevention and relief makes good fiscal sense. Hunger increases health care costs, lowers worker productivity, harms children’s development, and diminishes students’ educational attainment. These negative impacts can be minimized with robust funding and support for the federal nutrition programs.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is the nation’s first line of defense against hunger. It responds quickly and efficiently to changes in need, whether due to local or national economic downturns or natural disasters. As conditions improve, SNAP caseloads fall. COVID-19 increased need dramatically, and SNAP responded quickly and efficiently to serve more people facing hunger.

SNAP benefits are targeted to households with very low incomes. The average SNAP household has a gross income of \$872 per month, which is just 70% of the federal poverty level. Additionally, an estimated 85% of all SNAP benefits go to households with a child, older adult, or person with a disability.

SNAP has a positive impact on the economy. Each \$1 in SNAP benefits spent during a downturn generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in economic activity. These dollars flow through all parts of the food supply chain — from farmers and food manufacturers to truckers, food retailers, and store employees.

Unfortunately, SNAP benefit amounts are inadequate to help people maintain a healthy diet throughout the month. SNAP food benefits average about \$6 a person a day. Benefit inadequacy has serious consequences: Research has linked diminished food budgets later in the month with a drop-off in caloric intake, lower school performance, and an increase in hospitalizations due to low blood sugar.

Congress should strengthen and protect SNAP through fiscal year 2024 appropriations and the 2023 Farm Bill (see 2023 Farm Bill Priorities at www.antihungerpolicyconference.org). Specifically, lawmakers should:

- Strengthen SNAP permanently by basing benefit allotments on the more adequate Low-Cost Food Plan, removing the cap on the shelter deduction, increasing the minimum benefit level, and better accounting for out-of-pocket

medical expenses incurred by SNAP participants who are older or have disabilities.

- Promote equity by, among other policy changes, eliminating SNAP time limits and improving SNAP access for college students, immigrants, individuals with prior drug felony convictions, and families working their way up the economic ladder.
- Provide the necessary funding to ensure continuity of SNAP operations and benefits, and ensure SNAP can operate in the event of a government shutdown at the start of the fiscal year.

Child Nutrition Programs

Child nutrition programs provide quality nutrition, child care, and education and enrichment activities for children across the country, especially children from families with low incomes. These programs help improve children’s overall health, development, and school achievement.

In addition to maintaining robust eligibility structures, Congress should take the following actions to keep the child nutrition programs strong.

- **School Meals:** Fully fund school meals programs for all K–12 students in fiscal year 2024. Congress should provide **\$10 million** for school meals direct certification grants to reduce paperwork for schools and **\$100 million** in school equipment grants to help school districts build their capacity to prepare healthier and more cost-efficient meals on site.
- **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP):** Expand CEP so that more schools are able to offer school meals to all their students by **increasing the multiplier that determines federal funding from 1.6 to 2.5**, and creating a statewide option.
- **Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer EBT):** Provide \$50 million for technology and implementation grants to support states, territories, and Indian Tribal Organizations during the first year of Summer EBT.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):** Continue the additional 10-cent reimbursement for all meals and snacks served in the CACFP to help providers operate the program through the 2023–2024 school year.
- **Child Care Meals:** Continue to provide **\$10 million** for the Child and Adult Care Food Program’s (CACFP) nutrition and

wellness education and program efforts. These funds are crucial for supporting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's important role in providing materials, training, and support to state agencies and program operators to bolster nutrition knowledge among child care providers.

- **Team Nutrition:** Provide **\$25 million** for Team Nutrition funding, the primary resource for promoting healthy eating and nutrition education in child nutrition programs. These funds assist schools, child care centers and homes, and community-based sponsoring organizations to successfully implement healthier meal patterns.
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** Fund WIC at **\$6.35 billion** to serve anticipated caseloads while accounting for the rising costs of delivering high-quality nutrition services and sustaining the successful fruit and vegetable bump. Included in the WIC appropriation should be set-asides for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (**\$90 million**), infrastructure and technical assistance (**\$14 million**), and management information systems (**\$35 million**).
- **WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP):** Support FMNP at **\$30 million**. FMNP provides fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants.
- **Farm to School and Early Care and Education:** Provide **\$12 million** to support farm-to-school efforts and to continue expanding farm to early care and education settings.
- **21st Century Community Learning Centers:** Provide **\$2.09 billion** for the program, which is the largest source of funding for afterschool and summer programs.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

- **TEFAP Commodities:** Congress should provide **\$469 million** for TEFAP food purchases as authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill to provide emergency food assistance to people in need. Nutritious TEFAP foods are an essential resource for food banks and other local emergency food providers. Food banks combine government commodities with privately donated foods to maximize TEFAP benefits far beyond the budgeted amount for the program.
- **TEFAP Storage and Distribution and Infrastructure Funds:** Congress should support the work of America's charitable food system by providing full funding for the TEFAP storage and distribution account (\$100 million), the TEFAP Infrastructure Grants Program (\$15 million), and funding to support critical food bank capacity and equipment needs through member-directed spending projects.

Older Adults Nutrition Programs

- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** Congress should maintain the current **\$390 million** in total

funding for CSFP. The funding is needed to provide the necessary flexibility to maintain caseloads and facilitate responsible expansion of the program to serve more older adults who are experiencing food insecurity.

- **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (SFMNP):** Congress should support SFMNP at **\$21 million**. SFMNP provides seniors with low incomes coupons for eligible foods at farmers markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs.
- **Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs for Older Adults and Native American Communities:** The home-delivered meal and congregate nutrition programs are important sources of nutrition for older adults in many communities around the country. Congress must increase funding for these programs to keep up with the escalating demand for services.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

FDPIR provides USDA foods to low-income household members, including older adults who are living on Native American lands, and Native American families residing in nearby designated areas.

- Congress should provide:
 - **\$200 million** for administrative costs and food purchases, as is consistent with prior fiscal years;
 - the fully authorized amount of **\$5 million** for demonstration projects for tribal organizations to enter into self-determination contracts to procure foods for FDPIR packages;
 - **\$5 million** for FDPIR traditional foods market development; and
 - authorization and funding to allow participants to receive both FDPIR and SNAP benefits at the same time.

Congressional Hunger Center

- **Emerson/Leland Hunger Fellowship Program:** Congress should fund this fellowship program at its authorized level of **\$2 million**. Since 1994, congressionally funded research, analysis, and policy work conducted by fellows has enhanced the impact of local, state, and national anti-hunger efforts as well as the work of nonprofits, government agencies, and faith-based organizations.

Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)

- Congress should provide authorization and funding for Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to transition from NAP to full participation in SNAP. The choice of and path toward transition should be approved by the territories' leadership.