

Nutrition Priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill

The undersigned organizations offer the following recommendations to address hunger while improving nutrition and health, and to increase access to affordable, nutritious food, particularly for vulnerable populations. While our organizations have specific missions and farm bill priorities, we are guided by three shared principles that shape our collective priorities. The 2018 Farm Bill must: I) protect against hunger and strengthen federal nutrition programs, especially SNAP; II) improve nutrition and health outcomes among vulnerable populations; and III) strengthen community-based initiatives that stimulate the economy and increase access to affordable, healthy food.

Promote food security, nutrition, and health by ensuring adequate resources for federal nutrition assistance programs and emergency food providers.

- Protect access to and the funding structure of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's fundamental nutrition safety net program.
- Strengthen SNAP benefits to ensure that low-income individuals and families have the resources necessary to prevent hunger and afford a nutritious diet.
- Ensure an adequate supply of nutritious commodities through emergency food providers by increasing mandatory commodities provided by The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and maintaining authorized funding levels for TEFAP storage and distribution.
- Maintain authorized funding levels for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for low-income seniors and support CSFP nationwide; and ensure an adequate supply of nutritious commodities and maintain funding for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).
- Ensure policies and funding to address food waste across the food supply chain, including the financial support necessary for food banks and other nonprofits to acquire surplus agricultural products for the free, safe, and efficient distribution to communities that addresses hunger and supports health.

Improve nutrition and health outcomes for vulnerable populations by increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods.

- Protect and support continued innovation in the SNAP Nutrition Education and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program which empower low-income Americans to make healthy choices on a limited budget and reduce the risk of chronic disease and obesity.
- Maintain current funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and protect the program to ensure that low-income elementary students have a fresh vegetable or fruit snack at school every day.
- Provide increased funding for successful SNAP incentive programs to increase the purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables through SNAP retailers across the country.
- Maintain funding for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture for vital research on nutrition, hunger and food security, and obesity prevention.
- Support pregnant women, infants, and young children in making healthier food choices through nutritional and dietary information specific to their unique needs.

Stimulate economic development, create jobs, and promote self-reliance in low-income urban communities, rural areas, and small towns by supporting farmers and healthy food retailers in order to reduce hunger, improve health, and improve access to nutritious and affordable food.

- Reauthorize the Healthy Food Financing Initiative which supports projects that increase access to healthy, affordable food in underserved communities.
- Sustain funding for small food retailers such as farmers markets, community food programs, and agriculture marketing development initiatives, and support increased access of incentive programs to more types of food retailers, including large grocery stores, to improve outcomes, meet demand, and maximize impact.
- Increase access to SNAP EBT technology at farmer's markets, farm stands, online grocery delivery services, and other non-traditional food retailers to improve access and increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Support fruit and vegetable producers and innovations in industry to increase fruit and vegetable consumption through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program that supports research, agricultural extension activities, and programs for the specialty crop industry.