

2023 Policy Agenda



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

To achieve this, we must seek long-term solutions to eradicate hunger at its roots, alongside providing food for today. This is why, for more than 20 years, the Food Bank has firmly engrained legislative advocacy in our mission and day-to-day work.

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, and more — which concentrate power and resources and create the inequities at hunger and poverty's roots.

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

The role of a food bank in this effort? To 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 2023 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 consists in tearing down these barriers.

Join Us

We will be fighting for these policies all year and the movement is most **powerful with you in it.**

Sign up for Advocacy Action Alerts (<https://voterveice.net/ACCFB/home>) or contact advocate@acffb.org for more information. We also invite you to reach out with your questions about our policy priorities.

ISSUES & POLICY PRIORITIES

CALFRESH/SNAP

Federal

Parity in Food Assistance for U.S. Territories: Provide a pathway to help Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands transition from the block-granted Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) to full participation in SNAP.

Roll-back unjust federal time limits for SNAP that disproportionately impact people of color and immigrants experiencing poverty, and repeal work requirements for SNAP for able-bodied adults ages 18-49 with no dependent children.

Require **SNAP benefit amounts** to be calculated using the value of a low-cost food plan rather than the Thrifty Food Plan, thereby increasing the baseline for SNAP benefits by approximately 30 percent. Improve upon SNAP's well-designed structure to allow for a more gradual tapering of benefits as program participants earn more income.

Streamline SNAP Eligibility and Enrollment: Improve and simplify SNAP access, particularly for older adults, college students, immigrants, and other people who face eligibility and enrollment barriers.

Sovereignty for Native Communities: Allow tribal governments the flexibility to administer federal programs as decided by the tribe; allow SNAP participants to also receive Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits.

State

Address the Unprecedented **CalFresh Benefits Cliff:** Mitigate the harm of the end of CalFresh Emergency Allotments by providing five additional months of equivalent state-funded benefits.

CalFresh Fruit & Vegetable Supplemental Benefits EBT Pilot: Expand the Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot to boost benefits for a greater number of CalFresh households in more diverse regions of the state.

California Nutrition Incentives Program (CNIP): Fund CNIP at \$35 million in the Agriculture budget to support Market Match, which supports California farmers, promotes purchase of fruits and vegetables, and will stretch CalFresh benefits for low-income families.

Provide a permanent state supplement to **raise the CalFresh minimum benefit level** from the current \$23 to \$50 per month.

Extend and expand the CalFresh **Safe Drinking Water Pilot** to boost benefits for a greater number of CalFresh households who lack access to safe drinking water.

Streamline Access to CalFresh: Reduce administrative and procedural access barriers to CalFresh to ensure that all eligible Californians can enroll with ease and dignity.

Protect **unemployed and underemployed Californians** from the unjust federal time limits for SNAP.

CHILD NUTRITION & UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS

State

End Deep Child Poverty for All: Lift CalWORKs grants above deep poverty (50% FPL) for all households, including CalWORKs households that have family members who are not eligible due to immigration status, receipt of SSI/SSP, or other reasons.

Food with Care: Bring equity to child care nutrition programs by eliminating the supplemental State Meal Reimbursement rate gap for feeding younger children in family child care settings.

Build on California's historic success of **School Meals for All** by continuing to invest in healthy, adequate, locally-grown fresh school meals. Implement the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act to reduce hunger during the summer months.

Maximize the Availability of **Summer Meal Sites to Feed Children and Families:** Invest in a three-year backfill to continue providing meals to vulnerable families at summer meal sites and allow caregivers who are also food insecure to access meals.

DEMOCRACY & VOTING RIGHTS

Federal

Freedom to Vote Act: Protect and expand the right to vote, end partisan and racial gerrymandering, and limit the power of big money in elections.

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

EQUITY IN PROCUREMENT

Federal

Federal Commodity Purchasing: Redirect the government's considerable purchasing power toward a more equitable food distribution system that supports BIPOC farmers, producers, and distributors while engaging input from community members with lived experience with systemic inequities.

FOOD BANK FUNDING, EMERGENCY RESPONSE & SUSTAINABILITY

Federal

Reauthorize and Streamline the **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** Streamline reporting requirements to reduce the administrative burden for program participants and increase program efficiency.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): Increase TEFAP mandatory funding by \$250 million per year for food purchases. Authorize \$200 million per year for TEFAP storage and distribution funds and \$15 million per year for TEFAP infrastructure grants.

Bolster the TEFAP Farm to Food Bank Program: Increase funding, remove the state match, and allow states to prioritize projects for donated food or food purchased at a low cost from local growers and producers.

State

CalFood: Appropriate \$52 million in 2023-24 State Budget and ongoing to sustain the CalFood program at \$60 million annually.

Diapers & Menstrual Products – \$60 Million One-Time State Budget Request: Build upon the successful Diaper Bank Program and Menstrual Products Pilot to support the basic needs of families and people who menstruate.

Food Bank Capacity & Climate Resilience Infrastructure – \$180 Million One-Time State Budget Request.

Permanently authorize **State Disaster Food Assistance Program (SDFAP)** in statute to ensure that California is prepared and able to respond quickly when disaster strikes and communities need immediate food resources.

HOUSING & HOUSELESSNESS

State

Uplift community voices to advocate for **equitable access to affordable housing and promote equity for renters and community members experiencing houselessness.**

IMMIGRANT INCLUSION IN THE SAFETY NET

State

Food4All: Expand eligibility for California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) nutrition benefits to all Californians ineligible for CalFresh solely due to their immigration status, regardless of age.

Safety Net for All: Invest in immigrant workers who have been historically excluded from unemployment benefits.

OLDER ADULTS & PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

State

CalAIM/Medically-supportive food as a covered benefit through Medi-Cal.

Ensure that a state **Cost of Living increase for SSI/SSP recipients** is provided next year and every year going forward.

Fulfill CalFresh Expansion to SSI/SSP Recipients by ensuring parity in SNB and TNB to SNAP's Thrifty Food Plan Increase: Households receiving SNB and TNB should receive an increase in benefits that is equivalent to the respective improvements by household size in CalFresh due to the Thrifty Food Plan update.

Reinstate and refund WIC 12550 to provide for Special Circumstances for SSI/SSP recipients.

Restore all SSI/SSP grants to at least the Supplemental Poverty Measure as a down payment to the Elder Economic Security Index.

TAX POLICY

Federal

Billionaire Minimum Income Tax/Babies Over Billionaires Act: Ensure that the 0.01% wealthiest households pay a tax rate of at least 20.0%-23.8% on their full income

State

Ensure investments in tax credit outreach and free tax preparation/Volunteer Income Tax Assistance are maintained.

Expand the Young Child Tax Credit to all CalEITC-eligible households.

Raise the minimum CalEITC credit to \$300.