



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 state 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 1.5 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 a close to 90% drop in CalFood funding, food banks will not be able to continue purchasing/distributing essential items at current levels:



EGGS



PRODUCE



MEAT



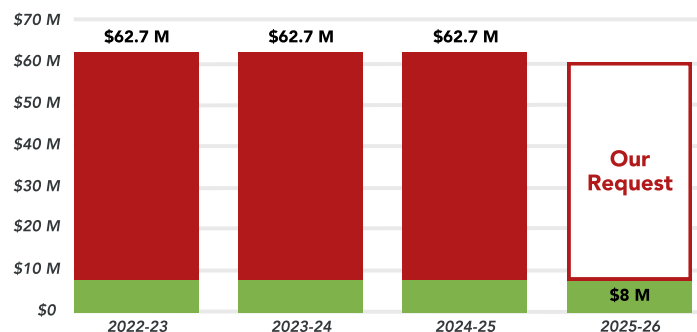
CHEESE



MILK

1% DROP IN HUNGER → **\$600 MILLION** SAVED IN HEALTHCARE COSTS

» 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

In 2024, CalFood represented 37% of food banks' food purchasing budgets. We asked our food bank network what would happen if CalFood was reduced to \$8M:**

- 91% would have to limit/reduce amount of food offered.
- 88% would have to reduce CA grown/produced food.
- 58% would have to turn away new partners.
- 24% would have to turn away new clients.
- 21% would have to close existing food distributions.



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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SHORTEN THE LINE AT FOOD BANKS

» MAXIMIZING THE POTENTIAL OF CALFRESH:

- › **AB 79 (Arambula):** Build on the success of AB 1326 (Arambula) to ensure collaboration and information sharing between higher education liaisons and stakeholders. ([Factsheet](#))
- › **AB 777 (C. Rodriguez):** Improve California's ability to provide Disaster CalFresh and other disaster-related CalFresh provisions during natural disasters. ([Factsheet](#))
- › **Budget:** Increase CalFresh benefit adequacy to reflect the high cost of living in California and inadequate federal benefit levels.
- › **Budget:** Protect the California Food Assistance Program expansion for 55+ and Expand Food 4 all to all ages by 2027. ([Factsheet](#))

» NOURISHING CHILDREN:

- › **SB 225 (McNerney):** Allow summer meal sites to offer meals to parents and caregivers so that they can share a meal with their children. ([Factsheet](#))
- › **SB 411 (Pérez):** Fight child hunger by creating a statewide online application for SUN Bucks and establishing nutrition benefits to provide food support during school breaks and emergencies. ([Factsheet](#))
- › **Budget:** Protect our nation-leading School Meals for All by maintaining the state per-meal reimbursement rate, maximize SUN Bucks by creating an online statewide application, provide \$6M for a summer caregiver meals pilot.

» ENDING HUNGER & SUPPORTING ESSENTIAL NEEDS:

- › **AB 636 (Ortega):** Expand access to prescription diapers for Medi-Cal recipients.
- › **Budget:** \$16.5M to sustain the distribution of diapers through CA's successful Diaper Bank Program. ([Factsheet](#))
- › **Budget:** Support SSI/SSP recipients by providing an ongoing COLA for SSP grants, establishing grants above the Federal Poverty Level, and reviving an Emergency Grant Program.
- › **Budget:** Reimagine CalWORKs' ability to fight hunger by providing real pathways to work and education for children and families facing the deepest poverty-related hunger. ([Factsheet](#))

EMPOWER FOOD BANKS FOR FOOD RECOVERY

- › **Food Recovery (SB 1383 Implementation):** 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.

“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/hunger-legislation/tracker

For questions: policy@cafoodbanks.org

*Citations: cafoodbanks.org/citations

**Percentages based on number of survey respondents