

### **Federal Updates:**

USDA announced on June 4 that \$1 billion will be invested in supporting the nation's emergency food system. The funds include \$500 million for food purchases through TEFAP, \$400 million for states to purchase local foods to distribute to food banks and other emergency feeding organizations, and \$100 million for states to fund last-mile distribution and capacity costs.

The *Closing the Meal Gap Act of 2021*, introduced by Representative Alma Adams (D-NC) and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), is designed to expand and strengthen SNAP benefits for households experiencing hunger. The proposal will address summer hunger by raising the baseline benefit for all SNAP households, allocating more funds to those with large medical and housing expenses, and increasing access to the program.

The Senate has been holding hearings on priorities for Child Nutrition Reauthorization and to gather insight on how it should improve and strengthen the child nutrition and school meal programs. We are seeking to retain most of the flexibilities we received during the economic closure in 2020 including the elimination of the congregant feeding requirements for summer food and to streamline the regulations between Kids Café and Summer Food Service Program. We expect to see votes in the Senate on child nutrition legislation in September of 2021. Just in time for hunger action month.

The Biden administration withdrew a SNAP rule made by the Trump administration that made changes to categorical eligibility. The withdrawal of the rule will preserve benefits for more than 3 million people in low-income families working their way up the economic ladder and ensures a direct connection to free school meals for the children in their households who are receiving SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid.

A new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study, *Barriers that Constrain the Adequacy of SNAP Allotments*, found that nearly 9 out of 10 SNAP participants face barriers in providing their household with a healthy diet throughout the month. The report reveals the most common barrier that SNAP participants face when trying to achieve a healthy diet: affordable foods.

Additionally, the USDA released the results of their own study that demonstrated that work requirements for able bodied adults without dependents enrolled in SNAP only resulted in deeper food insecurity rates and did not actually improve access to employment or educational opportunities. Feeding America and FRAC are working with the network to remove these requirements in the farm bill work expected to start in 2022.

### **State Updates:**

As of July 1, 2021, anyone with a felony substance abuse conviction will no longer be denied SNAP benefits in Nevada because of AB 138.

We will be working with the Nevada Department of Agriculture on the implementation of the Home Feeds Nevada Food Purchase Program created in SB 370. Although the Legislature did appropriate \$7.6m dollars of American Rescue money for food security the Legislature did not prescribe any guidance on how those dollars will be distributed. The partnership with the Nevada Department of Ag does present a number of opportunities to leverage seed money for Home Feeds Nevada, and to fund one-time projects over the next two years.