

FIGHT HUNGER & SUPPORT CALIFORNIA FARMERS

\$60 Million Ongoing for CalFood in the 2025-26 State Budget

Food insecurity in California is again on the rise, with 22% of households overall and 27% of households with children experiencing hunger as of September 2024 (analyses by Northwestern Institute for Policy Studies of the Census Household Pulse Survey).

Food banks have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis and remain a critically needed resource for millions of Californians who have lost other public supports and are struggling to put food on the table. With the ending of CalFresh Emergency Allotments and Pandemic-EBT that represented one third of the food safety net in 2021, combined with the soaring cost of food and ending of many other COVID-era public supports, food banks across the entire state are straining to meet sustained and heightened levels of demand.

"I'm not spending money on anything. I don't have it to spend right now, because I have less money available for food, so that's definitely very real. So I just you know, I put gas in my car to go [to work]. I don't go to other places."

– CalFresh recipient, August 2023

Our Request to Meet Community Need

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

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Baseline	\$8M	\$8M	\$8M	\$8M
One-time	\$112M			Back to \$8M only. REQUEST: Increase to \$60M ongoing in baseline.
		\$52M		
Total	\$188M [average = \$62.7M annually]			

Now is the Time for an Ongoing Commitment to a Hunger-Free Future

We are grateful that CalFood has been funded at \$8M ongoing since the 2017-18 Budget, and for the historic additional investment of \$112M in the 2022-23 Budget and \$52M in the 2023-24 Budget. While this is an important foundation, \$8M was never sufficient to meet the need prior to the pandemic when we had 4 million hungry Californians, and does not reflect the reality of today or future years.

"CalFood funding is a critical tool in Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County efforts to nourish those in our community suffering from food insecurity. With rising inflation and the high cost of living, the need for food in the community has not declined. Now more than ever food banks need the support from the Governor and California State Legislature to ensure we have the financial resources to procure the food needed in our community. CalFood funding is so powerful as it not only helps by directly supporting food bank purchasing, but also ensures a strong state economy by driving food purchase dollars to California farming and food production businesses."

– Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County

"The Redwood Empire Food Bank relies on the funding to provide eggs, a highly requested item, as part of our provision of help to the neighbors who rely on us for healthy groceries."

– Redwood Empire Food Bank

The CalFood Program

- » Enables food banks to purchase California grown foods to meet their communities' diverse needs, enabling them to fight hunger and support our critical food economy.
- » Is incredibly efficient, as food banks leverage private donations and incredible economies of scale. Each dollar enables California food banks to provide approximately five meals. Food banks use these precious dollars to purchase healthy, expensive items like eggs that are rarely donated, and meet the local cultural needs of their communities.
- » Provides significant return on investment: even a 1% drop in hunger saves California \$600 million in prevented healthcare costs, as well as supporting our hard-hit farmers and food producers in our food economy.

Current state investments to support food banks varies across the country, but California currently has one of the lowest annual funding per food-insecure person, at just \$1 per year:

	Most Recent Annual State Emergency Food Funding	Food Insecurity Rate, March 2022 (# of food-insecure people)	Annual State Funding Per Person	SNAP Participation Rate
New York	\$106.5M	18.6% (3.7M)	\$67.61	89%
Vermont	\$3M	14.4% (93K)	\$32.27	100%
Ohio	\$24.55M	18.2% (2.1M)	\$11.45	90%
Minnesota	\$5M	15.4% (880K)	\$5.69	80%
Rhode Island	\$450K	19.4% (211K)	\$2.12	100%
Florida	\$11.5M	25.2% (5.5M)	\$2.1	81%
Indiana	\$2M	23.7% (1.6M)	\$1.24	73%
Texas	\$10M	23.7% (7M)	\$1.43	73%
California	Current = \$8M Request = \$60M	20.3% (8M)	Current = \$1.00 Request = \$7.50	70%

Our network survived the aftermath of the Great Recession, when public supports were prematurely cut off and it took a decade for hunger to return to pre-crisis levels. This is the critical moment for California to learn that lesson and make the ongoing investment in CalFood needed to fight hunger, support our farmers, and build toward the healthy hunger-free future we know is possible.

"CalFood is essential for ensuring a consistent supply of California-grown food to those in need, aligning with our mission at Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. As the need in Los Angeles County has increased compared to last year, CalFood allows us to purchase more than twenty different varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy food items that are important in our fight against food and nutrition insecurity."

– Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

"Many community members are familiar with ACCFB's work distributing nutritious meals and groceries throughout Alameda County. What many people might not realize is that a substantial portion of the food we distribute is funded through public-sector resources, especially government programs such as CalFood. In fact, in the last year alone, we applied nearly \$2 million worth of support from CalFood towards distributing fresh groceries and produce. To achieve our goal of eradicating hunger, California must strengthen and sustain its investment in this critical anti-hunger program."

– Alameda County Community Food Bank

"We use this funding to purchase nutritious proteins like eggs and fresh produce. This funding has been critical in providing support for our mission."

– San Francisco-Marin Food Bank



For more information, contact: policy@cafoodbanks.org