



# State Policy Priorities



Community **FOOD BANK**  
of Eastern Oklahoma

## Champion Child Nutrition

- Support maximizing federal funds available to fight childhood hunger through increased participation in the National School Breakfast Program, the National School Lunch Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and the Women Infants and Children program.
- Strengthen participation in, and food quality of school meal programs, including National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs, by encouraging adoption of nutrition standards and Community Eligibility for schools with a majority of students on free or reduced lunch.
- Oppose reductions in funding that limit the ability of school districts to fully implement federal childhood nutrition programs and fight childhood hunger in their communities, including reductions in staff, facilities, or days per week of service.
- Support the efficient use of excess food in public schools through allowing schools to distribute leftover food from breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner meals to feed hungry children.

## Promote Economic Security for All Oklahomans

- Educate the public and members of the Oklahoma State Legislature about the social determinants of health, the root causes of hunger, and the inability of the charitable food assistance network to meet the demand.
- Support connecting working families and individuals to existing benefit programs, specifically SNAP and other federal nutrition safety net programs.
- Support policies and programs that promote financial security and assist in breaking the cycle of poverty, such as Paid Family Leave and Paid Sick Leave, the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, and the Sales Tax Relief Credit, and addressing the burdensome fines and fees of the criminal justice system that disproportionately impact low-income Oklahomans.
- Support increased restrictions on predatory lending practices that create a cycle of debt and contribute to the need for food assistance.

## Protect the Safety Net

- Support increased access to health care and health insurance for low-income Oklahomans including through the expansion of Medicaid.
- Encourage eliminating barriers to accessing federal and/or state safety net programs including SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, and others, as well as eliminating SNAP benefits as countable income towards qualifying for other assistance programs.
- Oppose any additional barriers to accessing safety net programs or additional burdens for safety net recipients, including:
  - Banning a group or class of people from accessing a safety net program
  - Imposing time limits or work requirements
  - Requiring personal responsibility plans for program recipients
  - Limiting the types of food that can be purchased by SNAP recipients
- Oppose reductions in funding that limit the ability of state agencies to provide basic social services.

## Increase Access to Healthy Food

- Support passage of a Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) or Healthy Food Financing Act in order to increase access to healthy foods in Oklahoma, particularly in under-served areas or regions of the state classified as food deserts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Support the continued expansion of federal funds that double the value of SNAP dollars when purchasing produce at farmer's markets, specifically through the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Double Up Oklahoma program.

## Encourage Charity

- Support existing, enhanced, and new tax and other incentives including the State Charitable Campaign that encourage individuals to volunteer their time and contribute money to the missions of charitable nonprofits.
- Opposing the imposition of fees, payments in lieu of taxes, and taxes on tax-exempt nonprofit organizations; and oppose floors, caps, or limits on existing charitable giving incentives.
- Maintaining and –where appropriate- expanding nonprofit exemptions from paying state and local property, sales, and use taxes.



# Federal Policy Priorities



## Ensure the Federal Budget Protects a Strong Safety Net

The federal nutrition safety net is the cornerstone of food assistance to low-income Americans. Congress must protect SNAP and other critical programs like TEFAP, CSFP, and child nutrition programs to ensure they remain a resource for millions of Americans in need of food assistance, and should:

- **Oppose efforts to block grant or cut SNAP through the federal budget process.** The countercyclical structure of SNAP allows it to respond efficiently and effectively to changes in the economy.
- **Oppose efforts to cut TEFAP and CSFP through the federal budget process.**
- **Ensure charitable giving incentives that nonprofits rely on and tax credits for working families are protected in any tax reform language included in a budget resolution.**

## Ensure the Next Farm Bill Reduces Hunger in America

The Farm Bill sets food policy and support for numerous critical nutrition and agriculture programs and is a critical cornerstone of supporting both the agriculture community and those that rely on federal nutrition programs. The next Farm Bill has enormous potential to help reduce hunger and support agriculture by:

- **Protecting and Strengthening SNAP:** SNAP is efficient and effective, reduces food insecurity and helps working families put healthy food on the table. Millions of unemployed Americans remain without a job, food assistance, or a job training program to enable economic recovery.
  - Proposals to block grant SNAP, cap or cut funding, or otherwise restrict participation would result in millions more Americans losing food assistance.
  - SNAP benefits are inadequate and Feeding America recommends Congress transition to calculating SNAP benefits based on the low-cost food plan.
- **Protecting and Strengthening The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP):** To enable resources needed by food banks, Congress should increase funding for TEFAP food purchases and protect TEFAP storage and distributions funds.
- **Strengthening donation policies and incentives in the Farm Bill:** Congress should address policy and regulatory barriers to food donation through expanding FSIS and FDA guidelines to include food donation; expand access to USDA grant programs addressing agriculture policy and programs to ensure food donation and food banks are a key component of connecting US consumers with US grown food; and expand resources to invest in ag surplus removal programs in state and regional ag economies to provide growers and food banks a method to connect excess wholesome food with communities in need.

## Reduce Hunger Through Federal Spending Legislation

- **FY2018 Appropriations should support strong funding for TEFAP,** including providing full funding for TEFAP food purchases at \$329 million a year, and \$100 million for TEFAP storage and distribution funds to support the infrastructure and distribution capacity necessary to meet need.
- **FY2018 Appropriations should support the Summer EBT funding** to expand the reach of the summer EBT option for children who aren't able to access a summer feeding site.

- **FY2018 Appropriations should provide an increase beyond the current \$236 million in funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)** which provides monthly nutritious food packages to 619,000 low-income seniors. New investments are needed to meet the needs of seniors struggling with hunger. We also urge Congress to provide additional funding to serve any new states with USDA-approved plans.
- **FY2018 Appropriations should provide sufficient funding to the Older American Act's home-delivered and congregate meals programs.**

### Strengthen the Nonprofit Community in Tax Reform

Tax policy plays a key role in the fight against hunger and helps reduce food waste. Feeding America food banks rely on support from a variety of sources, including individual giving, government commodities, and donations from all segments of the food industry.

- **Protect and strengthen the charitable tax deduction** to ensure the ability of our network to raise vitally needed funds and supplement vital federal programs.
- **Protect and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC)**, which lift millions of working families out of poverty and increase the stability they have found through the workforce.
- **Protect and strengthen food donation tax incentives**, which play a powerful role in connecting excess nutritious food with people in need. Without the tax incentives, it costs growers, retailers, and food companies more to donate food than it does to put it into landfills.

### Protect and Strengthen Child Nutrition Programs

The federal child nutrition programs are an essential investment in the 1 in 6 children in America that face hunger. Ensuring all children have the nutritious food they need to learn, grow, and thrive is critical to our nation's future. In addition to protecting SNAP, the largest safety net for children, Congress should help maintain strong nutrition standards and efficient access to all child nutrition programs.

- We urge Congress to protect the funding and structure of child nutrition programs in budget and spending legislation.
- We urge USDA to ensure that regulations on child nutrition programs protect access to these vital programs for the millions of children that rely on them for nutritious food.