



# ENDING HUNGER

*Recommendations from Oregonians for the White House*

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President United States of America  
The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear President Biden,

Thank you for your leadership in convening the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health. I am grateful that you have demonstrated a deep commitment to finding solutions to end hunger, improve access to nutritious foods, and strengthen our nation's food system. When the last conference was held more than 50 years ago, it elevated hunger as a national priority and paved the way to significant reductions in food insecurity.

Unfortunately, millions of Americans continue to struggle with hunger, diet-related diseases, and lack of access to affordable, nutritious food. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated this crisis and brought to light the urgency of addressing the gaps and vulnerabilities in our country's food security and nutrition programs. We urgently need to develop comprehensive solutions to transform the U.S. food policy agenda and finally end hunger.

As a leader on the Education and Labor Committee and member of the Congressional Hunger Caucus, I have long been committed to finding [solutions to end hunger](#), [improve access to nutritious foods](#), and [strengthen our nation's food system](#). We need a comprehensive approach to address this problem. We must pass laws based on effective and equitable policies to bolster food security, enhance nutrition education, and invest in expanding healthy food production and accessibility.

To better understand what is working and what can be improved, I hosted a [virtual roundtable discussion](#) on hunger with Oregon's leading hunger and nutrition advocates. Our discussion included people who have experienced hunger and food insecurity as well as representatives from regional food banks and pantries, nutrition services, community-based organizations and community action agencies, farmers' markets, school food authorities, and institutions of higher education.

Based on the feedback I received, I urge you to consider the following recommendations organized by the pillars identified by your administration to define the scope of the upcoming conference:

---

## IMPROVE FOOD ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

---



### *Feedback From Roundtable Participants & Ideas for Action:*

- Make improvements to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Remove time limits
  - End exclusions for immigrants and college students
  - Increase benefit levels for older adults
  - Establish parity for Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands
  - Modernize benefits to reflect the true cost of healthy food
  - Expand opportunities for direct certification with other basic needs assistance programs
  - Update the federal poverty level to be in line with earning a living wage, as well as recognize regional wage differences in the United States
- Address basic needs costs and systemic barriers that worsen food insecurity
  - Reinstate the enhanced and expanded Child Tax Credit
  - Increase supply of affordable child care
  - Expand eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit to all workers

- Better support people in the criminal justice system—[according to studies](#) from the National Institute of Health, up to 91 percent of formerly incarcerated people experience food insecurity
  - End policies that result in mass incarceration
  - Improve transition services, including early access to applications for SNAP benefits for people who are incarcerated and nearing the completion of their sentence
  - Remove bans on basic needs assistance for people with certain convictions
- Improve access to affordable housing
  - Limit depreciation for vacant units
  - Increase funding for programs that distribute housing and utility assistance to help farmworkers remain housed and reliably access kitchens
- Implement a pathway to citizenship
- Expand the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
  - Increase TEFAP funding to \$1 billion
- Amend 7 CFR 251.5 so states are prohibited from increasing barriers to accessing food service
- Strengthen Child Nutrition Programs
  - Increase funds for nutrition services to expand access to entire households
- Improve access to food for low-income families, farmworkers, and migrant and seasonal workers in rural communities
  - Develop pilot program for healthy corner stores to help “mom and pop shops” in small towns provide access to nutritious, fresh food
  - Destigmatize access to SNAP and WIC and provide information on how to access assistance through community organizations and public education campaigns in rural communities
  - Enhance data collection on food deserts, and incorporate distance to access food
  - Work with trusted programs, like those under the National Farmworker Jobs Program, in communities to distribute foods and assistance at worksites
  - Expand the Fair Labor Standards Act and National Labor Relations Act to farmworkers
    - Strengthen standards for kitchens and dining areas
- Invest in Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)
  - Further invest in GusNIP to continue effective state and local nutrition incentive programs, like further [expanding Double-Up Food Bucks](#) or creating similar matching incentives for meat and dairy
- Provide federal funding to support expansion of farmers’ markets
- Continue making investments to end the baby formula supply chain crisis
  - Remove barriers and reduce costs that force farmworkers and low-income families to travel beyond their normal shopping areas to find overpriced baby formula and spend more on gas



### ***Oregon as a Model:***

- [Double-Up Food Bucks](#) - During our roundtable we discussed the Astoria Co-Op and their implementation of the Double Up Food Bucks program. This program helps Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in Oregon better access fruits and vegetables by providing matching funds for future purchases of produce. This incentive improves healthy food access and decreases costs for SNAP beneficiaries. It also increases economic opportunities for local farmers.
  - o Recommendation: Expand this program nationwide at all points of sale, including grocery stores and farmers' markets
- [Oregon Worker Relief Coalition](#) - provides financial support directly to Oregonians who have lost their jobs but are ineligible for Unemployment Insurance and federal stimulus relief because of their immigration status, causing them to face hunger, homelessness, and economic hardship.
  - o Farmworkers may have greater access to services if the assistance is funneled through a community-based organization
  - o Recommendation: Apply this model to distributing money for food, child care, and other essentials



