



2021 State Policy Agenda

FIGHT HUNGER IN CALIFORNIA

Hunger Remains at Record Levels, Demands Ongoing State Response

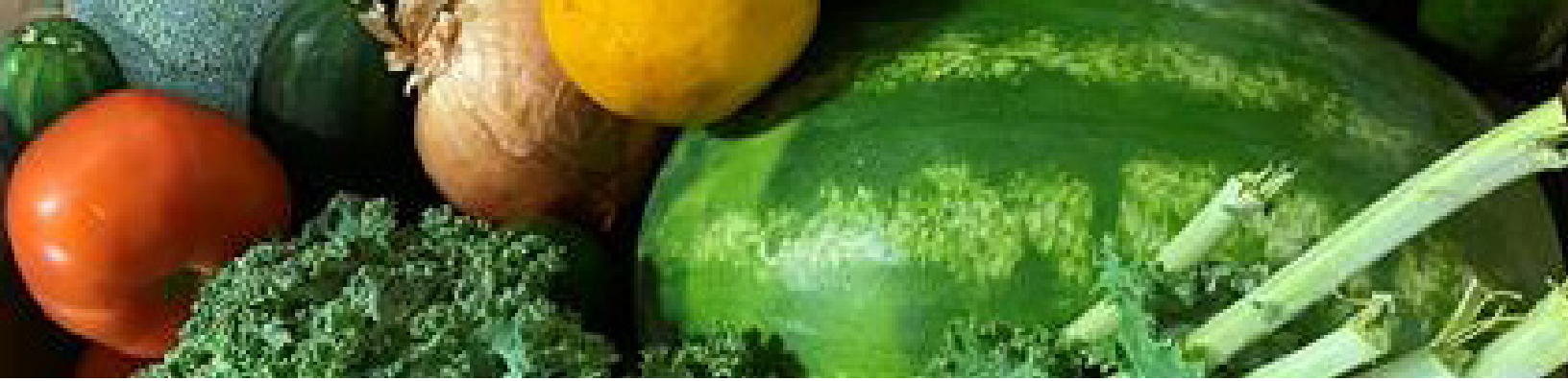
No Californian should go hungry, yet hunger remains at tragic levels. Despite many policy interventions, 21.2% of California households – more than 8 million people – still report food insecurity. This is more than double pre-pandemic rates. Even worse, there are deep racial and ethnic disparities, with 37.9% of Latinx and 36.1% of Black households with children facing hunger and the irreparable harm from persistent food insecurity. **This demands an ongoing response proportional to this long-term crisis:**

Bolster the Emergency Food System in the COVID-19 Crisis & Beyond

- » **\$110 million one-time: Emergency Food (Sen. Laird, Asm. Wicks)**
Food banks served 1 billion meals in 2020, and remain on the frontlines of hunger caused by COVID-19. Based on current data, and that from the Great Recession, food banks expect demand to remain above pre-pandemic levels for years. State support funds highly effective food programs through DSS, which are critical given a sharp drop in federal food supports.
- » **\$32 million one-time: Climate & Disaster Resilience (Sen. Newman, Asm. Villapudua)**
Climate emergencies and disasters are the new normal. Immigrants, farmworkers, and other low-income Californians experience disproportionate consequences. California has had close calls, and we need to prevent a crisis like the Texas freeze. Whether fires or public safety power shutoffs, we must ensure food banks are climate friendly and can go off the grid, to prevent catastrophic food loss, and remain able to serve when Californians are in greatest need.
- » **\$25 million one-time: Capacity Enhancements**
While serving record demand, food banks have faced steep costs from operational shifts to drive-throughs and other direct distributions. A survey of our members underscored the acute need for long-term capacity will enable food banks to distribute more California grown healthy produce and protein items that must be kept fresh.
- » **SB 240: Prevent the Healthy Food Donation Tax Credit from Expiring (Sen. Eggman, Asm. Levine)**
A triple win to help farmers and food banks, while preventing food waste, by extending the 15% tax credit for donations to food banks to 2027.

(over)





Create a Hunger-Free Future for Our Children

- » **SB 364 (Sen. Skinner): Free School Meals for All Act of 2021** takes historic steps to end childhood hunger in California: (1) provide free breakfast and lunches to all children, (2) establish the Better Out Of School Time (BOOST) Nutrition Program to prevent child hunger during school breaks or closures during disasters, (3) support farmers by increasing purchasing of California grown food prepared by California's school food workforce, and (4) protect student privacy.
- » **AB 508 (Asm. Rivas, Asm. Gonzalez):** working families struggle to pay the reduced price lunch fee. The state paying this fights child hunger, while preventing school meal stigma and debt.

Prevent Poverty & Hunger Among Older Adults

- » **Enact the vision outlined in the Master Plan for Aging to Prevent Poverty and Hunger for SSI recipients:**
 - › Include SSI recipients in all future Golden State Stimulus payments.
 - › Restore SSP grants so that they meet the Elder Economic Index.
 - › Fulfill the "hold harmless" goal of the Supplemental Nutrition Benefit and Transitional Nutrition Benefits by preventing recipients from churning off the program and by providing replacement benefits during disasters.
- » **SB 107 (Sen. Wiener):** create a simplified two-page CalFresh application for older adults and people with disabilities, and ensure that all applicants and participants can "sign" required forms over the phone.

Food4All / ComidaParaTodos: Secure Food for Californians Regardless of Immigration Status

- » **AB 221 (Asm. Santiago):** provide immediate Emergency Food Benefits for immigrants adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and who are excluded from federal aid because of their immigration status.
- » **SB 464 (Sen. Hurtado):** improve long-term food access for immigrant communities by expanding eligibility for the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP).

Support #RealCollege Students' Basic Need for Food

- » **AB 396 (Asm. Gabriel):** improve CalFresh access by requiring all higher education programs that meet standards for increasing employability to submit certification to CDSS by June 1, 2022.
- » **AB 1326 (Asm. Arambula):** require county human services agencies to designate a staff liaison for all higher education segments to improve coordination and outcomes for students.

Prioritize emergency food capacity investments in bond measures AB 125 (Asm. Rivas) & SB 45 (Sen. Portantino)

Questions?

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For additional information on bills we are tracking: cafoodbanks.org/hunger-legislation-tracker

