



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FOOD BANKS

# CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF FOOD BANKS 2025 STATE POLICY AGENDA

We thank the Administration and Legislature for the critical investments made to fight hunger in California. Today, over one in five California households are faced with the stress and health consequences of food insecurity, with shocking disparities for communities of color. Food banks continue to face record demand. In 2023, our 41-member network and their more than 6,000 community distribution partners served 6 million Californians a month—a 20% increase year over year, met with only 4% more food to meet the increased need. This year, demand has risen even further, and with fewer resources. Hungry families cannot wait, and we must build toward a more equitable, hunger-free future now.



## FUND CALFOOD ONGOING AT \$60 MILLION

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

### » WHAT IS CALFOOD?

The CalFood Program allocates funding to food banks for purchasing, storing, and distributing food grown and/or produced in California.

CALFOOD IS A LIFELINE FOR CALIFORNIA'S:



FARMERS



FOOD BANKS



FAMILIES

### » KEY ADVANTAGES OF THE CALFOOD PROGRAM

- Food banks can meet diverse dietary/cultural needs and purchase rarely-donated items like eggs and meat.
- Food banks leverage economies of scale — each dollar enables food banks to provide about five meals.
- Even a 1% drop in hunger saves California \$600 million in prevented healthcare costs, and supports farmers and food producers critical to our food economy.\*

### » LESS FUNDS, LESS ESSENTIALS

With lower CalFood funding, food banks will have a much harder time or be unable to purchase/distribute essentials items like:



EGGS



PRODUCE



MEAT



CHEESE



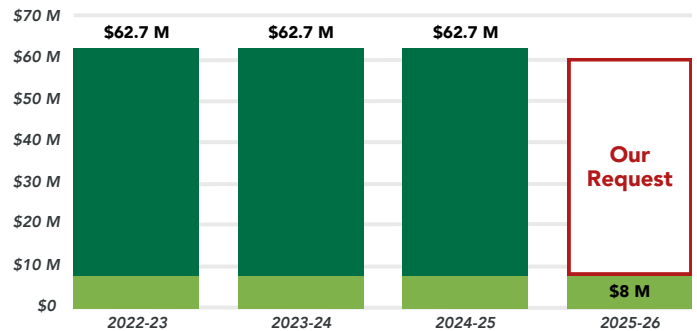
MILK

1% DROP IN HUNGER



\$600 MILLION SAVED IN HEALTHCARE COSTS

### TOTAL CALFOOD FUNDING PER FISCAL YEAR, 2022–2026



CalFood has been funded with an annual \$8M baseline, with additional multi-year funding (\$112M in 2022–23, \$52M in 2023–24), for a total of \$62.7M on average per year between July 2022 and June 2025. It reverts to \$8M baseline after this fiscal year. We're requesting a permanent increase of \$52M to the baseline, starting in 2025–26 (for a total of \$60M annually).

### » STATEWIDE IMPACTS

We asked our food bank network about what they are seeing in their communities. We learned:

- 75% have had to adjust their operations to cope with increased demand with fewer resources.
- 50% limited or reduced amount of food provided.
- 60% limited or reduced the variety of food distributed.
- 25% scaled back programs, with several reporting the closing of food distribution sites, reducing their paid workforce, or turning away new partners or clients.\*\*

“A drop in CalFood funding means our food bank network will have to provide a fraction of the resources to distribution sites with lines that are now twice as long as they were last year.”



– Community Action Partnership of Kern



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## EMPOWER FOOD BANKS FOR CLIMATE SMART TRANSITIONS

- » **TRU TRUCKS:** Ensure food banks have the financial support and guidance needed for state-mandated climate smart transitions, while advocating for delayed enforcement for our food bank network.
- » **SB 1383:** Work with CalRecycle to ensure food banks are at the table on efforts to adjust statutory language to better represent the work of food banks on SB 1383 implementation.

## SHORTEN THE LINE AT FOOD BANKS

### » MAXIMIZING THE POTENTIAL OF CALFRESH:

- › Increase **benefit adequacy** to reflect the high cost of living in California and inadequate federal benefit levels.
- › **Protect un- and under-employed Californians** (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents, or ABAWDs) from the harsh federal “work for food” time limit rules in CalFresh.
- › **Expand access to all Californians regardless of immigration status and for college students**, who face disproportionate barriers to enrollment because of the federal rules.

### » NOURISHING CHILDREN:

- › **School Meals, Summer Meals & SUN Bucks:** Continue to strengthen and build upon programs that ensure access to meals year-round so children can thrive.

### » ENDING HUNGER & SUPPORTING ESSENTIAL NEEDS:

- › **Master Plan to End Hunger:** In partnership, lead a statewide cross-departmental, cross-sector effort to remove barriers to access adequate, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all communities in California.
- › **Diaper support:** Build on California’s leadership in preventing diaper and period poverty.
- › **SSI/SSP:** Support older adults and people with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/State Supplementary Payment (SSP) in reaching economic self-sufficiency.

“ Last year we saw a 20% increase in need year over year in our network, with food banks only having 4% more food to distribute. **Hunger in California has become a chronic condition.** Food banks are no longer a temporary stopgap for families.”

– Stacia Levenfeld, CEO, California Association of Food Banks

**Learn More: [cafoodbanks.org](https://cafoodbanks.org)**

For questions: [policy@cafoodbanks.org](mailto:policy@cafoodbanks.org)

\*Citations: [cafoodbanks.org/citations](https://cafoodbanks.org/citations)

\*\*Percentages based on number of survey respondents