### ***Related Legislative Activities:***

In Congress, one of my top priorities is to address food insecurity. As Chair of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services, our subcommittee has taken [legislative action](#) and provided [oversight](#) to expand food access for vulnerable people in our communities, especially [children](#), [seniors](#), and [low-income families](#). There are many bills in Congress that are relevant to the feedback provided during my roundtable and should be passed immediately, including:

- [H.R. 1919](#), the Enhance Access To SNAP Act: to address college food insecurity by eliminating the restriction on college students participating in SNAP.
- [H.R. 1753](#), the Improving Access to Nutrition Act: to end the outdated, ineffective Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) work requirement and time limit.
- [H.R. 2837](#), the Making Essentials Available and Lawful (MEAL) Act: to reduce recidivism and hunger by removing the lifetime SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) ban for people with felony drug convictions.

- [H.R. 5227](#), the Lifting Immigrant Families Through Benefits Access Restoration (LIFT the BAR) Act: so our neighbors who are immigrants can access food assistance by eliminating the five-year bar to SNAP, TANF, and other essential federal assistance programs.
- [H.R. 421](#), the Assuring You Uniform Dietary Assistance (AYUDA) Act: so our citizens in territories are on a level playing in food access by expanding SNAP to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- [H.R. 7272](#), the Feed Hungry Veterans Act: so veterans who have served our nation can access food by expanding SNAP eligibility for low-income veterans with service-related disabilities.
- [H.R. 928](#), the American Family Act: to help families afford necessities and cut childhood poverty in half by restoring the Child Tax Credit from President Biden and Congressional Democrats' American Rescue Plan.

---

## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND HEALTH

---



### ***Feedback From Roundtable Participants & Ideas for Action:***

- Increase Collaborative Nutrition Education
  - Break down barriers between medical and non-medical systems, like public schools, to create cohesive nutrition education

### ***Oregon as a Model:***

- Veggie RX – This program supports partnerships between health care clinics and community benefit organizations by identifying patients and connecting them to local produce through a Community-Support Agriculture system or farmers’ market.
  - Recommendation: Expand the Veggie RX program and incorporate similar collaborations at the national level with clinics and further investing in GusNIP

### ***Related Legislative Activities:***

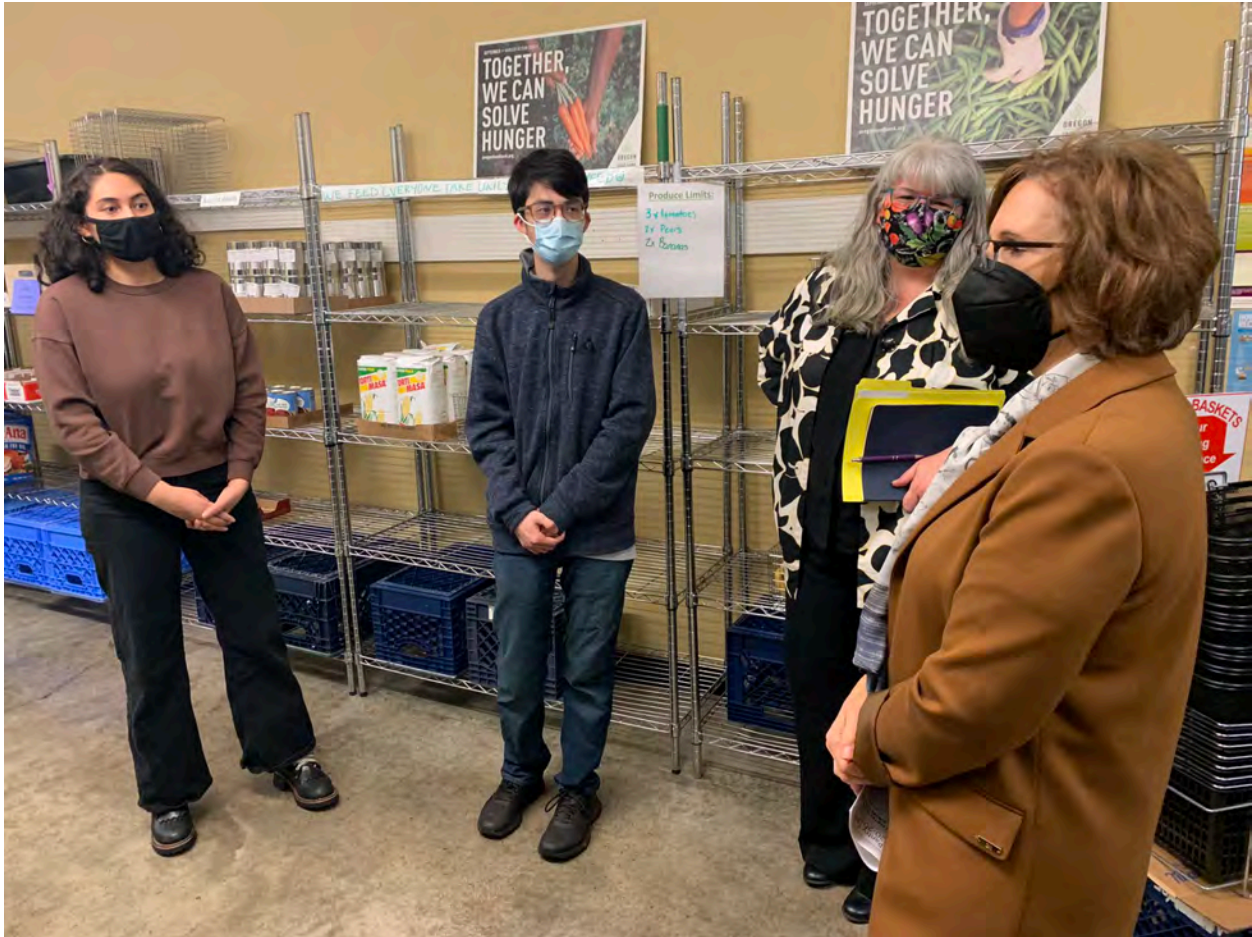
Pass legislation to help address food-related diseases:

