



2020 Legislative Priorities

Feeding Kentucky, a Partner State Association of Feeding America, is Kentucky's largest charitable response to hunger. Our network of 7 regional food banks and over 800 community agencies work together in successful public/private partnerships to assist 1 in 7 Kentuckians a year. Feeding Kentucky members distributed 86 million pounds of food in FY 19, or the equivalent of 72 million meals.

We depend upon strong federal nutrition programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), child nutrition programs such as Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and federal commodity foods through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). SNAP alone provides nine times the meals enabled through the Feeding America food bank network, underscoring the significant role it plays in connecting families with meals nationwide. Food banks also need strong charitable giving incentives to invest in a robust nonprofit sector that continues to enrich communities and provide vital services. Innovative state programs that strengthen Kentucky's agricultural economy while providing food to our most vulnerable neighbors are also key to the fight to end hunger in Kentucky.

Feeding Kentucky urges Congress and the Kentucky General Assembly to partner with us to create programs that help increase opportunity among the neighbors we serve and that maintain the longstanding bipartisan commitment to protect anti-hunger programs from budget cuts and harmful policy changes.

Federal Policy Initiatives

- **Protect Federal Nutrition Programs**

Federal nutrition programs are the essential foundation for low-income Americans to get the nutritious foods needed when they fall on hard times. SNAP lifts millions of families out of poverty, alleviates food insecurity, and has a proven cost-effective impact on the health and well-being of our most vulnerable. The program provides nine meals for every one meal provided by food banks. Congress must protect SNAP and other critical programs like TEFAP, CSFP, and child nutrition programs to ensure they remain a resource for millions of Americans in need of food assistance, and should:

- **Oppose structural changes to SNAP.** Proposals to block grant or make structural changes to the program would prevent it from responding effectively to fluctuations in need, and efforts to limit broad-based categorical eligibility would increase administrative costs and access barriers.

- **Oppose efforts to cut nutrition programs like SNAP and TEFAP.**
- **Reduce Hunger Through Federal Spending Legislation**
 - **Appropriations legislation should support strong funding for TEFAP**, including providing full funding for TEFAP food purchases at \$350 million a year, and \$100 million for TEFAP storage and distribution funds to support the infrastructure and distribution capacity necessary to meet need.
 - **Appropriations legislation should support strong funding for CSFP** by fully funding the current caseload at \$245 million a year to provide monthly nutritious food packages to low-income seniors. Congress should also provide additional funds to serve any new states with USDA-approved plans.
 - **Appropriations legislation should provide sufficient funding for the Older Americans Act’s home-delivered and congregate meals programs.**

- **Protect and Strengthen Child Nutrition Programs**

The federal child nutrition programs are an essential investment in the one in five children in Kentucky who face hunger. Ensuring all children have the nutritious food they need to learn, grow, and thrive is critical to our nation’s future. Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act provides an important opportunity to strengthen the child feeding programs. Congress can ensure more children can get the meals they need to grow and thrive over the summer by pursuing the following two-pronged strategy that makes it easier for communities to establish summer feeding sites in underserved areas and gives states the flexibility to reach kids in alternate ways.

- **Strengthen summer feeding sites.**
 - **Streamline regulations for community-based providers so that they can feed children year-round.** Currently, community-based organizations like food banks and other nonprofits have to operate the SFSP and the CACFP to provide meals during the summer and after school. Allowing organizations to operate the SFSP year-round would eliminate duplicative administrative processes and ensure that more organizations are able to focus on feeding kids.
 - **Align the area eligibility requirement for summer feeding and educational programs to allow more learning programs to offer meals in the summer.** Reducing area eligibility from 50 percent of area children eligible for free- or reduced-price school meals to 40 percent would allow more community providers to offer meals in the summer.

Action: Support the Summer Meals Act of 2019 S.1908 from Senators Gillibrand (D-NY) and Murkowski (RAK) and H.R.2818 from Reps Young (R-AK) and Larsen (D-WA).

- Allow alternative strategies to reach unserved children.

- **Provide a Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) grocery card to low-income families with children during the summer months to supplement their household food budgets.** In the summer months, many families are left struggling to stretch already limited food budgets even further when they no longer receive meal assistance from school. In fact, one study shows that low-income families spend an additional \$300 dollars on groceries during the summer months.

From 2011-2014, the USDA tested pilot projects at 14 sites across the country, providing low-income families who qualify for free- or reduced-priced school meals with a summer supplemental SNAP card. At participating sites, food insecurity among children dropped by almost one third and children ate more healthfully, consuming more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products, and fewer sugar- sweetened beverages.

