

FOOD SECURITY & HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Defend and Strengthen Programs to Reduce Childhood Poverty and Support Nutrition & Health

Protect and expand access to free school meals for all students. Strengthen and simplify programs like Summer EBT, Summer Meals, and WIC. **Deploy or strengthen policies like the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit that reduce childhood poverty and food insecurity.** Enhance farm-to-school connections and promote healthier food options for children wherever food is served or sold.

Improve Food Security & Healthy Food Access

Increase food and flexible cash assistance to residents in need, including children and their families, college students, adults, seniors, and veterans. **Support efforts to reverse recent changes to SNAP that increase administrative burdens to applicants and administrators, reduce current and future benefit amounts, restrict eligibility, and shift program costs to states.** Support any allied initiatives to undo negative Medicaid changes which will have cascading detrimental consequences to the availability of free school meals. **Invest in reducing SNAP error rates, modernizing programs, protecting participants from fraud** and replacing stolen funds. Advocate for revenue policies (i.e., extreme wealth tax) to address gaps in federal food assistance and poverty reduction programs. Support innovative initiatives for food insecure residents not eligible for federal programs. Address disparities in food security and healthy food access among communities of color. Support culturally responsive policies and practices that protect the dignity and safety of food assistance recipients from immigrant communities. Promote SNAP acceptance among small/local vendors. Invest in programs that improve access to local and regional healthy food, including on college campuses, at food banks, farmers markets, and through food-as-medicine initiatives.

Support Small Farmers & Food System Resilience

Institutionalize and fund programs like Local Food for Schools/Childcare and Local Food Purchase Agreement Programs. Address land loss issues (e.g., Heirs Property) and support farmland preservation, **healthy soils, land access strategies and programs, and transition** to the next generation of farmers. Center the unique experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in legislative proposals, and policy and program development to facilitate greater access to land ownership, capital, and markets. **Increase resources and improve policies** that promote values-based group purchasing and institutional procurement initiatives from the region's farmers. Streamline benefit program payments for farmers and promote use of public lands for community food production. Recognize indigenous food security priorities and rights. Invest in regional food system infrastructure and research to increase resilience.

Support Local Food Entrepreneurs, Businesses, & Workforce Development

Strengthen entrepreneurial, cooperative, and workforce development programs in the regional food economy which will result in increased employment opportunities which pay living wages. Target investments to address inequities faced by communities of color. Create career pipelines and

improve health and safety for food/agriculture workers. Invest in regional food production and distribution infrastructure to support small businesses including subsidized regional commercial kitchen space.