



February 24, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
2267 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders:

We, the undersigned organizations, members of the Alliance to End Hunger, urge you to protect, strengthen and fully fund federal food and nutrition programs in Fiscal Year 2025 and FY 2026 budget appropriations, reconciliation and continuing resolutions. U.S. domestic food assistance programs are critical to keeping people strong and secure in all corners of our nation - in rural, suburban, and urban areas. Federal nutrition programs support farmers and jobs all along the food chain and brace up local economies.

We strongly urge you to reject efforts to use federal nutrition program cuts to reduce or offset spending. Largescale cuts as proposed in menus of potential Congressional actions would have very real and damaging impacts on our families, our communities, and our economy. We express our concern for a growing number of people in our country who will be facing food insecurity and hunger if these cuts are enacted. There are numerous pressures mounting on the cost and availability of food including viral illnesses in animals raised for consumption, a diminished number of agricultural workers, increased food costs, and continuing global conflict.

Consider these priorities and funding requests for federal nutrition programs in the coming weeks.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is one of our nation's most powerful tools to end hunger. It helps the 41+ million Americans, including 1 in 5 children, who participate in the program afford nutritious food.

- Protect and strengthen SNAP through appropriations processes and the Farm Bill;
- Preserve the benefit adequacy and ability to select more healthful dietary choices through the update of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) that was directed by Congress in the 2018 Farm Bill. Do not cut future benefits for all SNAP participants by restricting future updates to the TFP. Such action would cause SNAP benefits to become increasingly inadequate to afford a healthy diet over time.
- Prioritize the dignity and autonomy of people facing hunger and reject efforts to restrict SNAP participants' ability to choose the groceries that work best for their families.
- Do not add additional work requirements for SNAP participants. Most adult SNAP participants are already subject to existing work requirements: general work requirements and an additional stricter set of work requirements and time limits for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs). SNAP rules already limit ABAWDs ages 18 to 54 to three months of benefits every three years unless they are able to document that they are in a work or training program for a minimum number of hours per week.

The majority of people participating in SNAP who can work are working; 84% of SNAP households had at least one person working in the past 12 months. SNAP work requirements serve to limit the amount of time individuals can receive food assistance, add onerous reporting requirements, and impose consequences if a person is unable to document meeting the requirements.

- Do not eliminate SNAP's Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) options. These options are structured to encourage families to attain financial stability while achieving administrative efficiency. Eliminating BBCE options removes the local control of a state to tailor the program to their unique needs, will add to state administrative burden, and create more hardship, especially for families already facing the high costs of housing and childcare.
- Do not cap SNAP benefits at the household of 6 size. This is not a family-friendly proposal, and it unfairly penalizes large families that fall on hard times; it would make it harder for more than 150,000 families to feed their children.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a short-term intervention program for the high-risk population of pregnant and post-partum women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk and live in households with low incomes. **About 6.6 million people participate in WIC each month, including 4 of 10 infants in the United States.** We urge Congress to:

- Secure full funding for WIC to ensure every eligible family who seeks certification can be served;
- Protect implementation of the final rule updating WIC's food packages, which state and local WIC agencies are currently in the process of implementing;
- Pass the MODERN WIC Act to create permanent virtual service authority, giving participants the choice to complete certification appointments in-person at a WIC clinic or virtually by phone or video call.

Senior Nutrition Programs

Senior nutrition services in local communities reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition, promote socialization and improve health and well-being of older people in our nation. Due to inadequate funding and volunteer shortages, **45 percent of community-based Meals on Wheels providers have reported that they have a waitlist or intend to start one.** To support older adults in our local communities, we urge Congress to:

- Increase funding for the OAA Nutrition Program to \$1.842 billion for FY25;
- Protect other critical funding sources for senior nutrition programs, including the Social Services Block Grant.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Investing in the commodity safety net programs The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) supports food banks, food pantries, and other emergency feeding organizations that provide nutritious meals and groceries to their neighbors in areas where people who are not able to access and/or afford enough food live. **Cuts made to these programs will impair the ability of state agencies, food banks and other providers to sufficiently serve community members.** We urge Congress to:

- Provide full funding of \$100 million for the TEFAP storage and distribution account;
- Invest \$15 million to fully fund the TEFAP Rural Infrastructure Grants Program, which helps food banks and other organizations with storage, transportation and distribution of USDA foods.

- Provide \$440 million for the CSFP which would maintain CSFP's current caseload and keep seniors connected to nutritious food amid higher food prices and warehousing costs.

School Meals

School meals provided through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs support our children learning to their fullest potential in public and nonprofit private schools. **About 29.6 million students eat lunch at school, and 72 percent of those lunches served are to students whose families qualify for free and/or reduced-price meals.** To support children and learning, Congress should:

- Reject proposed harmful changes to the National School Lunch Program's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). CEP is a valuable tool to increase efficiency and streamline program administration; CEP leverages verified data from other means-tested programs. The proposal to limit CEP eligibility would dramatically increase administrative costs for schools across the country. Proposals circulated by the House Ways and Means Committee could result in more than 24,000 schools across the country, serving more than 12 million children, no longer eligible to participate in CEP.
- Reject requiring eligibility verification of all school meals applications rather than a targeted percentage. As verification is a cost borne by schools and covered through meal reimbursements, additional time costs to verify applications by school personnel amount to an unfunded mandate for school districts that will result in schools with less money to spend with American food producers and suppliers and less for preparing nutritious meals for America's children.

In addition to food and nutrition programs, consider how proposed legislation and funding actions support or harm people and programs. We encourage the restoration of an enhanced Child Tax Credit that helps improve family economic stability and mobility. We encourage support for, not elimination of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) program, which supports many senior nutrition programs. Many community-based Meals on Wheels and other food providers depend on SSBG funding to bridge shortfalls in program budgets.

Thank you for the consideration of our concerns and priorities (endorsing organizations and individuals below).

Sincerely,



Eric P. Mitchell
President
Alliance to End Hunger

Endorsing Organizations/Individuals:

1890 Universities Foundation
Bread for the World
Congressional Hunger Center
Daniel Silverstein, Heuristic Management
David & Carol Myers Foundation
End Hunger Network
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Fair Food Network
Feeding America
Harriet Giles, Auburn University (Retired)
Islamic Relief USA
March of Dimes
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Meals on Wheels America
National Council on Aging
National WIC Association
Poetry X Hunger
RESULTS
Rise Against Hunger
Save the Children
Share Our Strength
Society of St. Andrew
Terence Meehan, Azimuth Trust
The Community Grocer
Tony Hall, Ambassador and U.S. Congressman (Retired)
UnidosUS
World Renew

CC:

The Honorable John Boozman, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

The Honorable Glenn G.T. Thompson, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable Angie Craig, Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture

The Honorable John Hoeven, Chair
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Member
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Andy Harris, Chair
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee

Th Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr., Ranking Member
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D., Chair
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

The Honorable Tim Walberg, Chair
House Committee on Education and the Workforce

The Honorable Bobby Scott, Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and the Workforce