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Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.

The State and Federal Landscape & Advocacy Strategies for Agency Partners

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Today's Presenters

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The State and Federal Landscape & Advocacy Strategies for Agency Partners

Today's Advocacy Workshop Overview:

1. Introduction to nonprofit advocacy/lobbying
2. State legislative updates
3. Federal legislative updates
4. 'How to' guide to hosting legislative advocacy meetings with your elected officials



What is advocacy?



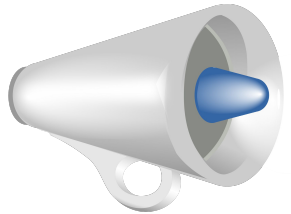
- **Advocacy & Lobbying** are often used interchangeably, but advocacy is much broader than lobbying:
 - Advocacy focuses on *raising awareness* and *influencing public opinion* rather than directly influencing legislation
 - Examples of advocacy issues: environmental protection, animal welfare, affordable housing, healthcare access, food insecurity
 - Examples of advocacy organizations: Greenpeace, Habitat for Humanity, Humane Society, Feeding America
- **Advocacy activities include:**
 - Public education campaigns to influence public opinion
 - Social media campaigns, TV/Radio/Online commercials, Hosting community events to educate the public, Disseminating mailers/fliers, Publishing research reports, Writing Op-Eds, Gathering signatures for public petitions, Organizing public rallies/demonstrations, etc.

What is lobbying?



Lobbying = A Subset of Advocacy Focused on Influencing Legislation

Lobbying involves influencing laws at the federal, state, or local level



Direct Lobbying is any attempt to influence new or existing legislation by communicating with legislators or government officials.
Example: Meeting with a legislator to discuss a bill.



Grassroots Lobbying involves mobilizing partner organizations or the public to influence legislation by contacting legislators. For example, sending an action alert request to contact legislators to support or oppose legislation.



Nonprofit Lobbying



What's allowed (Advocacy/Lobbying)

- ✓ Lobbying is allowed as long as it's not a "substantial part" of a nonprofit's total activities.
(Regulated by the IRS "Substantial Part Test" not to exceed 5% to 15% of total org activities.)

What's not allowed (Partisan Activity: Candidates/Elections)

- ✗ Cannot engage in any activities that support or oppose candidates for public office.
- ✗ Cannot endorse or oppose candidates for public office.
- ✗ Cannot contribute to political campaigns.
- ✗ Cannot use charitable assets for partisan campaign activities.

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Engaging in Advocacy

Levels of Government



Federal



State



County



City

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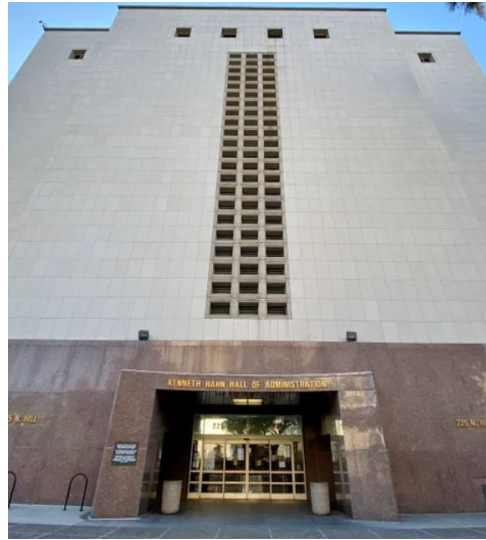


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Engaging in Advocacy



**Mayor Karen Bass &
15 City Council Members
88 Cities in LA County**



**Los Angeles County
Board of Supervisors
Representing 5 Districts**



**Governor of California
State Assembly & Senate**



**Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Senate**

Who are my legislators?

Visit the California Secretary of State website: www.sos.ca.gov

[Home](#) ▶ [Elections and Voter Information](#) ▶

Who Are My Representatives?

Elections Division

About Elections Division

Statewide Election Results

Register to Vote

Pre-Register to Vote

Voter Registration Status

Click on the following links to find your State Senate, State Assembly or United States Congressional Representative, as well as information on how you can contact them.

[State Board of Equalization](#)

[State Senate](#)

[State Assembly](#)

[United States Congress](#)

[United States Senate](#)

[Legislative District Maps](#)

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CA State Legislative Updates



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State Legislative Updates CalFood Program

2025-2026 State Budget Request: \$60 Million



FIGHT HUNGER & SUPPORT CALIFORNIA FARMERS

\$60 Million Ongoing for CalFood Starting in 2025-26 State Budget

Food insecurity in California is again on the rise, with 23% of households overall and 28% of households with children experiencing hunger as of October 2023 (analyses by Northwestern Institute for Policy Studies of the Census Household Pulse Survey).

