

| TALKING POINTS: FOOD4ALL 2023

- **NO CALIFORNIAN SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM FOOD BENEFITS.** Undocumented Californians are unjustly excluded from CalFresh (SNAP), the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP), and other crucial benefit programs. These exclusions contribute to painfully high rates of hunger, which have serious consequences for health, financial security, and children’s long-term success. Nearly half (45%) of undocumented Californians are affected by food insecurity according to recent data from UCLA’s California Health Interview Survey (CHIS).¹
- **IMMIGRANT JUSTICE IS FOOD JUSTICE.** Californians who are immigrants face discrimination and other barriers to meeting their basic needs. In 2019, the median hourly wage for undocumented immigrants in California was \$13,² which is below the living wage for the state. No matter where they are born, every Californian should have the opportunity to earn a fair wage and have food on the table.
- **INFLATION WORSENS FOOD INSECURITY.** The COVID-19 pandemic and rising cost of food has worsened hardships across California, particularly among workers without current immigration status. Among respondents to a 2022 statewide survey, 3 out of 4 immigrants with children worried about running out of food in the past 12 months – and nearly 70% did run out of food before they could afford to buy more.³
- **ACCESS TO FOOD HELPS FAMILIES THRIVE.** Nearly 1 in 10 California children live with at least one parent who is undocumented.⁴ Children who receive CalFresh do better academically, which improves long-term health and economic outcomes.⁵ When parents are well, their children are more likely to be well.⁶ This is why *everyone* in a household should have access to food.
- **FOOD ASSISTANCE IS A COST-EFFECTIVE INVESTMENT IN CALIFORNIA.** Research shows that access to food assistance like CalFresh improves overall health outcomes for individuals with low income and lowers health care costs over the long term.⁷ For example, increased access to SNAP results in \$2,100 in annual health care savings per senior enrolled.⁸ Inclusive food benefits for all Californians will save our state money in the long term.
- **AN EQUITABLE FOOD SAFETY NET CREATES A STRONGER CALIFORNIA.** In fall 2021, participating in CalFresh kept 1 million Californians from experiencing poverty.⁹ Especially because participants tend to spend their benefits quickly and locally, CalFresh helps stimulate and stabilize the economy. Yet, many income-eligible Californians remain excluded from CalFresh due only to immigration status. When every Californian has access to the food they need, our state becomes stronger and more resilient to economic downturns. In California, we have enough resources for everyone to thrive.
- **CALIFORNIANS NEED FOOD4ALL TODAY.** Food4All is an urgent issue. Delaying solutions will further harm California immigrants who continue to be left out of the state’s safety net. Pushing the expansion of CalFresh for immigrants 55 and older to 2027 will only push people further into devastating poverty and hunger. We cannot ask them to wait any longer. **No exceptions! No exclusions! No delays!**

¹ <https://nourishca.org/food4all-briefs/>

² <https://dornsife.usc.edu/eri/the-future-of-immigrant-integration-california-100/>

³ 2022 statewide survey conducted by Nourish California. Publication of these findings is still pending.

⁴ https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ACHildIlsaChild_Children-in-Immigrant-Families-2022-FINAL.pdf

⁵ <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26942>

⁶ <https://www.childtrends.org/blog/a-parents-health-is-one-of-the-strongest-predictors-of-a-childs-health>

⁷ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-is-linked-with-improved-health-outcomes-and-lower-health-care-costs>

⁸ https://bdtrust.org/Policy-Research-Brief-_July-2018.pdf

⁹ <https://www.ppica.org/publication/poverty-in-california/>

