

April 27, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-146A The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

CC: Chairwoman Tammy Baldwin, Chairwoman Patty Murray, Senator Roy Blunt, Senator John Hoeven

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Shelby,

We understand the critical nature of addressing issues of food security and nutrition as drivers of health, economic, and social well-being, and deeply appreciate the actions Congress has taken thus far to address the unprecedented hunger crisis in the U.S. brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you consider your Fiscal Year 2022 priorities, the undersigned national organizations strongly urge the following recommendations as it relates to hunger in America:

- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): \$7 billion**

Increased investment is needed to enhance access to healthy foods through long-recognized, bipartisan eligibility expansions for postpartum women and 5-year-old children to kindergarten and pending USDA rulemaking to increase the value of the WIC benefit. This overall funding should be inclusive of annual set-aside priorities, including \$90 million for breastfeeding peer counselors, \$14 million for infrastructure and special project grants, and \$35 million for technology and Management Information System (MIS) projects.

- **WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP): \$35 million**

Since 1992, the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program has strengthened connections between nutrition programs and agriculture by providing WIC families with a small annual benefit to redeem at local farmers markets or farm stands. After years of flat funding, the small increase in fiscal year 2021 allowed new states to start WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Programs. Congress should similarly include a small increase this fiscal year to ensure that even more states can establish and enhance this strategic investment in local farm economies.

- **Include report language to revise WIC package**

Appropriators should include report language that directs USDA to, this fiscal year, revise the WIC food packages to increase their overall value while maintaining their science-based framework. USDA is equipped to make these revisions based on the 2017 National Academies of Sciences report and the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- **Summer Meals: No less than \$75 million**

Provide a minimum of \$75 million to continue the current and expanded Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Demonstration Projects which provides families with an additional grocery benefit over the summer and ensures that children in rural and underserved areas have access to nutrition during the summer.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): as necessary**

Add language to protect against potential appropriations shortfalls, such as “provide such sums as are necessary to ensure continuity of SNAP operations and benefits.”

- **The Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program: No less than \$1.9 billion**

To maintain the current level of nutrition services needed in communities, increased federal funding is critically needed. For this reason, we are requesting that the OAA Nutrition Program be funded at a minimum of \$1,903,506,000. Prior to the pandemic, federal funding for the national network failed to keep pace with increasing demand, rising costs and inflation, and over 17 million fewer OAA meals were served in 2019 than in 2005. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, local nutrition programs, like Meals on Wheels, have proven to be even more essential to addressing the issues of senior hunger and social isolation. This appropriations increase will provide the levels needed for community-based nutrition programs to serve more older adults, especially as the demand for these essential services continues to rise.

- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): \$1 billion**

TEFAP Commodities: Congress should provide \$900 million for TEFAP food purchases to ensure food banks and emergency food providers are able to better meet high demand. This also will mitigate the cliff effect from the reduction of food coming through the Food Purchase and Distribution Program.

TEFAP Storage and Distribution Funds: Congress should appropriate the fully authorized amount of \$100 million for TEFAP Storage and Distribution Funds. These funds help cover costs associated with distributing TEFAP commodities to emergency food providers and help defray the costs of storing, transporting, and distributing TEFAP foods.

- **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR): \$210 million**

FDPIR provides USDA food to low-income household members, including older adults who are living on Native American lands, and to Native American families residing in nearby designated areas. Congress should provide (a.) \$200 million for administrative costs and food purchases that are consistent with prior fiscal years; (b.) the fully authorized amount of \$5 million for demonstration projects for tribal organizations to enter self-determination contracts to procure foods for FDPIR packages; and (c.) \$5 million for FDPIR traditional foods market development.

- **Provide an increase beyond the current \$325 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**

Additional funding is needed to meet the needs of older adults who are struggling with hunger during the pandemic. In 2020, CSFP provided nutritious food boxes to approximately 736,000 older adults each month.

Thank you for considering our request. We know that food insecure individuals and families were hit disproportionately hard by the economic impact of COVID-19, and we thank you for your strong considerations to bolster the lives and livelihoods of those who are most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition.

Respectfully,

A Place at the Table

Alabama Childhood Food Solutions Inc

Alliance to End Hunger

Beyond Hunger

Black Women's Health Imperative

Bread for the World

Church World Service

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces

Feeding America

First Focus Campaign for Children

GIVN Goods

Islamic Relief USA

Maui Economic Opportunity – the Community Action Agency for the County of Maui

Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger

MCCOY (Marion County Commission on Youth)

Meals on Wheels America

Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program (MCHPP)

Montgomery County Food Council

Move for Hunger

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Council of Jewish Women

National WIC Association

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

NourishKC

Ottawa Food

RESULTS

Share Our Strength

Rise Against Hunger

Save the Children

Save the Children Action Network

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee

Society of St. Andrew

Souper Bowl of Caring

The Children's Agenda

The Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger

The Root Cause Coalition

Union for Reform Judaism

Voices for Virginia's Children