

2022 Policy Agenda



Alameda County Community Food Bank exists for one reason: to achieve a hunger-free community.

To truly achieve a hunger-free community, we must go beyond only providing food for today and seek long-term solutions to eradicate hunger at its roots. This is why, for more than 20 years, the Food Bank has firmly engrained legislative advocacy in our mission and day-to-day work. **What you are reading now is our boldest and most inclusive Policy Agenda ever.**

We seek to end hunger by asking three questions:

Why do hunger and poverty exist? They exist because of systems of oppression — racism, sexism, heteropatriarchy, ageism, ableism — which concentrate power and resources and create the inequities at hunger and poverty's roots.

How can hunger be eradicated? Hunger can only be *truly eradicated* by equitable distribution of power and resources.

The role of a food bank in this effort? To truly achieve a hunger-free community, we must uplift community power to hold our government accountable for breaking up the concentration of power and resources.

Our 2022 policy proposals seek meaningful legislation at all levels of government. Furthermore, they were democratically sourced and reflect a broad range of priorities identified by community members, our partner organizations, and our coalitions. As such, this robust agenda acknowledges that the roots of hunger run deep and entangle a range of inseparable issues — essential nutrition programs, housing, immigrant inclusion in the safety net, democracy, tax policy, and more — which create barriers to meeting basic needs. The foundation of this agenda is the tearing down of these barriers.

Join Us

The movement is most powerful with you.

Visit accfb.org/advocacy or contact advocate@accfb.org to join us.

ISSUES & POLICY PRIORITIES

CALFRESH/SNAP

CalFresh (known nationwide as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and commonly referred to as “food stamps”) is the nation’s most effective anti-hunger program. We will continue to protect, strengthen and expand access to CalFresh as the nation’s first line of defense against hunger – and a genuinely equitable and inclusive tool to fight poverty.

State

AB 1965 (Wicks) — CARET Act: Protects unemployed Californians from the unjust federal time limit for CalFresh.

AB 2153 (Arambula) — CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable EBT Pilot: Expands a statewide pilot program that provides matching dollars to CalFresh recipients when they purchase California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

SB 641 (Skinner) — CalFresh for College Students Act: Improves access to CalFresh for college students, ultimately preventing hunger and supporting college completion.

CalFresh Pre-Enrollment Upon Re-Entry: Supports successful re-entry for community members returning from incarceration by improving access to healthy food.

Federal

HR 1753 (Lee) — Improving Access to Nutrition Act: Lifts SNAP’s unjust three-month time limit and ensures that all people have access to nutrition assistance and stay healthy while seeking full-time work.

HR 1919 (Gomez) — EATS Act: Expands SNAP eligibility for college students.

HR 4077 (Adams) — Closing the Meal Gap Act: Increases the minimum SNAP benefit amount by updating the formula used to calculate benefits.

CHILD NUTRITION & UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS

All children have the right to the nutritious meals they need to grow, learn, and thrive. Building off our historic victory in 2021 that made universally-free school meals permanent in California, we will continue to ensure that elected officials make necessary direct and indirect investments to ensure food access in educational settings.

State

AB 1912 (Bonta): Requires a school district under financial distress to conduct an equity impact analysis before approving the closure or consolidation of a school.

SB 364 (Skinner) — Equitable School Meals for All Implementation: Builds on California’s historic School Meals for All victory by continuing to invest in healthy, California grown and prepared school meals and in child hunger prevention for periods when school campuses are closed. Increases security and privacy protections for school income data collection.

SB 1481 (Becker) — Food with Care: Lifts the State Meal Reimbursement pay penalty for child care meals; expands free child care meals to all kids by enabling all child care providers to receive the highest federal reimbursement rate for meals served.

Federal

HR 3115 (Omar) — Universal School Meals Program Act: Ensures that every child has access to free meals at school, after school, during the summer, and at child care.

HR 6613 (Spanberger) — Keeping School Meals Flexible Act: Extends meal waivers to ensure critical flexibilities for child nutrition programs to operate.

S 3979 (Padilla) — Support Kids Not Red Tape Act: Amends the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to extend child nutrition waiver authority.

DEMOCRACY & VOTING RIGHTS

We address threats to equity by uplifting community voice and power. To redistribute power and resources, we need a government that is accountable to everyone. This is why we continue to call for reforms that fully realize the value of democracy. The right to vote is a cornerstone of democracy. At Alameda County Community Food Bank, we see the vote as a critical instrument in ending racism, hunger, and poverty.

