



FIGHT HUNGER & SUPPORT CALIFORNIA FARMERS WITH CALFOOD

\$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 continue to be an essential resource for millions of Californians grappling with the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, natural disasters, and the rising cost of living, which makes it challenging for households to put food on the table. Unfortunately, food banks across the entire state are straining to meet sustained and heightened levels of demand. In 2023, our 41-member network served 6 million Californians a month (a 20% increase year over year, with only 4% more food to meet the increased need). This year, our network is reporting even greater demand, and with fewer resources. To address this urgent need, food banks rely heavily on CalFood funding.

It's daunting to not know where your next meal is going to come from. As a mom, you don't want to tell your kids, well, we don't have enough money....To have places like this that have food that is more useful, like milk, we got milk last time, fresh fruit, fresh veggies, healthy food, that's the best."

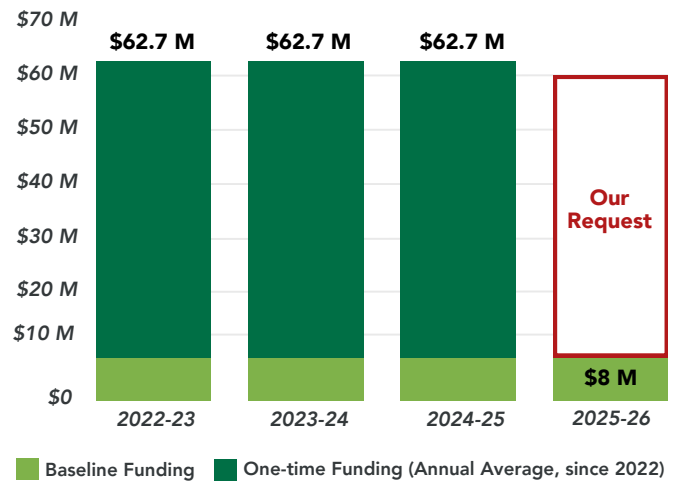
– Family in Ventura County



Our Request to Meet Community Need

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 a \$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).**

TOTAL CALFOOD FUNDING PER FISCAL YEAR, 2022–2026



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

While \$8M baseline for CalFood is an important foundation, it 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 the future.

CalFood is essential for ensuring a consistent supply of California-grown food for those we serve...it supports the purchase and distribution of nutritious, fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods that are important in our fight against food and nutrition insecurity."

– Los Angeles Regional Food Bank

"The CalFood program is the single most important tool that we have to address the growing lines over the last 2 years. Having the ability to purchase food allowed us to bring on more partners resulting in an increase of access points across the county by almost 33%"

–Community Action Partnership of Kern



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% reduction 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 person living under the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), at just \$0.75 per year:

	Most Recent Annual State Emergency Food Funding	People living below 200% FPL	Annual State Funding Per Person under 200% FPL	SNAP (CalFresh) Participation Rate
New Jersey	\$85M	2M	\$42.16	72%
Massachusetts	\$42.36M	1.5M	\$28.14	100%
New York	\$111M	5.6M	\$19.83	82%
Vermont	\$1.3M	148K	\$8.77	96%
Ohio	\$32M	3.5M	\$9.20	81%
Pennsylvania	\$25.6M	3.5M	\$7.23	100%
Minnesota	\$8M	1.3M	\$6.40	76%
Colorado	\$3M	1.2M	\$2.42	76%
California	Current = \$8M Request = \$60M	10.6M	Current = \$0.75 Request = \$5.66	66%

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 for our operations has meant having the capacity to expand our distribution of culturally relevant and preferred food for neighbors. Often these are ideal staples like tortillas and eggs that neighbors have to skip purchasing when it comes to their food budget - items that can also have the highest nutritional impact as well. Through our partnership with the Community Alliance of Family Farms (CAFF), we use CalFood to source culturally appropriate, locally grown produce from small and medium-sized farms, strengthening the connection between farmers and their neighborhoods.”

– Central California Food Bank

“CalFood provides funding for food resources we would otherwise go without. As the donated supply food chain decreases, we use CalFood funding to make up the difference. It has allowed us to increase the volume of food we can give to each of our neighbors, cutting the gap they face due to prioritizing their financial resources to other costs of living and what SNAP benefits don’t make up for.”

– Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

