

Policy Agenda 2022

Vision: A hunger-free community

Mission: Lead our community to ensure that anyone who needs a healthy meal can get one

Policy Principles:

Access to healthy food is a human right.

Food is foundational to community health and economic stability.

All children should receive free school meals.

Free meals at school and in childcare settings creates equity and community by ensuring that every child has the nutrition they need to learn and to thrive. Sustainable government funding should allow schools and childcare providers to serve healthy meals.

Policies should be evaluated for their impact on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Systemic racism is embedded in many long-standing policies and programs. We are committed to examining systems, policies and practices to ensure that they support racial and ethnic diversity and provide equity and inclusion for people from all different backgrounds and life experiences.

Community voice matters.

The communities we serve need access to the electoral process to ensure their needs are met. Second Harvest will support nonpartisan efforts at the local, state and federal levels to increase access to voting and encourage voter registration.



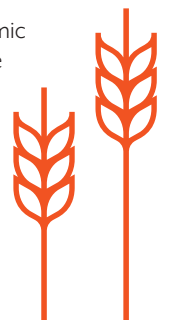
School and Summer Meals:

School meals ensure that all children are nourished so they are ready to learn and to thrive. Universal school meals are a crucial tool to build community. Work can be done at the county, state and federal levels to provide adequate funding and support to school nutrition departments and improve every child's access to healthy school meals.

- Universal School Meals:** At the federal level, Child Nutrition Reauthorization provides an opportunity to fund universal school meals nationwide for the longterm. Waivers provided during the pandemic have allowed all children to access meals at school and have demonstrated the importance of this nutrition. Until universal school meals are the standard, Congress must give U.S. Department of Agriculture the continued authority to issue and extend essential nationwide child nutrition waivers past June 30, 2022.
 - California State Support of Universal School Meals:** In the 2021–22 legislative session, our collective advocacy resulted in significant state investment in universal school meals, offering every student free breakfast and lunch beginning in the 2022–23 school year. Based on feedback from our school partners, we will advocate for additional funding, infrastructure and administrative flexibility.
 - County Support of Universal School Meals:** Second Harvest works with our county partners to help local schools access grants for kitchen and food distribution infrastructure.
 - Summer and After-school Meal Support:** When schools are closed, students still need access to nutrition. Federal programs support summer meals, but they can only be offered in very specific areas at specific times. In addition, there is no option for other planned school closures, such as winter break. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress authorized Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT), which provided money on debit cards to families whose children were missing school meals. We will advocate for these nutritional supports for our community.



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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) / Known as CalFresh in California:

SNAP is a systemic answer to food insecurity. For every meal provided by food banks, nine are provided through SNAP. SNAP needs to be strengthened and made more accessible at both the state and federal level. Looking forward to 2023, advocacy for a robust farm bill will begin with discussions starting in early 2022.



- **Increase Benefits:** USDA made a historic investment by increasing the benefits of the Thrifty Food Plan, but a move to a Low-Cost Food Plan would benefit even more families in securing adequate nutritious food.
- **Inclusion:** SNAP should be available to all.
 - States should not be allowed to exclude participants, such as those returning from incarceration.
 - College students should have continued flexibility to enroll and access benefits, regardless of their employment status.
- **Access:** Require states to offer options to access benefits online, in person and by phone. We would also like to see improved options for online ordering and delivery and for restaurant meals for those who are disabled or elderly.

Support of Food Banks:

Healthy food and financial support from the federal and state level are crucial for food banks. Strong networks of food banks exist throughout the U.S. and support should flow through these networks.

- **Federal Support:** The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a crucial source of food and funding for food banks nationwide. Funding in 2021-22 dropped considerably from the year before though the need in the community did not. Congress should include \$900 million for this crucial and efficient program in the FY2022 spending bill.
- **State Support:** California's support of food banks through CalFood and Emergency Funding is crucial to keep the network strong. Given the continuing need and the fact that federal support has lagged, California should fund at a rate of \$120 million for 2022-23 and ensure that the base amount of funding stays high in future years.



Food and Agricultural Systems:

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed vulnerabilities, exposing the multitude of risks faced by the essential workers who feed this country and the fragility of our supply chains. At the same time, climate change continues to unfold around us, forcing California to grapple with unprecedented wildfires, a resurgent drought and more.

We should advance economic recovery by investing in resilient and reliable regional food systems, including:

- Protecting workers in our fields, kitchens and grocery stores.
- Address long-standing inequities in our food system by directing significant resources to farmers, ranchers and communities of color that have historically been excluded from many state and federal programs.

Food Rescue:

Second Harvest is the leader in food rescue in our two counties. Foods rescued from food generators, wholesalers and grocery stores provide variety and nutrition to our clients while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We are active in the implementation of SB 1383, which will require major food generators and distributors to donate more of their surplus, quality food. Counties and the state will need to continue to invest in infrastructure to enable additional food rescue.

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