

Hunger in this country, especially during the pandemic, would be far worse if not for the federal nutrition programs. This year, FRAC scored several key wins by advancing bold and equitable policy solutions that strengthen the federal nutrition programs, which are proven to reduce hunger, improve health, and support economic recovery.

SNAP — A Lifeline for Millions

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's first line of defense against hunger and helps tens of millions put food on their tables. FRAC's advocacy has been pivotal in making SNAP an even more effective responder for individuals and the economy during COVID-19.

With coalitions of state and national partners, FRAC successfully pressed at the federal and state levels: for adoption and implementation of policies to accommodate remote SNAP enrollment; for [a series of temporary benefit increases](#) to support households throughout the pandemic; for an update to the [Thrifty Food Plan](#) to grow per person monthly SNAP benefits by \$36.24; and for more equitable SNAP access such as for immigrants without triggering public charge impacts and for [struggling college students](#).

Nearly 42.5 million people [participated in SNAP](#) in August 2021, approximately 5.6 million more than in pre-COVID-19 February 2020. Moreover, SNAP [benefit redemptions](#) jumped 40 percent in fiscal year 2020, compared to fiscal

year 2019, due to the influx of new SNAP customers and the SNAP benefit boosts provided in response to the pandemic.

Since the last administration changed the public charge rule to include SNAP in a public charge determination, FRAC, our national network, and partners relentlessly urged the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to permanently block their 2019 public charge rule nationwide; and in March of this year, DHS did just that. While much work remains to undo the fears and obstacles immigrant families face in accessing nutrition and food programs, the blocking of this harmful rule is an essential step toward a future where all families and individuals, regardless of immigration status, are nourished and healthy.

Child Nutrition Programs — Fueling Our Future

The child nutrition programs fuel children's health and learning. At the onset of the pandemic, FRAC quickly acted to leverage federal nutrition programs to ensure millions of children were fed despite suspended or limited meal programs through schools and child care centers.

Last year, FRAC helped roll out and support Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), a critical new program that provides nutritional resources to families who lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to school or child care closures. This year, FRAC helped implement P-EBT extensions (to include summer) and expansions (to reach children under 6 who are enrolled in SNAP), making P-EBT a pivotal, year-round nutritional support for children of all ages.

The pandemic has proven the importance of providing free, healthy school meals to all children — something FRAC has long called for. Since March 2020, child nutrition waivers have helped close the child hunger gap. As of now, these waivers are effective until the end of school year 2021–2022.

We can't turn back now.



Next Up

FRAC is intensifying our SNAP agenda in the coming months given a precipitous and steep “hunger cliff” looming when the COVID-19 emergency ends. At that point, authority to issue SNAP Emergency Allotments will end; and [average monthly SNAP benefits](#) in most states will fall by \$82 per person. We are redoubling our efforts so that SNAP provides more equitable access and benefit amounts that better reflect households’ living costs and needs.

FRAC and their national network are pushing Congress to pass the Build Back Better Act, which adds nearly \$35 billion in additional funding for the Child Nutrition Programs. One way that the bill centers child nutrition is by expanding the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP allows high-poverty schools and districts to provide breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students. Students and schools benefit, making CEP a game changer for Healthy School Meals for All, which is another campaign of FRAC’s.

In addition to its program work, FRAC aims to be part of the proposed second White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health. The first conference occurred just over 50 years ago, culminating in the creation and expansion of SNAP, WIC, and school meals programs.

Food Equity Requires Equity for Everyone

COVID-19 and racial violence have shone a spotlight on the disparities that have existed for far too long in this country. Equity needs to be real for everyone if we are to end hunger. As part of FRAC’s strategic plan, we’re doing more to center equity in our work. For example, we’ve begun applying a racial equity lens in our publications, and we recently launched a Social Impact and Equity Fund. The Fund will identify, recognize, and financially support innovative strategies among organizations working to leverage federal nutrition programs to fight hunger and promote equity. FRAC also serves on the Steering Committee of the Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign, which fights for equity for those who are frequently ignored, erased, or otherwise sidelined.

Looking Ahead

FRAC will keep hunger issues in the headlines, provide the tools for allies and partners to join in the fight, and advocate for food justice for all. For more on FRAC’s work in 2021 and beyond, check out the sample of resources.

FRAC’s webpages

- [Food Insecurity During COVID-19](#)
- [SNAP](#) and [SNAP Benefit Adequacy](#)
- [P-EBT](#)
- [Community Eligibility Provision](#)

FRAC’s publications

- [Hunger, Poverty, and Health Disparities During COVID-19 and the Federal Nutrition Programs’ Role in an Equitable Recovery](#)
- [Food Over Fear: Overcoming Barriers to Connect Latinx Immigrant Families to Federal Nutrition and Food Programs](#)
- [State Food Assistance Programs: Addressing Gaps in SNAP Eligibility for Immigrants](#)
- [New Data Reveal Stark Decreases in SNAP Participation Among U.S. Citizen Children Living With a Non-Citizen](#)
- [School Breakfast Scorecard](#)
- [Hunger Doesn’t Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report](#)
- [Afterschool Suppers: A Snapshot of Participation](#)
- [Screen and Intervene: A Toolkit for Pediatricians to Address Food Insecurity](#)