Federal Nutrition Programs: A Bridge for Families in America

FEEDING AMERICA

Everyone needs nutritious food to thrive, and in every community in America, people are working hard to provide for themselves and their families. Yet the latest data shows that in 2024, nearly 48 million people across the country, including 14 million children, experienced food insecurity.

Meanwhile, persistent high costs—from the farm to the grocery store to the gas pump—are increasing food production costs, food prices and pressure on the emergency food system. Because food banks and pantries are deeply connected to local and regional agriculture, financial strain on farmers, ranchers and producers affects the availability and affordability of food for people experiencing hunger. Today, producers and food banks are confronting the same reality: tighter supply, less stability and higher prices. Congress can help stabilize this interconnected food system through timely legislative action.

We urge policymakers to support families, farmers and local economies by:
- Delaying implementation of the SNAP cost shift to states by two years.
- Increasing and sustaining funding for TEFAP food purchases.
- In addition to, not in place of, economic aid for farmers, ranchers and producers, providing new funding dedicated to immediate food and commodity purchases.


Taylor & Liam, *Virginia*

DELAY THE SNAP COST SHIFT

SNAP provides critical food assistance to families across the United States. In fiscal year 2025 (FY25), 42.1 million people received SNAP benefits.

Recent changes to SNAP, including a shift in program costs, could push states to make tough trade-offs. The short timeline for implementation also does not leave states enough time to identify all the reasons for payment errors and deploy targeted solutions.

Payment error rates are about program accuracy. They generally reflect unintentional paperwork or process mistakes that lead to under- or overpayment of benefits.

Based on FY25 payment error rates, 19 states, plus the District of Columbia, may need to pay up to 15% of SNAP food benefits, totaling an estimated $7.74 billion to maintain SNAP benefits starting *as early as* October 2027.

WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO: Delay implementation of the SNAP cost shift to states by two years, as requested by states and counties, to allow states more time to reduce SNAP payment error rates and food banks to adjust to changes in SNAP participation.

August 2026

Hunger in America

47.9 million people, or **14.4%** of the American population, experienced food insecurity in 2024.

As grocery bills and other living costs continue to rise, more households are turning to food banks.
- Food prices in December 2025 were **3.1%** higher than a year prior.
- **86%** of likely voters are concerned about high food prices, according to a Feeding America survey from February 2026.

More Food is Needed to Help Families Facing Hunger

FEEDING AMERICA

Food banks are proven, community-based partners with the infrastructure, relationships and expertise to get food to the people and places where it's needed most. They work closely with American farmers, retailers, manufacturers and local organizations to move food quickly and efficiently, strengthening local communities and farm economies in the process.

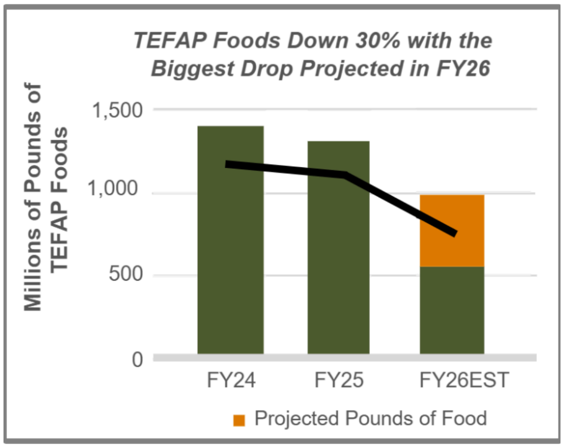
Federal programs like The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) move nutritious foods from farms through food banks to people facing hunger. TEFAP also provides farmers a reliable market, ensures efficient distribution of surplus food, strengthens rural communities and ensures taxpayer investments in agriculture are benefiting growers, producers, ranchers and families facing hunger in America.

INCREASE & SUSTAIN TEFAP FUNDING

A growing number of people are turning to their local food banks for help. Yet nationally, the Feeding America network is facing a 30% decline in pounds of TEFAP food over recent years (FY24 to FY26), with a 25% decline projected from FY25 to FY26 alone.

Food banks are working to meet growing community demand as more families seek assistance. However, demand is rising faster than available resources.

Strong federal investment is needed to ensure critical and effective programs like TEFAP remain efficient and reliable—for farmers, food banks and families.



WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO: Increase and sustain funding for TEFAP food purchases to provide markets for farmers and producers while ensuring better access to nutritious, domestically grown foods for families facing hunger. Specifically, we ask Congress to provide:

- $450 million appropriated for TEFAP food purchases.
- An additional $500 million per year authorized funding in the farm bill for TEFAP food purchases.

PROVIDE FUNDING FOR IMMEDIATE FOOD PURCHASES

Strong investment in USDA food purchases would quickly move nutritious, U.S.-grown food to families while supporting American farmers and producers. Federal commodities have long been a reliable source of food for food banks and a stable market for farmers. Additional food purchases would increase demand for domestically produced agricultural commodities and move more healthy, whole foods to families by leveraging the scale and efficiency of food banks and pantries.

WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO: In addition to, not in place of, economic aid for farmers, ranchers, and producers, provide new funding dedicated to immediate food and commodity purchases to quickly create additional markets for American agriculture and deliver much-needed nutritious food to families facing hunger.