

Blueprint to End Hunger Federal Policy Coalition

Talking Points for Site Visits

*As an organization/community member with a stake in the 2022/23 Farm Bill, ask yourself what talking points **YOU** would use when meeting with a member of congress. Write it out in the pertinent section, but leave any data points specific to your community/organization blank so other organizations can use the talking point as a template for their own visits.*

Previous Farm Bill Training recordings:

1. [Farm Bill 2023 Discussion Series, Part 1: Farm Bill 101](#)
2. [Farm Bill Discussion Series, Part 2: Shared Values & Actions](#)
3. [Farm Bill 2023 Discussion Series, Part 3: Planning Site Visits](#)

There are many titles in the farm bill, many of which we do not touch upon here. *For questions regarding other titles please contact Meighen Lovelace:*
meighen.lovelace@mountainharvest.org

Charitable Feeding Organizations/TEFAP/CSFP

Contact: Effie Rorke (Feeding Colorado): erorke@feedingcolorado.org

1. Our nation's food banks—and programs like TEFAP and CSFP that support them—are lifelines for families who face challenges putting food on the table.
2. Charitable donations alone cannot ensure families get enough to eat. Food banks rely on federal nutrition programs to help keep shelves stocked for people in need.
3. TEFAP is a federal program that provides food at no cost to individuals in need through organizations such as food banks, food pantries and emergency shelters. A reliable and continuous stream of TEFAP foods is essential, particularly now as the demand for food assistance in our country remains high.
4. TEFAP also has a strong, positive impact on the U.S. farm economy. Foods purchased through TEFAP are required to be domestically grown. According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, TEFAP purchases give U.S. growers and producers an average of 27 cents per dollar, compared to about 16 cents per dollar from retail.
5. Lawmakers must increase TEFAP mandatory funding to ensure the flow of TEFAP foods remains steady throughout the food assistance network, continue to help people facing hunger, and support the U.S. agricultural economy. Congress should also authorize additional funding for TEFAP storage and distribution funds and TEFAP infrastructure grants. This additional funding will better cover the cost of moving TEFAP foods from farms to food banks to families in need, especially in rural communities.

6. Every month, CSFP provides boxes of nutritious food to around 760,000 older adults (age 60+) who are low-income. CSFP helps to prevent the health issues often experienced by older adults facing hunger. Congress should streamline reporting requirements to reduce the administrative burden for program participants and increase program efficiency.

Environment

Erin Foster West (National Young Farmers): erin@youngfarmers.org

1. Food Waste- An estimated 1/3rd of the food produced in the U.S. is landfilled (not composted), which breaks down and contributes to harmful levels of GhG's (Greenhouse Gasses) and supports higher food prices and fosters the belief that non-regenerative farming practices like mono-cropping are necessary to produce higher yields.
2. Each year in the U.S., around 70 billion pounds of food do not make it from farm to plate. Feeding America network food banks partner with growers, producers, food companies, retailers and restaurants to rescue this nutritious food and distribute it to people in need. Congress must act to help increase food donations to communities in need through increasing funding for the TEFAP Farm to Food Bank Program.

Farms and Farm Workers

Evanne Caviness (National Young Farmers): evanne@youngfarmers.org

1. Regenerative Ag - Regenerative agriculture broadly refers to an approach to farming and ranching that builds healthy soils and ecosystems, supports climate-resilient farms and communities, and addresses inequity in agriculture. Regenerative practices are not new, they have been innovated by Indigenous communities for thousands of years.
2. Equity and Diversity - Farmers hailing from BIPOC communities are some of the most skilled, talented, and resourceful young farmers and ranchers in our network. At the National Young Farmers Coalition, we are fighting to clear the path for their leadership and wisdom to be recognized and regarded as integral in securing a sustainable future for agriculture. We do this by shifting power to farmers of color and prioritizing their values in all of our programs.

Food Chain / Value Chain

Meighen Lovelace (National Alliance to End Hunger): meighen.lovelace@mountainharvest.org

1. Food waste props up food prices, incentivizes away from regenerative agriculture and towards GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) farming practices (Bayer/Monsanto and Cargill) and monocropping etc to get bigger yields and produce more food. It is also the opposite of food donation.

