

2004 State Legislative Agenda

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) is a statewide food policy and advocacy organization working to improve the health and well-being of low-income Californians by increasing their access to nutritious, affordable food. Unfortunately, accessing good nutrition is a challenge for many: Nearly 6 million Californians live in a household in which an adult is struggling to put food on the table. At the same time, over 25% of the children in California are overweight. The Legislature and the Governor can address these challenges by supporting the following legislative initiatives. Taken together, these initiatives would not cost the state any new money. During these difficult economic times, California cannot afford to forgo initiatives that will help needy families, draw down millions of federal dollars, and save the state money.

Feed hungry minds and tap federal nutrition resources:

Require Breakfast at all of California's Public Schools

Every student should start the day with breakfast; research has shown that kids who eat school breakfast do better on standardized tests and are less disruptive in the classroom. Too many of California's schools do not serve breakfast, including many low-performing schools that have a special responsibility to give children the tools they need to succeed. Twenty-seven states have laws requiring all or certain schools to participate in the School Breakfast Program.



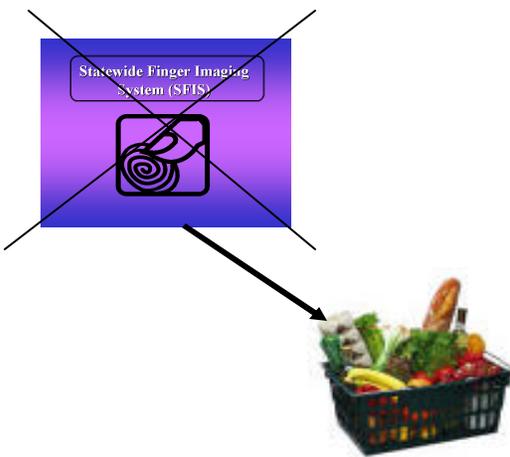
Action: Require that all schools serve breakfast. This will give hundreds of thousands of low-income children a healthy start to their school day, and a start to a successful life.

Save millions, remove waste, attack hunger, and fight fraud responsibly:

Eliminate the Finger Imaging Requirement

California is one of just a handful of states that require every adult member of food stamp households to provide a finger image in order to get benefits. The state spends millions of dollars each year to operate the Statewide Fingerprint Imaging System (SFIS)—a system that detects very little fraud while deterring eligible, hungry people from getting food stamps. The State's own audit doubts the value of this expensive system and there are cheaper and effective multiple aid fraud tools already being used.

Action: Eliminate the finger imaging system to save \$10 million each year and to remove a major barrier from the lengthy and intimidating food stamp application process.



Healthy kids need healthy school lunches:

Make School Lunches Healthier

Over 3 million kids in California eat lunch served through the National School Lunch Program. School meals are often nutritionally superior to the other food in kids' lives, but they still fall short of USDA standards for fat and saturated fat. Nationwide, only 19% of schools meet the USDA requirement that no more than 30% of calories come from fat over the course of a week and only 15% meet the saturated fat requirement (10% of calories per week).

Action: Take three steps to improve the nutrition provided in the school lunch program: (1) draw upon federal resources to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables served as part of school meals; (2) make sure school lunch entrées don't exceed the total amount of fat or saturated fat allowed for the whole meal; and (3) help parents, students, and community members get involved in their school meal program.



Don't let the state's fiscal crisis eat away our future:

Preserve Current Investments in Nutrition



Policymakers can and should do *more* to improve nutrition in California. However, the state's fiscal crisis has already led some policymakers to propose short-sighted cuts that will make *existing* nutrition programs and resources worse. Such cuts might appear to save California money this year but they will certainly compromise the health and well-being of millions of Californians. Existing nutrition programs and resources bring federal funds into the state. By ensuring all Californians access to affordable and nutritious food, the state of California can prevent future medical costs while immediately bringing in federal dollars to stimulate local economies.

Action: Resist short-term cuts to nutrition programs that lead to costly future education and health consequences.

For more information on this agenda, contact George Manalo-LeClair at 415.777.4422 ext. 103 or george@cfpa.net. Visit us at www.cfpa.net