Food banks have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis and remain a critically needed resource for millions of Californians who have lost other public supports and are struggling to put food on the table. With the ending of CalFresh Emergency Allotments and Pandemic-EBT that represented one third of the food safety net in 2021, combined with the soaring cost of food and ending of many other COVID-era public supports, food banks across the entire state are straining to meet sustained and heightened levels of demand.

"I'm not spending money on anything. I don't have it to spend right now, because I have less money available for food, so that's definitely very real. So I just you know, I put gas in my car to go [to work]. I don't go to other places."

— CalFresh recipient, August 2023

Our Request to Meet Community Need

We request ongoing minimum funding of \$60M General Fund for CalFood (\$52M in addition to the \$8M in baseline annual budget) starting in 2025-26, when current one-time funding runs out.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Baseline	\$8M	\$8M	\$8M	\$8M
One-time		\$112M		Back to \$8M only.
			\$52M	REQUEST: Increase to \$60M ongoing in baseline.
Total	\$188M [average = \$62.7M annually]			

Now is the Time for an Ongoing Commitment to a Hunger-Free Future

We are grateful that CalFood has been funded at \$8M ongoing since the 2017-18 Budget, and for the historic additional investment of \$112M in the 2022-23 Budget and \$52M in the 2023-24 Budget. While this is an important foundation, \$8M was never sufficient to meet the need prior to the pandemic when we had 4 million hungry Californians, and does not reflect the reality of today or future years.

- CalFood is a legislative success due to advocacy by the state's food banks.
- CalFood provides funding to the state's food banks to purchase and distribute California grown and manufactured foods.
- Food banks can purchase expensive foods including milk, eggs, and frozen protein items as well as fresh produce.
- The program was funded at \$8 million pre-pandemic, then boosted by \$164 million in multi-year pandemic funding.
- Pandemic-era funding ended on July 1, 2025.
- Statewide advocacy campaign secured \$60 Million in one-time funding in the state budget for FY 2025-26.

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State Legislative Updates: Diaper Bank Program



California Association
of Diaper Banks

for free diapers. If state funding expires and this structure collapses, it will take years to rebuild if/when future funding is made available.

For Questions, please contact Yajaira Lechuga (Yajaira.Lechuga@sen.ca.gov) with Senator Umberg's office, Stephanie Jerstle-Esparza (stephanie.jerstleesparza@asm.ca.gov), or Josh Gauger (jdg@hbeadvocacy.com), Matthew Hurley (mhurley@capoc.org) with the California Association of Diaper Banks.

Current & Additional Counties Potentially Served by \$23M Annual Diaper Bank Funding



Diaper Bank Program Funded in 2025-2026 State Budget & Coverage Expanded

- Established in 2019, the state's diaper banks have distributed 160 million diapers to over 1 million families with 1.6 million infants.
- Los Angeles Regional Food Bank has distributed over 25 million diapers through 125 agency partners in communities throughout LA County.
- The state legislature passed \$30 million in one-time funding over three years in the 2021-22 budget that expired in June 2024.
- Thanks to the California Association of Diaper Banks and advocacy/lobbying from a range of stakeholders and partners, the Governor and legislature included \$9 million in funding to keep the state's Diaper Bank Program operating in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.
- Three new food banks were added to the program (Ventura, Santa Cruz, Contra Costa & Solano) that now **covers 39 counties and 83% of California residents.**

State Legislative Updates:

AB 777 (C. Rodriguez)- Disaster CalFresh Transparency & Reporting Act

AB 777 Disaster CalFresh Transparency & Reporting Act

This bill would improve California's ability to provide Disaster CalFresh and other disaster-related CalFresh provisions during natural disasters.

Sponsor(s): California Association of Food Banks, GRACE/End Child Poverty CA

BILL SUMMARY

AB 777 will require that all necessary data sharing agreements and points of contact, or other necessary steps, are in place between utility companies and the DSS to allow California to maximize federal food assistance programs and provide support to families affected by disasters.





State Legislative Updates:

SB 411 (Perez)- Stop Child Hunger Act of 2025

SB 411 Stop Child Hunger Act of 2025

This bill would fight child hunger by creating a single statewide SUN Bucks application website.