Public Health

Joël McClurg (Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger): jmcclurg@endhungerco.org

1. Having enough healthy food to eat at a young age reduces debilitating and costly chronic diseases in childhood and into adulthood, including heart disease, diabetes, and obesity-related cancers. The financial costs of these preventable diseases can bankrupt individuals and families, and Bread for the World estimates the annual cost of diet related ailments is \$160 billion per year.
2. Adequate funding now to ensure all children and adults have sufficient healthy, fresh, local food to avoid preventable disease saves pain and financial costs later. It's estimated that every dollar spent on a program like WIC returns 3.5 times that in savings over the course of childhood.

Schools

Danielle Bock (Colorado School Nutrition Association): dbock@greeleyschools.org

1. Congress should direct the USDA to to apply a values-based approach to the procurement of food for schools. The 2008 Farm Bill made “geographic preference” an official policy to encourage schools to purchase more local products. In order to provide clarity and help schools procure products from local producers, the law should be changed to explicitly allow schools to require “local” or “regional” as a product specification in school food procurement processes. (Contact Wendy at Nourish Colorado for this one: wendy@nourishcolorado.org)

SNAP Outreach/Advocacy

Anya Rose (Hunger Free Colorado): anya@hungerfreecolorado.org

1. SNAP is the first line of defense against hunger and helps more than 500,000 Coloradans afford the nutritious food they need to thrive each month. It is a dynamic program that fuels economic recovery as households spend their food assistance at local retailers.
2. **Streamline and Simplify to Boost Access** - However, far too many eligible Coloradans are still left out. Less than 60% of low income, likely eligible, Coloradans accessed the program in 2019. This is in part because the process to apply and stay on the program is confusing, long, and burdensome. The Farm Bill should strive to make accessing SNAP easier by streamlining the application and recertification process, simplifying eligibility rules, and reducing administrative burden for families and counties alike.
3. **SNAP Outreach** - We also need more support for SNAP outreach programs, which provide education, application assistance, and help those with barriers to access to connect with the program. In Colorado, SNAP outreach is crucial for helping households with older adults and people with disabilities, households that speak a language other than English, and households with limited access to technology and in rural areas to access SNAP and be able to bring those food dollars into their local communities. We need the federal government to further invest in this effective program and to reduce the

federal match requirement so that more rural and grassroots groups can do this important work.

4. **Benefit Adequacy** - SNAP can do more to support healthy eating by improving benefit adequacy. SNAP benefits are modest and don't last the full month for most households. During the federal Public Health Emergency, Colorado households are receiving emergency allotments which bring everyone up to the maximum benefit for their household size. But when the public health emergency ends, this boost will go away and we will face a hunger cliff. The average SNAP household will lose \$123 in food benefits per month. This will bring the average benefit per person per day down to about \$5.45 (from \$8 during the pandemic and \$4.25 pre-pandemic). This would have been an even starker drop without the critical and long overdue Thrifty Food Plan update completed by USDA last year, however benefit levels remain inadequate to support a healthy diet.

SNAP Produce Incentives

Wendy Peters Moschetti (Nourish Colorado) wendy@nourishcolorado.org

1. The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Grant Program (GusNIP) was established in the 2018 farm bill and provides permanent funding to state, territories, and tribal nations to offer SNAP incentives and produce prescriptions. SNAP incentive programs provide cash incentives to SNAP shoppers when they use their EBT card to make food purchases at either point of sale or through coupons or vouchers to increase cash for produce purchases. All GusNIP grantees are currently required to match their federal grant dollar for dollar with local cash or in-kind match, a barrier that impedes program growth and reach.
2. In Colorado, this is implemented as Double Up Food Bucks and is offered at farmer markets, farms, small stores, and large retailers across the state. SNAP incentives are administered in a variety of ways across the country but have universally been found to decrease food insecurity and increase produce consumption.
3. In Colorado, the Double Up Food Bucks program is offered at 85 locations in almost 30 counties and provides almost a million dollars in incentives a year. Colorado has also passed a bill allocating \$1Million to the CO Department of Human Services to build the technology that would enable to placement of the SNAP incentives directly on to the SNAP shopper's EBT card, which ultimately could increase reach and efficiency of the program as it would automate the incentive, decrease stigma, and ease administrative burden at retailers.
4. To build on current successes and expand reach and impact, we recommend the following for the next farm bill:
 - a. Increase mandatory funding for GusNIP to \$3Billion
 - i. This should include at a minimum \$500M for current program funding and the remainder for the creation of a new tier supporting statewide expansion where 90% of funds would go to incentives by the end of the grant
 - b. Require no more than 10% match from any grantee on the federal grant
 - c. Codify statutory language that SNAP shoppers can use their SNAP benefits for produce purchases AND buy produce that then earns them more overall SNAP