- [H.R. 1577](#), the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act: to support Americans addressing obesity by providing access to nutrition therapy and other treatment options for Medicare beneficiaries.

---

## EMPOWER ALL CONSUMERS TO MAKE AND HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY CHOICES

---



### *Feedback from Roundtable Participants & Ideas for Action:*

- Address food insecurity at college and university campuses
  - Increase student awareness of benefits and work to decrease fear of accessing resources
    - Basic Needs Coordinator at Portland State University shared that there is a serious need to destigmatize receiving food benefits and accessing needed resources
  - Connect students to resources with basic needs coordinators and food pantries
  - Directly communicating about benefits that many students who become food insecure are eligible to receive, both locally and through the federal government
    - This would help cut the rate of college students experiencing hunger

- Provide students with copies of documentation needed to apply for federal benefits
- Improve Child Nutrition Programs
  - National School Lunch Program
    - Provide universal access to free School Breakfast and Lunch by enacting Healthy School Meals for All
  - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
    - Extend length of postpartum benefits to two years
    - Extend age limits for children through age six
  - Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
    - Extend grab and go meal options
    - Provide flexible meal service options like non-congregate distribution
  - Eliminate paperwork and burdens for families, especially for families of children with disabilities
    - Senior Director of Nutrition Services for Portland Public Schools shared the story of family struggling to work through civil rights and accommodations paperwork for SFSP
    - Eliminate paperwork by providing free meals for all students during the school day under one program
  - Update pre-pandemic rules to those under child nutrition waiver authorities to expand eligibility and access to meal services, including:
    - Expansion of School Breakfast and Lunch; and,
    - Flexible meal service options like non-congregate distribution
- Increase public education about food assistance
  - Expand program access through public education campaigns for disproportionately food insecure communities, including migrants, refugees, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, college students, and older Americans
  - Increase number of languages for application and informational materials
- Improve food supply chain
  - Increase personal connections to food and help people understand the contributions of farmers and farmworkers
    - Provide education on how and where food is grown, nutrition benefits, and local producers
    - Source food locally by investing in community gardens and gardening education
- Improve access to culturally appropriate foods
  - Provide education about culturally appropriate foods
  - Improve capacity of school food authorities to provide culturally appropriate, vegetarian, and vegan dietary options
- Provide nutrition education in K-12 Schools
  - Demystify terminology around nutrition

