



## 2023 State Policy Priorities

Feeding Colorado is an association of the five Feeding America food banks serving all of Colorado and Wyoming, collaborating and leveraging their combined strengths to reach people in every county, every day. Member food banks include Care and Share Food Bank for Southern Colorado, Community Food Share, Food Bank for Larimer County, Food Bank of the Rockies, and Weld Food Bank.

Feeding Colorado's policy agenda is **tied to our mission** of supporting people experiencing food insecurity and reducing the number of people needing food assistance, **driven by information** from neighbors who experience hunger, supported with **data and analysis; external of partisan politics**; focused on the areas in which **our involvement will have the most impact**, and **coordinated with other coalitions** and organizations to determine what unique voice we may bring to an issue.

All public policy priorities may not be captured by this document as additional legislation that affects our ability to nourish our communities, shorten the line for people needing food assistance, and elevate the voices of food banks, partners, and people experiencing food insecurity may arise throughout the year.

### Protect and Strengthen Programs that Fight Hunger

- Maximize federal funds being leveraged in Colorado to fight hunger through increased participation in The Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Women Infants and Children program.
- Eliminate barriers for eligible people to access and utilize government assistance programs and support continuation of expanded benefits and waivers providing more people with more food, helping to alleviate demand on the charitable food assistance network.
- Support universal school meals and other blanket meal provisions such as the Community Eligibility Provision to provide all children with access to healthy food while learning and decrease the administrative burden on school districts.
- Support program improvements that increase the ability of nonprofits, public organizations, and families to feed children when schools are closed.
- Maximize funding and outreach to connect eligible people with existing food assistance programs.
- Educate the public and elected officials about the inability of the charitable food assistance network alone to meet demand.

### Support Organizations that Serve People Facing Hunger

- Leverage the robust resources of the agricultural, manufacturing, and retail industries to benefit people experiencing food insecurity via donations, food purchasing, and disaster relief.
- Increase food and funds for the Feeding Colorado charitable food assistance network, expanding the capacity and ability of food banks and food pantries to procure, store, and distribute high quality, nutritious food to those who need it.
- Invest in expanded capacity and infrastructure for the charitable food assistance network in the form of buildings, equipment, staff, and other non-food necessities.
- Support and expand "Farm to Food Bank" ag. surplus food donation programs to connect excess food with communities in need and provide a win-win to fight hunger and support farmers.
- Support expansion of federal and state funds for healthy food incentives like those that double the value of SNAP dollars at farmer's markets through the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and the Double Up Food Bucks program.
- Support a food system that produces in abundance, is sustainable, encourages food rescue, and responds to the preferences of all residents.



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### **Reduce the Number of People Needing Food Assistance**

We need more food to feed our neighbors today, but we also support investments that prevent hunger tomorrow. Hunger is not primarily the result of personal choices. Instead, it is caused by multiple interconnected factors: inadequate financial resources, unaffordable or inaccessible healthcare, a lack of stable and affordable housing, under-employment, and scarcity of living-wage jobs. We work in partnership with other coalitions, organizations, stakeholders, and constituencies to determine where our involvement would have the most impact, where our voice might bring a unique perspective, and when we should lead on an issue or follow the lead of others' expertise and experiences. In general, we support policies that:

- Provide direct financial assistance to those most at risk of food insecurity through provisions like the state Child Tax Credit and the state Earned Income Tax Credit, ensuring benefits are targeted to individuals and families with the lowest incomes.
- Support policies and programs that promote financial security and household stability to help low-income people build for a better future, such as increasing access to affordable housing, quality childcare for working families, and increasing access to healthcare and health insurance.

### **Encourage a Strong Nonprofit Sector**

- Preserve and expand tax incentives that encourage donations to charitable nonprofits.
- Support policies that balance donations to charity while also ensuring that the government has the resources to meet our collective obligations to provide for the health and well-being of our communities.
- Oppose the imposition of fees, payments in lieu of taxes, and taxes on tax-exempt nonprofit organizations; and oppose floors, caps, or limits on existing charitable giving incentives.
- Support policies that encourage nonprofits to advocate for their missions and require nonprofits to be politically neutral.