



# Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Anti-Hunger and Healthy Food Successes

**Now is the time to build on the progress that has been made to eliminate hunger and commit to a healthier America.**

## Improve Food Access and Affordability

- 21% Increase in SNAP benefits to reflect the true cost of food: As directed by the 2018 Farm Bill, the [USDA evaluated](#) how SNAP benefits are calculated and determined that benefits do not reflect the reality that working families' face today, compared to 1975 when benefits were last updated. As a result, the average Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit increased by \$36.24 per person, per month starting October 1, 2021.
- Invested in SNAP to make the program more workable and accessible: The 2014 Farm Bill established a pilot program to implement [SNAP online](#), which has since been implemented across the country. This will provide more flexibility for participants, particularly for seniors or those with disabilities.
- Provided baby formula flexibilities for WIC families: Senator Stabenow delivered a bipartisan win to improve formula access in the WIC program during the nationwide shortage. Over 6 million women and children depend on WIC each month to buy healthy and nutritious foods.
- Strengthened the food supply chain: Senator Stabenow's [Food Supply Protection Act](#), which passed in the [American Rescue Plan](#), and the Consolidated Appropriations Act put over \$5 billion towards the supply chain to build resiliency, stabilize prices, and prevent the breakdowns that were experienced throughout the pandemic.
- Invested in the food bank network: The supply chain funding in the American Rescue Plan also invested in the food bank network and [USDA is working](#) to implement those funds by building out the TEFAP network, increasing the share of local food that is procured by USDA and bringing in new partners to reach more communities.
- The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act also established the [Dairy Product Donation Act](#), modeled off the 2018 Farm Bill pilot milk donation program, to facilitate the donation of dairy products and minimize food waste.
- The 2018 Farm Bill also established a Farm to Food Bank system to connect surplus food to those in need and reduce food waste.

## Empower All Consumers to Have Access to Healthy Choices

Millions of Americans live in food deserts and struggle to access healthy food in their communities. Programs that increase access to and incentivize purchases of healthy food, as well as educate participants on how to make smart choices help empower families to eat healthy.

- Grew a Michigan pilot program called “Double-up Bucks” to incentivize healthy food purchases into a nationwide federal program. Originally in the 2014 Farm Bill, the 2018 Farm Bill greatly expanded the program into the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) providing permanent funding for incentives to help families stretch their food dollar and increase purchases of fruits and vegetables.
- The 2018 Farm Bill also created a produce prescription program and a center to provide training and TA. A [study](#) to evaluate the program found that GusNIP participants ate more fruits and vegetables than the average American adult and that it improved their food security status.
- Created the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) in the 2014 Farm Bill which was reauthorized and strengthened in the 2018 Farm Bill. HFFI helps to bring healthy food to underserved areas by funding food retail and enterprises.
- Invested in farmers markets through programs like GusNIP, Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP), the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program.
- Focused on nutrition education through programs like SNAP Ed
- Provided additional fruits and vegetables through an increase in the WIC Cash Value Voucher during the pandemic.
- Brought healthy food to kids in school through the Farm to School Program.
- Implemented the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act to update meal standards to improve school meals.

## Equity and Access

Everyone deserves healthy food regardless of their race, age, or where they live. The Senate Agriculture Committee is working to ensure that Americans are not left behind and can invest in their communities.

- Established a [demonstration program](#) in the 2018 Farm Bill to give tribal communities more autonomy in administering the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) program so that foods provided through the program can better

align with dietary and cultural preferences.

- Provided additional assistance for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).
- Provided nutrition assistance to Puerto Rico and the territories throughout the pandemic.
- Secured permanent funding for the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) to invest in farmers markets and [empower](#) local food systems to address food insecurity within communities.
- Created the [Office of Urban Agriculture](#) to advocate for and provide support for urban farmers starting their operations, growing their businesses, and managing risk, bringing food production closer to communities in need.
- Expanded high-speed internet in rural communities in the 2018 Farm Bill by providing new grants that will target areas most in need and connect communities with modern internet access. Access to broadband will help families utilize virtual breastfeeding consultations or tele-health nutrition education services, as well as enroll in programs virtually.

## Pandemic Assistance

As the nation grappled with the COVID-10 global pandemic, the Agriculture Committee [took action](#) to [keep families fed](#) and school and summer meal programs operating. [Reporting](#) shows that [assistance](#) during the pandemic kept food insecurity rates level.

- Provided flexibilities to make it easier to feed kids at school, over the summer and in childcare. This included an increased reimbursement rate, flexibility on paperwork, allowing for multiple meals to be taken home or delivered. The pandemic flexibilities also helped to increase access to food by providing free meals to all children or allowing virtual enrollment in the program for those facing transportation challenges.
- This year, Senator Stabenow led the charge with bipartisan support to extend important [funding and flexibility](#) for communities to provide all children healthy meals over the summer and to allow schools and daycare providers to respond to supply chain challenges and high food costs during the school year
- Provided flexibility for college students to access SNAP during the pandemic through the Consolidated Appropriations Act.

- Allowed states to increase Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for families who needed additional food assistance during the crisis. Not only does SNAP play a critical role in supporting families but it also contributes to local economies and helps lessen the impacts of a recession, [particularly in rural areas](#).
- Established a [Pandemic EBT program](#) during the school year and summer months so that families with children that normally rely on school meals could purchase food instead when school was closed. This option was later extended to children in childcare.
- Expanded funding for food distribution programs like The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and the Commodity Supplemental Nutrition Program (CSFP) when families and seniors most needed it.
- Allowed states to lift certain restrictions on families to make sure they had continued access to nutrition under the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC) and SNAP program.

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