



California
Food Policy
Advocates

2017 State Legislative Priorities

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California Food Policy Advocates

AB 164 (Arambula): California Leads to Meet Food Needs



Opportunity

California can lead the fight against hunger. The state has long led the nation in innovative policy solutions. No child should go hungry in the state that produces most of the nation's food. No one holding down a full-time job should struggle to put food on the table. Hunger, in the wealthiest state in the wealthiest nation, is unacceptable.

We must be prepared to effectively fight hunger. Food assistance, like CalFresh, is one of the most effective tools to reduce poverty and improve health. We have a history of stepping up to fight hunger: the California Food Assistance Program for Immigrants (CFAP) successfully responded to 1996 welfare reform that stripped benefits from many lawfully-present residents. The Work Incentive Nutritional Supplement (WINS) provides additional support for working families.

Now is the time for California to be proactive. California Food Assistance should be flexible and responsive so that we can step up if federal assistance does not fully meet California's needs.



Legislative Action

- AB 164 creates a flexible and adaptable California Food Assistance structure that can effectively respond to Californians' food needs through the state EBT system.
- AB 164 allows the state to deliver nutrition benefits when allocations are made in response to circumstances such as drought, emergencies, or federal ineligibility.

Why This Matters

Despite its wealth, California has the nation's highest rate of poverty, according to the Supplemental Poverty Measure. Nearly 40 percent of low-income Californians lack consistent access to enough food — more than 4.1 million households. These are our neighbors, our elders, our children. Now, more than ever, we must work to create a California where no one goes hungry. We can make a significant impact in reducing hunger and take care of our own.

We must be prepared for unforeseen emergencies. We can lead when the response from other levels of government is inadequate. Ending hunger is something we must – and can– do together.

Fight hunger & help California thrive: Let's be prepared to meet food needs as they arise

AB 164 would:

- Create a flexible structure to respond to emerging needs with EBT food benefits
- Utilize existing systems so that the State could provide food assistance for emergencies, supplemental needs, or federal ineligibility
- Benefits issued through this structure would be contingent upon specific budget allocations

Budget Advocacy: Invest in Safe Water for CalFresh Families



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- More than 44,000 disadvantaged Californians are served by failing small water systems. They pay for water twice- in their utility bill and at the store.
- CFPA is advocating for temporary, emergency supplemental CalFresh benefits for residents whose drinking water poses a serious health threat.



“We have been buying water for years because the water is contaminated with arsenic. Every week I buy 10-15 gallons of water with our CalFresh benefits so my daughters have safe water to drink. As a single mother, I work hard to provide for my family... I wish our state leaders would do more to support families like mine.” **Paula Diaz, Arvin, CA**

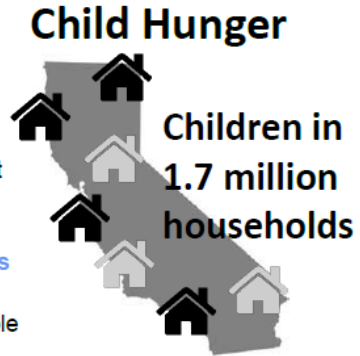
SB 138 (McGuire): Count Me In! Expand Access to School Meals



Opportunity

Across California, more than 1.7 million California households with children struggle to put food on the table. **School meals are extremely effective at fighting the devastating effects of child hunger.** The time is right for California to broaden the reach of schools meals.

By acting now, we can elevate our state's success with Medi-Cal enrollment by directly connecting these low-income children to school meals. This has been successfully piloted in 14 districts, and should be used statewide. **We can double down on our commitment to meet the needs of Californians by maximizing the reach of school meals, and ensuring that the programs are efficient and effective.** School meal programs should be able to focus on what matters most – child health – not burdensome paperwork.



Legislative Action

SB 138 would more effectively identify low-income students and increase access to school meals:

- ➔ SB 138 would ensure that the Department of Education and school districts identify students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals with verified Medi-Cal income data.
- ➔ SB 138 calls for very high poverty schools to provide optimal access to school meals – and receive maximum federal reimbursements with reduced administrative burden – by utilizing federal universal meal provisions to serve breakfast and lunch free of charge to all students.

Why This Matters



Well-nourished students are able to learn, grow, and achieve at their fullest potential. Unfortunately, on an average school day, millions of California's low-income public school students miss out on the health and academic benefits of school meals. SB 138 helps state leaders to fight child hunger and take steps to fight off possible threats to school meal programs, while directing additional federal funds to serve students in high-poverty schools.

Now, more than ever, school districts need the best available tools to identify disadvantaged students. Students need access to resources that support their health, including school meals.

Schools need support to make sure that their school meal programs serve all students in need and remain fiscally viable. SB 138 presents straightforward solutions to improve student access to school meals and reduce administrative burden for school districts, while maximizing all federal funding available.

SB 138 would more effectively identify low-income students and increase access to school meals by:

- Ensuring that Medi-Cal data is used statewide to directly certify income-eligible children for free and reduced-price school meals
- Maximizing this enrollment boost by calling on very high poverty schools to use a federal universal meal provision to serve school breakfast and lunch free to all students

Thank you! Questions?

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For more information, visit <http://cfpa.net/legislative-agenda-2017>

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