



## **Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma 2024 Policy Position and Priorities Summary**

### **Where We Stand**

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma recognizes that Oklahoma has the fifth highest food insecurity rate in the country. To end hunger in Oklahoma, we must craft and champion policies that address the root causes of hunger and poverty in our state. Oklahoma is currently faced with challenges such as rising costs of goods and services, but stagnant wages continue to suppress the buying power of families across the state. We support policies that enforce stronger communities, where all individuals have the right to nutritious food, financial stability and healthy lives.

Our mission will always include the emergency distribution of nutritious food; however, we know that we cannot end hunger in our state without advocating for policies that focus on the conditions that cause food insecurity and poverty in the first place. Our priorities set a vision for local, state and federal leaders to support policies that drive us towards an Oklahoma where no one goes hungry.

### **The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma Supports:**

#### **State**

1. Alleviating strains on families for school meal affordability as schools transition from pandemic support.
2. Policies that support living wages for Oklahomans.
3. Providing economic relief to those who are burdened by sales tax on groceries while protecting local and state funding of services.
4. Addressing lingering supply chain challenges and prioritizing the needs of hunger relief organizations so that food security efforts remain strong.
5. Providing sales tax exemptions for food bank facility expansions.
6. Utilizing state resources for investment in local food purchasing to increase the Regional Food Bank's capacity to source from Oklahoma growers and producers.
7. Streamlining SNAP access for Oklahomans re-entering society post-incarceration.
8. Protecting and strengthening tax credits for working families, such as the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit.
9. Policies that meet the demand for affordable housing and promote equitable access to said housing.

10. Leveraging Medicaid to improve access to nutritious food.
11. Policies that address benefit cliffs that may keep Oklahomans from advancing in the workforce.
12. Implementing the SNAP Standard Medical Deduction.
13. Policies that address root causes of poverty.
14. Creating opportunities for state employees to volunteer at 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

## **Federal**

1. Updating the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act to lift the congregate meal requirement.
2. Implementing economic security strategies from the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health recommendations such as:
  - a. Making the child tax credit expansion permanent and maintaining full refundability.
  - b. Continuing the expansion and full refundability of the Earned Income Tax Credit.
  - c. Federal policies that support living wages for Oklahomans.
3. Modernizing, strengthening and funding nutrition and agriculture provisions of the 2023 Farm Bill. To include but not be limited to:
  - a. Making the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) online pilot permanent.
  - b. Maintaining the thrifty food plan adjustment to SNAP benefits that prevents the loss of purchasing power for nutritious foods.
  - c. Improving SNAP eligibility requirements by modernizing deductions.
  - d. Expanding SNAP purchasing eligibility to include hot foods.
  - e. Increasing The Emergency Food Assistance Program funding by \$250M, authorizing \$200M for TEFAP storage and distribution and \$15M for TEFAP infrastructure grants.
  - f. Allowing tribal nations to utilize both Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR) and SNAP.
  - g. Continuing the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive program.
  - h. Simplifying paperwork requirements for the Commodities Supplemental Food Program.
4. Protecting and expanding WIC funding.

## **The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma Opposes:**

1. Legislation that reduces funding of core services and programs that aid Oklahomans in need.
2. Policies, legislation, or rules that create barriers and inequitable access to food assistance.