benefits as allowable, not just buying produce with SNAP and earning more for produce.

Older Adult Nutrition Programs

Wendy Peters Moschetti (Nourish Colorado) wendy@nourishcolorado.org

1. Since 2001, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program has aimed to address the significantly low rates of consumption of fresh produce in older adults by providing grants to state, territories, and tribal nations to provide low-income older adults with coupons to purchase produce at farms, farmers markets, and Community Supported Agriculture sites. Eligible older adults may receive no less than \$20 and no more than \$50 dollars per year. The current mandatory funding for the program is just over \$20 million per year.
2. Colorado is currently only one of a few states that do not participate in the program due to limited grant funding and high administrative costs. Some states who have been participating for many years received a disproportionate amount of funding.
3. To build on success and address challenges we recommend the following for the next farm bill:
 - a. Increase mandatory funding for the program to \$50 million per year and allow program authority for increases through annual appropriations as needed
 - b. Allocate the program funding to states through an equitable formula that accounts for the percent of older adults in each state living at or below 185% of the federal poverty level
 - c. Set aside committed funds for US territories and tribal nations
 - d. Allow states to pursue alternative or electronic redemption models, not just paper checks
 - e. Increase flexibility through increased Administrative funding for all states
 - f. Increase flexibility by allowing up to 50% of distribution models to include food hubs or other aggregators, not just farmers markets

USDA Produce Procurement

Wendy Peters Moschetti (Nourish Colorado) wendy@nourishcolorado.org

1. The 2022 Farmers to Families Food Box Program provided significant access to nutritious foods for households experiencing acute rates of food insecurity due to the pandemic, and demonstrated the USDA's ability to direct funds to benefit small, local growers. To build on success and address challenges we recommend the following for the next farm bill:
2. Congress should now create a new, permanent, values-based fresh produce procurement program at the USDA to connect farmers, food hubs and distributors, and others to food banks and other agencies that do emergency food distribution such as youth-serving organizations, tribal nations, schools, older adult facilities, and other community-based organizations.
3. This new program should be authorized at \$100 million per year in mandatory funding.

4. The USDA should now integrate values other than low-cost bid in awarding contracts in order to provide a wider variety of high-quality and culturally relevant produce, including local & regional geography and sourcing from BIPOC, veteran, and woman-owned farms.

Local & Regional Food Systems

Wendy Peters Moschetti (Nourish Colorado) wendy@nourishcolorado.org

1. The 2018 farm bill created the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) by consolidating the Farmers Market Promotion Program, Local Food Promotion Program, Value-Added Producer Grants, and creating the new Regional Food Systems Partnership Program, and providing permanent, baseline funding for all programs.
2. The next farm bill can build upon this solid foundation, address significant inequities in how these programs have been allocated and granted, and ensure equitable access to these programs moving forward. To do so, we recommend the next farm bill:
 - a. Increase mandatory funding from \$50 million to \$75 million per year and appropriations from \$20 million to \$30 million per year
 - b. Provide simplified “turnkey” grants that require no matching and offer simpler applications for grant requests of \$100,000 and less for Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Programs
 - c. Decrease all match requirements to 10%
 - d. Provide USDA the authority and direction to prioritize geographic diversity and balance in funding
 - e. Allow FMPP funds to cover costs and fees for direct market operations participating in nutrition benefit programs (e.g., EBT machines, etc)
 - f. Provide USDA the authority and direction to set aside a certain percentage of FMLFPP funds to BIPOC- and woman-led organizations or businesses.