Federal

Freedom to Vote Act: Protects and expands the right to vote, ends partisan and racial gerrymandering, and limits the power of big money in elections.

John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act: Restores the full protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and establishes safeguards against voter suppression.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE & SUSTAINABILITY

Alameda County Community Food Bank and our partner food banks across the country continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic emergency. We also believe that our mission to end hunger in Alameda County requires challenging environmental injustices that disproportionately affect communities of color and exacerbate food insecurity in our community.

State

Emergency Food Funding: CalFood budget request for \$60 million on-going and \$60 million one-time; raises storage and distribution rate.

Food Bank Capacity and Climate Resilience: One-time \$180 million request to improve capacity and respond to future disasters.

Improve State Disaster Food Assistance Program: \$10 million request to improve program and prevent future delays.

Support for Gov. Newsom's Proposed Investments in the Circular Economy: One-time \$270 million request over two years aimed at reducing short-lived climate pollutants and promoting edible food recovery.

Federal

Support food banks across the country by providing full funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (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.

SENIORS & PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

The income support provided by **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** for seniors and people living with disabilities is more urgently needed now than ever. During the Great Recession, SSI grants were cut, leaving recipients with a maximum grant below the Federal Poverty Level for over a decade. Seniors and people living with disabilities have the right to a life of dignity, and we call on the Governor and State Legislature to increase the state portion of the grant (known as the **State Supplementary Payment, or SSP**) to bring SSI recipients back above the Federal Poverty Level.

State

Fully restore SSI/SSP grants in the 2022-2023 state budget above the Federal Poverty Level.

Other State Budget Requests:

- Implement the Master Plan for Aging's Actions on SSI to ensure protection from poverty.
- Make the Golden State Grant Permanent.
- Ensure parity in Supplemental Nutrition Benefit and Transitional Nutrition Benefit with SNAP's Thrifty Food Plan increase.

HOUSING & HOUSELESSNESS

With the high cost of living in the Bay Area, rental and housing burden is a primary factor in soaring rates of food insecurity. As the cost of housing increases, individuals and households don't have much left over to pay for nutritious meals and groceries, medicine, child care, and other essential needs. In response, we will adopt a grassroots approach by uplifting community voices to advocate for equitable access to housing and other essential resources.

State

AB 328 (Bryan): Housing for re-entry for formerly incarcerated community members.

AB 1961 (Gabriel): Makes it easier to apply for affordable housing.

IMMIGRANT INCLUSION IN THE SAFETY NET

Food is a basic human right, yet millions of Californians are unjustly excluded from participating in crucial nutrition programs solely due to their immigration status. These nutrition programs were intended to act as a "safety net" to protect people from falling into poverty. But our safety net is full of holes. To fix this, we will work with our statewide partners to expand immigrant inclusion in nutrition programs and beyond to ensure equity in the health and wealth of our community.

State

AB 4 (Arambula) — Health4All: Guarantees Medi-Cal to all income-eligible adult Californians regardless of age or immigration status.

AB 2847 (Garcia) — Safety Net 4 All: Invests in immigrant workers who have been historically excluded from unemployment benefits.

SB 464 (Hurtado) — Food4All: Ensures permanent funding to provide California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) nutrition benefits to all Californians ineligible for CalFresh solely due to their immigration status.

TAX POLICY

Equity means the redistribution of power and resources. Tax policy is one of the most effective ways to transform the economy *systemically* and address *structural barriers* in our tax code. Building on our endorsement of Proposition 15 in 2020, which would have funded schools and community colleges by having some commercial properties pay a fair share of property taxes, we will work at all levels of government to secure investments in schools and communities and win back hard-fought gains such as the **Child Tax Credit**. Since payments expired at the end of 2021, 3.7 million children have fallen into poverty — with an even higher rate for Black and Latinx children. We will also work to improve access to the **California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC)**, which is a refundable state tax credit that lifts working Californians out of poverty.

State

AB 1515 (Santiago): \$30 million on-going funding for CalEITC and outreach.

AB 2589 (Santiago): CalEITC increase, \$2,000 one-time payment to backfill the federal Child Tax Credit loss.

SB 860 (Rubio): Improvements to Young Child Tax Credit.

Federal

Billionaire Minimum Income Tax/HR 7502 – Babies Over Billionaires Act (Bowman): Ensures that the 0.01% wealthiest households pay a tax rate of at least 20.0%-23.8% on their full income.

Restore expanded Child Tax Credit provisions which expired on December 31, 2021, including \$3,600 per year for each child up to age 6 and \$3,000 per year for children ages 6-17, **and make them permanent.**