Sponsor(s): California Association of Food Banks, GRACE/End Child Poverty CA, SEIU California

BILL SUMMARY

SB 411 addresses the gap in access to school meals by ensuring California maximizes federal SUN Bucks aid, and streamlining both families' access and schools' administrative processes through the implementation of a single statewide web application (**Universal Benefits Application**).





State Legislative Updates:

AB 79 (Arambula) - Public Benefits & Higher Education County Liaisons

AB 79 Public Benefits & Higher Education County Liaisons

This bill establishes a statewide knowledge sharing network of basic needs coordinators on college campuses and county liaisons of higher education to improve awareness of public benefit programs like CalFresh and CalWORKs among college students.

Sponsor(s): California Association of Food Banks, Center for Healthy Communities, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization, UAspire, The Michelson Center for Public Policy

BILL SUMMARY

AB 79 would require every county to appoint at least one employee to serve as a county liaison of higher education. This person is responsible for connecting on-campus basic needs coordinators with resources to better assist students with accessing county-administered services such as CalFresh and CalWORKs.



State Legislative Updates:

SB 225 (McNerney)- Summer Meals for Families

SB 225 Summer Meals for Families

This bill would ensure parents and caregivers can have a meal with their child when they visit a summer meal site by requiring the State Department of Education to reimburse summer meal program operators for caregiver meals.

Sponsor(s): California Association of Food Banks

BILL SUMMARY

SB 225 would create a state-funded reimbursement program that would allow summer meals operators to serve a parent, or guardian who accompanies a child to meal sites. By allowing a caregiver to sit and eat alongside their children, SB 225 aims to strengthen the impact of summer meal programs (SFSP) ensuring young children and children with disabilities are able to participate with their caregiver.



State Legislative Updates:

AB 636 (Ortega)- Expand Diaper Access Under MediCal

AB 636 Ortega- Expand Diaper Access Under Medical

This bill would expand access to prescription diapers for Medi-Cal recipients by lowering the qualifying age for “incontinence” from five to three.

Sponsor(s): California Association of Food Banks, GRACE/End Child Poverty CA, National Diaper Bank Network

BILL SUMMARY

AB 636 aims expand access to diapers for low income families allowing children under the age of 5 covered under Medi-Cal to have access to prescription diapers when medically necessary. This is to help prevent painful conditions like Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs), Diaper Dermatitis, and related skin infections.



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Federal Legislative Updates



Federal Updates

SNAP Facts:

- Two-thirds of SNAP recipients are children (40%), seniors (18%), or people living with disabilities (11%)*
- 75% percent of SNAP households live at or near the poverty level*



California SNAP/CalFresh Benefits Overview:

- 5.5 Million enrolled in SNAP/ 3.2 Million households/ 14% of population**
- FY-24 over \$12 Billion in food assistance provided through SNAP

Los Angeles County SNAP/CalFresh Benefits Overview:

- 25% of LA County faces food insecurity; 1 in 4 people***
- 1.6 Million enrolled in CalFresh in LA County; 991K households**
- Provides critical benefits to households facing food insecurity

*USDA June 2024 **CDSS CalFresh Data Dashboard ***USC Dornsife Dec. 2024





Federal Updates



“The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025” H.R. 1

May 22, 2025 - House of Representatives passed H.R. 1

(House of Representatives Bill 1, Designated for priority legislation)

July 1, 2025 - Senate passed its version of H.R. 1

July 3, 2025 - House of Representatives passed the final version of H.R. 1

July 4, 2025 - President signs H.R. 1 into law

H.R. 1 SNAP Cuts:

- Cuts SNAP funding by \$186 Billion over 10 years (Original House Bill cut SNAP by \$300 Billion)
- Feeding America estimates 6 Billion meals lost annually (Original House Bill cut SNAP by 9 Billion meals)
- Projected federal funding cuts to CalFresh by \$1.7 to \$3.7 Billion annually
- 395,000 Californians could lose SNAP/CalFresh eligibility/benefits
- State could lose up to \$827 Million in SNAP/CalFresh benefits activity

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Federal Updates

"The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025" H.R. 1

Implements "Cost-Sharing" SNAP Benefits with the States Starting FY-2028

- Previously benefits were 100% federally funded
- States to fund up to 15% of SNAP benefits based on payment error rates:
<6% = 0%; 6% - 8% = 5%; 8% - 10% = 10%; >10% = 15%
- Effective FY-2028 (Oct. 1, 2027)
- California's error rate FY-24: 11% (9% over/ 2% under-payments)
- Estimated impact: ~\$2 Billion

