

## State policy can make a significant impact in reducing food insecurity. The time for California to lead the fight against hunger is **NOW**.

For over two decades, California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) has incubated and advanced innovative policy solutions that increase low-income Californians' access to nutritious, affordable food.

**California must lead the fight against hunger.** The state has long led the nation in innovative policy solutions. Golden State leadership often spurs other states and the nation to take action.

**California is a refuge of opportunity.** If the state were a country, it would be the 6th largest economy in the world. California is an agricultural powerhouse, producing the most food in the nation.

Despite these advantages, many Californians are left behind. The State's true poverty rate is the highest in the nation. **Nearly 40% of low-income Californians lack consistent access to enough food.** The drought has only intensified persistent inequities.

**Nutrition programs are among the most effective tools to reduce poverty and improve health.** CFPA's legislative priorities are focused on breaking the cycle of hunger, poverty and poor health.

## 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Link child nutrition and Medi-Cal by maximizing federal options to enroll students in school nutrition programs and expand access to free meals

Leverage California's Medi-Cal success to strengthen the connection of nutrition to health



Empower California Food Assistance to be a responsive, adaptable and forward-thinking nutrition program that works for Californians in need



Ensure that a lack of safe drinking water does not increase hunger for low-income Californians

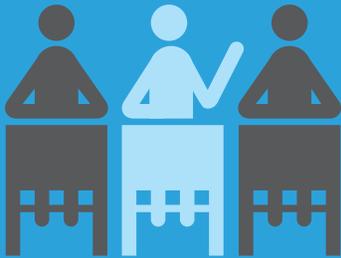


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## CFPA's legislative priorities are focused on breaking the cycle of hunger, poverty and poor health.

One tool could connect **500,000+ at-risk students** in California with much-needed school meals.



Nearly **40% of low-income Californians** lack consistent access to enough food.

That's **4.1 million+** households.

In the Central Valley—where the poverty rate is over 25%—some households devote **20% of their annual median income** of \$14,000 to pay for safe water.



### Count Me In! Expand Access to Nutritious Free School Meals

Well-nourished students can learn, grow, and achieve at their full potential. Unfortunately, millions of low-income students miss out on the health and academic benefits of school meals. Students must first be enrolled in school meal programs to receive them. Efforts to identify and enroll low-income students encounter significant challenges here in California.

California can now paperlessly enroll Medi-Cal students in school meals. Enrollment improvements allow schools to serve free meals to more students in high-poverty schools. We must act now to ensure that low-income students are counted in the most effective way for school meals and school funding, and seize the opportunity to offer nutritious school meals to all students in highly disadvantaged schools.

**Policy Action** *Ensure that school districts use Medi-Cal to identify students for free and reduced-price meals and that the highest poverty schools use available options to serve meals free of cost to students*

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### Budget Advocacy: Invest in Safe Water for CalFresh Families

California is tackling the complex solutions to our water crisis, but many residents are still waiting to feel any relief. While infrastructure plans are developed, tens of thousands of Californians living in poverty must use very limited grocery dollars to buy safe drinking water in addition to food. Families in poverty cannot afford to wait for long-term solutions. Without affordable access to safe water, these households will continue to bear a disproportionate burden of the drought.

**Policy Action** *Provide funding to issue emergency supplemental nutrition benefits to CalFresh recipients who must use their benefits to purchase drinking water when water systems fail and pose a health threat.*

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### Adapt Nutrition Assistance to Meet California Needs

The California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) was created in response to 1996 federal welfare reform that took nutrition assistance away from many lawfully-present immigrants. CFAP reacted in the past, but we should now prepare to meet current and future needs. California must be proactive. California Food Assistance could be a flexible and responsive nutrition assistance program that can step up when federal assistance does not meet California's needs.

A forward-thinking program structure could allow for:

1. Nutrition assistance for special populations, as it currently operates.
2. Temporary nutrition assistance for state-recognized emergencies.
3. Supplemental nutrition to meet specific needs, such as lack of safe water or chronic disease.

**Policy Action** *Create a flexible and adaptable California Food Assistance program structure that can effectively respond to California needs.*

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