

Opportunity



No mother should have to explain to their child why there isn't a warm dinner at night.

Amanda Hill, Food Pantry Volunteer
Veteran's Transition Center

#Food4All

California is a state of ambition. We aim to lead the nation. While many of us are united in resistance, we still live in two very different Californias: one where certain people thrive – and one where many people struggle just to get by. The tide of California's progress should lift all boats. Economic growth is not success when it leaves so many behind.

Sky-high housing costs force many Californians to choose between basics like food, medicine, and rent. Meanwhile, in these uncertain times, immigrants, seniors, and families living in poverty face unprecedented threats and fear.

California's unrelenting cost of living stretches household budgets further and further, leaving less and less for food. Effective food aid is proven to significantly reduce poverty. We must act now to end the cycle of poverty, poor health, and hunger that hurts millions of Californians, and our state as a whole.

Legislative Call to Action

SB 900 (Wiener & Arambula): Double the 'Fresh' in CalFresh

CalFresh helps more than 4 million low-income people put food on the table. Despite the reach of CalFresh, the federal benefit levels limit the ability of Californians to purchase healthy foods. **Supplemental nutrition incentive programs provide matching dollars tied to the purchase of California-grown vegetables and fruit.** These programs operate locally across the state to help low-income people afford to buy California's abundant variety of fruits and vegetables.

For California's successful programs to reach their full potential for people, farms, and the economy, we must integrate supplemental fruit and vegetable benefits into the CalFresh EBT card, which is widely accepted by food retailers statewide. **We can advance state systems for greater impact on hunger, health, and California agriculture.**

ACTION: Enable the CalFresh EBT system to integrate matching benefits for California produce purchases. Pilot community initiatives to earn and redeem benefits via EBT at grocery stores and farmers' markets.



AB 1871 (Bonta): Don't Make Hunger a School Choice

In his first year as Governor in 1975, Jerry Brown signed a law granting low-income, public school students the right to a nutritious, free or reduced-price meal each school day. **More than four decades later, public schools have changed, but students' need for food has not.**

California's Charter Schools Act of 1992 expanded public school choice. More than 340,000 low-income public school students are now enrolled in California charters. **Unlike other low-income public school students, charter students are not extended the same right to a nutritious school meal.** Hunger should not be a school choice. Charter schools can—and should—help meet their students' basic needs so they can succeed.

ACTION: Ensure that low-income public charter school students, like all other public school students, are guaranteed access to a free or reduced-price, nutritious school meal.



Advance Educational Equity with Breakfast After the Bell: Budget Action



All students deserve to reach their full potential. Unfortunately, too many children don't have enough food at home—they arrive at school hungry, struggling to pay attention in class. School breakfast is proven to boost academic performance, improve attendance, and support positive class environments. But on a typical day, two million low-income California students miss out on school breakfast. **Providing breakfast after the start of the school day overcomes barriers that prevent students from accessing school breakfast.** We can advance equity with breakfast after the bell by giving low-income students a fair shot at success.

ACTION: Strengthen California's After-the-Bell Breakfast Expansion Grant program for high-need schools.

Food with Care: Invest in Low-Income Working Families

A quarter of California's young children live in poverty. To build a stronger future for our children, low-wage working families need access to affordable, quality child care that keeps their children healthy and safe.

Nutrition is an essential part of any child's day, but many parents struggle to feed their families. Child care centers and providers want to help, but high costs and limited resources make it difficult for them to meet the nutritional needs of children in their care. For decades, California helped by supplementing the cost of meals served through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). But in 2012, state funding was cut. **Now less a third of child care centers offer nutritious CACFP meals.**

ACTION: Restore access to healthy food for low-income children by reimbursing child care for serving nutritious meals through CACFP.