- Put nutritious foods in easy to access places in grocery stores
- Incorporate nutrition and dietician services into afterschool programming
- Continue nutrition education
  - Provide opportunities to access nutrition and dietician services in workplaces
  - Develop platforms that provide access to all the resources that are available to a family in one place
- Increase consumption of healthy foods and reduce waste
  - Revise federal taxes to limit food waste and create tax credit system for low margin businesses like family farms
  - Provide tax credits for grocery stores and farms to encourage donating and composting foods
  - Investments in infrastructure and combatting climate change
    - Improve transportation systems to better connect low-income and rural communities to food
    - Increase funding for cold storage and food hubs
    - Enhance Food Processing Facilities
  - Consider facilitating storefronts on-location for farmers, improving access to online marketing for farmers and farmers' markets



## ***Related Legislative Activities and Conclusion***

I accessed food assistance when I was a college student; without it, I would not have had enough to eat. No one should have to feel stigmatized for receiving free and reduced school lunch or SNAP benefits when they need help. During a tour at Portland State University, I heard about the power of basic needs access for students at their on-campus food pantry and through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) at the university's child care center. Making sure people at all stages of education—preschool through higher education—have access to affordable and nutritious foods is a critical part of my work in Congress.

As Chair of the Education Committee's Civil Rights and Human Services Subcommittee, I have been working toward a comprehensive update for the federal child nutrition programs. The last update to our Child Nutrition Programs came more than a decade ago through the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, and we [learned many lessons](#) during the pandemic about how to better serve students. We have an incredible opportunity to make necessary changes to overhaul food access both during and outside school hours. As Chair, I have led four hunger-focused hearings this Congress covering topics including improving nutritional health for [infants](#) and mothers, investing in food access through our [schools](#) and [child care centers](#), and examining the [priorities](#) and [policies](#) of the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. I also [worked](#) throughout the pandemic to [maintain waivers](#), which were based on my bipartisan [COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act](#), for the federal child nutrition programs that allowed students to continue accessing meals during closures. I also worked on the [Keep Kids Fed Act](#), which is an important extension of these programs.

Another critical aspect of making our food system more resilient is sustainability. In a [2021 report](#), the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that the food supply chain accounts for more than 30 percent of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions. I am [leading legislation](#) to help schools combat food waste, which will help the health of both our planet and our kids. [Another bill](#) I lead would make sure students are not contributing to food waste in their rush to play during recess. Additionally, as a member of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, I have [joined efforts](#) to examine how the federal government can improve the resiliency of our agricultural economy and food supply chain.

Access to healthy food is essential to the long-term success and development of our kids, and nutrition is fundamental to everyone's health. I'm working to expand funding for the Farm to School grant program, which helps students better understand the connections between where their food comes from and enhances their interest in eating healthy. A well-rounded education includes nutrition education, and I've [long led](#) efforts to fully fund the grant program created by Title IV-A of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Title IV-A, when if fully funded, could be a critical part of expanding school's capacity to provide nutrition education and physical activities.

Legislation to further integrate healthy meals and nutrition into our schools and address food waste include:

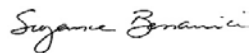
- [H.R. 5919](#), the Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act: my bipartisan legislation to support providers and combat hunger by reducing paperwork burdens and increasing

reimbursements under Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). It would cover a third meal or additional snack and improve the value of reimbursements for family child care home providers.

- [H.R. 3362](#), the Opportunity to Address College Hunger Act: my legislation to provide college students with the information and documents they need to access SNAP.
- [H.R. 5459](#), the School Food Recovery Act: legislation I co-lead to provide schools with the resources they need to address food waste through grants and technical assistance.
- [H.R. 6526](#), the Healthy Meal Time Act: legislation I co-lead to provide students with enough time to eat and enjoy being active by helping schools develop best practices for scheduling lunch and recess.
- [H.R. 3519](#), the Stop Child Hunger Act: to prevent hunger gaps when schools are closed by establishing a permanent, nationwide Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program.
- [H.R. 2011](#), the Wise Investment in Children (WIC) Act: to prevent infants and moms from falling through cracks by extending WIC benefits and reducing paperwork.
- [H.R. 783](#), the Summer Meals Act: to stop kids worrying where the next meal will come from whenever school is out by allowing SFSP to operate year-round, including during afterschool hours, weekends, and holidays.

I appreciate your consideration of the recommendations offered by Oregon stakeholders, and I look forward to working together to end hunger, improve nutrition and physical activity, and eliminate disparities.

Sincerely,




Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary of Health and Human Services Becerra and Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack



UNITED STATES  
REPRESENTATIVE

# Suzanne BONAMICI

 1st District of Oregon

 [CongresswomanBonamici](#)

 [RepBonamici](#)

 [RepBonamici](#)

## OREGON OFFICE

12725 SW Millikan Way  
Suite 220  
Beaverton, OR 97005  
Phone: (503) 469-6010

## WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE

2231 Rayburn House Office  
Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-0855

[Bonamici.House.Gov](#)