States to Pay More for SNAP Administration Starting FY-2027

- Increases amount states must pay for SNAP administration from 50% to 75%
- Effective FY-2027 (Oct. 1, 2026) (Federal 25%/ State 75%)
- In California, the cost share is split between the state (70%) and counties (30%)
- Estimated impact: \$685M (\$474 M State/ \$211 M Counties)



Federal Updates

“The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025” H.R. 1

Impacts of “Cost Sharing” and Increased Administration Costs:

- States could pay billions for SNAP benefits, e.g. FY-24 15% = \$1.9 Billion
- States will pay more for SNAP Administration, e.g. FY-24 = \$661 Million
- States may need to cut other programs or raise taxes to fund SNAP benefits

FRAC estimated the potential budgetary impact on CA based on FY-24 SNAP error rates & Admin costs:

California	Percentage Cost Shift 15%	Estimated SNAP Benefits \$12.7 Billion	State Share of Benefit Costs \$1.9 Billion	State Share of Admin Costs \$661 Million	Budgetary Impact \$2.6 Billion
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Federal Updates

“The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025” H.R. 1

Makes SNAP Funding Formula Cost Neutral

- Thrifty Food Plan outlines the cost of nutritious, minimal cost diet that can be prepared at home
- TFP is the USDA’s funding formula for SNAP benefits based on dietary guidelines and food prices
- Next re-evaluation moved from Oct. 1, 2026 to Oct. 1, 2027 and adjustments must be cost neutral
- Links increases to inflation, not rising food costs, which will likely reduce SNAP benefit increases

Expands Work Requirements for New Age Groups:

- Expands work requirements for parents of children ages 14 - 17 (Previously 18+)
- Expands work requirements for ABAWDs (Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents) to ages 55 to 64 (Previously capped at 54; Now 18 - 64)
- Limits benefits to 3 months in a 3 year time period OR beneficiaries must work 20 hours work per week/participate in a qualifying activity (Awaiting guidance from USDA and CDSS)
- Eliminates exemptions for those experiencing homelessness, former foster youth, veterans

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Federal Updates

"The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025" H.R. 1

Implements New SNAP State Waiver Restrictions

- Waivers temporarily allow states to suspend SNAP rules due to high unemployment/ natural disasters
- Under the new law, unemployment must be 10%+ for waiver eligibility
- Previously, an unemployment rate 20% higher than the national average (3.6% vs 4.5%) qualified
- California's current ABAWD time-limit waiver is in effect from Feb. 1, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026
- Currently, no ABAWDs living in California have to meet work requirements to receive CalFresh
- CDSS estimates 303,000 individuals could lose eligibility with a loss of \$499 Million federal funding

Noncitizen Eligibility for SNAP

- H.R. 1 removes SNAP access for refugees and asylum seekers
- Limits SNAP eligibility to: Citizens, Lawfully Permanent Residents, Cuban or Haitian Entrants, and Residents of Compacts of Free Association Agreement (COFA) countries
- CDSS estimates 73,900 noncitizens will lose eligibility and \$133 Million in federal funding annually

Federal Updates

“The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025” H.R. 1

SNAP-Ed Program

- Repeals funding for the SNAP-Ed Program effective Oct. 1, 2025
- Equates to a loss of \$178 million annually
- Millions of Californians will no longer be reached through nutrition education programs

Limits Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) Based on Receipt of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

- The utility deduction lowers “countable income” which can result in higher SNAP benefits
- Limits SUA to households with seniors or disabled members if they receive LIHEAP funded benefit (LIHEAP payments trigger eligibility to claim the SUA deduction)
- Estimated 185,000 households/444,000 individuals will see benefits reduced
- Estimated 15,000 households will lose eligibility
- Estimated loss of \$183 Million federal funding annually

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'The One Big Beautiful Bill Act'

"The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, 2025" H.R. 1 Implementation Timeline:

SNAP Benefit COLA Increases - Possibly linked to inflation and not the TFP (Possible Oct. 1, 2025)

Work Requirements - Upon enactment /Pending USDA guidance (Late '25)

- USDA is analyzing and interpreting the new law
- The law's provisions are broad and need to be clarified, e.g: ABAWD work requirements: Exemptions/what are qualifying activities? How to track compliance? How are error rates calculated? Which data years apply? State appeals process?, etc.
- USDA will issue guidance: Instructions and timelines for provisions; Instructions on new work requirements; How to modify state SNAP systems; Updating benefits software; How to communicate changes to beneficiaries, notices; Training for eligibility workers