Action: Support the Hunger-Free Summer for Kids Act of 2019 S.1918 from Senators Boozman (R-AR), Leahy (D-VT), McConnell (R-KY), Bennet (D-CO), Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Brown (D-OH), and Hoeven (R-ND) and Stop Child Summer Hunger Act of 2019 S. 1941 from Senator Murray (D-WA) and H.R. 3378 from Representative Davis (D-CA)

- **Allow kids to consume meals off-site, which would enable communities to adopt innovative program models to reach children who lack access to a summer feeding site.** During the summer, kids are dispersed. Some are at day camps or other enrichment programs. However, many others are at home being looked after by older siblings, a neighbor or grandparent, and are harder to reach through a single, site-based delivery model. Our communities could protect far more children from hunger if community providers were allowed to send meals home with children or to deliver meals to families in rural communities.

From 2011-2013, the USDA tested pilot projects in six states where community providers sent children home with backpacks of meals for when the site was not open, or delivered meals to rural communities who otherwise couldn't access a traditional summer feeding site. In areas where the site-based model simply is not viable, alternate models that allow communities to operate a meal delivery program or have families pick up meals and take them home can ensure more children access nutrition support during the summer months.

Action: Support the Hunger-Free Summer for Kids Act of 2019 S.1918 from Senators Boozman (R-AR), Leahy (D-VT), McConnell

(R-KY), Bennet (D-CO), Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Brown (D-OH), and Hoeven (R-ND).

- **Ensure a fair, accurate and complete 2020 U.S. Census** by allocating at least \$7.59 billion to support the 2020 decennial Census. The U.S. Constitution mandates that the population of the United States be counted every ten years. The data collected determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and how hundreds of billions of federal dollars are allocated for key programs such as SNAP, the National School Lunch program and Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). If the data are wrong, there will be inequitable distribution of resources for basic community needs such as food and income security. We must ensure a fair and accurate count so that resources are directed to where they are most needed.
- **Strengthen the Nonprofit Community in Tax Policy**
Tax policy plays a key role in the fight against hunger and helps reduce food waste. Food banks rely on support from a variety of sources, including individual and corporate giving, government commodities, and donations from all segments of the food industry.
 - **Protect and strengthen the charitable tax deduction** to ensure the ability of our network to raise needed funds and supplement vital federal programs.
 - **Protect and strengthen food donation tax incentives** which play a powerful role in connecting excess nutritious food with people in need. Without these tax incentives, it would cost growers, retailers, and food companies more to donate food than it would to put it in a landfill.
- **Protect the advocacy rights of nonprofit organizations.** The integrity of food banks and other nonprofits must be preserved by protecting the tax-law ban on electioneering and partisan political activities. We oppose any changes to the provision of federal tax law that protects food banks, other nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations from demands from politicians and others for endorsements and support.

State Policy Initiatives

Feeding Kentucky supports efforts to increase the availability of nutrient-dense locally grown food to low-income Kentuckians through the **Farms to Food Banks program**. We urge the General Assembly to continue supporting initiative with an annual appropriation of at least \$600,000. We also support a state appropriation to **Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry**, which covers the cost of processing donated venison for distribution by food banks. The current state income tax credit for farmers who donate to nonprofit feeding programs “sunsetting” in taxable year 2017. Feeding Kentucky supports the **extension of the tax credit** and an increase in the amount of credit from 10 percent to 20 percent. Feeding Kentucky supports state funding appropriated for **value added processing** to benefit food banks.

Feeding Kentucky urges the General Assembly to **reject proposals to alter core policy components** of the SNAP program such as requiring applicants be drug tested to receive benefits. We oppose efforts to enact even stricter work requirements that make it harder for vulnerable Kentuckians to access food assistance. **Lifting the lifetime ban** on SNAP food assistance benefits for people convicted of drug felonies should be another priority of the General Assembly.

Feeding Kentucky supports effort to allow schools to consider up to 15 minutes as instruction time when students consume **breakfast in the classroom** and educational activities are provided while children eat.

Feeding Kentucky supports efforts to **establish a state earned income tax credit**. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a tax credit for low- and moderate-income working families that is designed to help people afford to work by offsetting the rising costs of child care, transportation, and utilities that working families need. The federal EITC reduces poverty and enhances opportunity for low- to moderate-income families through a tax credit that supplements low wages.

We support efforts to maintain and – where appropriate – **expand nonprofit exemptions** from paying state and local property, sales and use taxes and from collecting sales and use taxes.

We promote and support tax policy that empowers community solutions through nonprofits, such as a **statutory exemption for nonprofits from collecting sales and use tax** on admissions and on any other related fundraising activities.

We **oppose efforts to place a cap on itemized charitable deductions** in an attempt to increase state revenue and balance the state budget.