States to pay 75% of SNAP Admin - FY-27 (Oct. 1, 2026)

Matching funds "cost-Sharing" SNAP benefits with States - FY-28 (October 1, 2027)

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How to Conduct Legislative Advocacy Meetings with Elected Officials



Conducting Legislative Advocacy Meetings

The Importance of Hosting Legislative Advocacy Meetings:

- Educating legislators about food insecurity in their districts
- Share local food insecurity data *and* your nonprofit's food distribution data to illustrate the level of need
- Share personal stories of individuals and families from the district that you are serving
- Advocate for anti-hunger legislation and programs. Your voice makes a difference! (CalFood, SNAP, TEFAP, CSFP)
- Invite legislators for district site visits so they can meet the neighbors that you are serving and hear their personal stories
- Build relationships and become a trusted resource for data and neighbor stories to include in speeches and policy briefings; provide feedback on legislation; provide support for constituents



Conducting Legislative Advocacy Meetings

Step 1: Schedule an appointment with your legislator:

- Send an email to the scheduling staff, or complete the online meeting request form.
- Introduce your organization and the purpose for your meeting request.
- Include your available dates and times.
- If you do not hear back within a reasonable time, do not get discouraged. Staffers receive a lot of meeting requests, and they may not always respond right away.
- Circle back with a follow up email or telephone call referring to your original meeting request.
- Once confirmed, share a calendar invitation with all attendees/invitees.



Conducting Legislative Advocacy Meetings



Step 2: Conduct Preliminary Research:

- Get to know your legislator
- Check out your legislator's website for biographical information, committee assignments, and recent press releases
- Look up their voting record on anti-hunger legislation
- New to your organization? Make sure you know the legislator's history with your organization
- Follow your legislator on social media

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Conducting Legislative Advocacy Meetings



Step 3: Prepare for the meeting:

- Create your “leave behind” folder
 - Include factsheets on local, county, and state food insecurity/ poverty data
 - Include legislative factsheets on bills/budget requests that you are asking the legislator to support
 - Include recent newsletters and your annual report if available
 - Include the meeting attendees’ business cards

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Conducting Legislative Advocacy Meetings



Step 4: How to engage with your legislator during the meeting:

- Share your food distribution data: number of pounds/ meals distributed, number of households/individuals served
- Give local examples/ share client stories about the impact your programs have in alleviating hunger in your community
- Share your legislative factsheets, and ask your legislator to co-sponsor legislation, vote for or against legislation
- Ask your legislator to agree to a site visit in the district
- Take a group photo with the elected official, and post it on your organization's social media platforms

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Conducting Legislative Advocacy Meetings



Step 5: Follow up after the meeting:

- Send a thank you email/letter to the legislator and staff who attended the meeting
- Follow up with any information or materials that were discussed during the meeting
- Send the list of bills you asked the legislator to support
- Invite the legislator to visit your agency or a distribution site
- Share the visit on your organization's social media platforms

Group Exercise

Host a Legislative Briefing Meeting

1. Break into groups of 3 or more
2. Select one or more bills to advocate for in the meeting
3. Plan the meeting agenda and nominate spokespeople in your group
4. Conduct a mock legislative visit with assigned roles: Legislator, Legislative Director, Advocate 1, Advocate 2, Advocate 3, etc.
 - a. Open with introductions: members of your group; the legislator and policy staff
 - b. Share your nonprofit's mission and your important work in the community
 - c. Outline the bills that you're asking the legislator to support
 - d. Ask the legislator to share their views on the legislation
 - e. List the items you discussed to follow up on after the meeting
 - f. Exchange business cards, take photos for social media, and exchange thank yous

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LA Regional Food Bank – Support/Tools for Agencies



- Policy Updates through Agency Relations Communications:
 - Monthly Policy updates - local, state, federal
 - Legislative briefings and factsheets
 - Policy action requests
 - Sign-on Letters
- State and Federal Legislation Tracker with CAFB:
 - cafoodbanks.org/hunger-legislation-tracker

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Questions?

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Contact the LARFB Policy Team:

We are here to help you become stronger anti-hunger advocates for your communities!

If you are interested in scheduling a meeting or site visit with your legislator please contact:

Chris Carter

ccarter@lafoodbank.org

Claudia Castaneda

ccastaneda@lafoodbank.org

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