

Advocacy Update 1.17.2019



NTFB VOICE Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

Federal Government Still Shutdown

Collaboration Creates a Direct Food Distribution to Impacted Federal Workers

The North Texas Food Bank will be distributing food directly to federal workers at DFW Airport (along with Tarrant Area Food Bank) and at Dallas Love Field. As the longest government shutdown in history continues, we are mobilizing to ensure that federal employees impacted by the government shutdown have access to food.

We have partnered with teams at both airports to host special distributions for onsite employees. We will be providing emergency food, sharing information about the partner agency network where they can turn to for continued assistance and providing SNAP counselors who will help employees sign up for emergency SNAP benefits.

While this event is specifically for the more than 1000 federal employees that work at the DFW Airport (FAA, TSA and Border Protection), the organizations are working with partners such as the Federal Executive Board to determine additional strategic locations where we can directly serve the greatest number of federal employees in need of food assistance.

For the DFW Airport distribution, NTFB and TAFB have been coordinating operations, distribution, logistics, communication, volunteers and all the parts that go into making an event like this come together. We are grateful to have a partner to help those in need during these uncertain times.

As a special note, at NTFB, this event is moving forward at a quick pace thanks to cross-departmental cooperation, quick communication and teamwork, touching almost every department in-house.

Food Banks exist to help feed people in emergency situations. Whether it be environmental disaster, economic instability or unexpected personal crisis, this is the very reason we are here – to serve those in need. This message of stability has been made clear to our media partners in interviews including WFAA, FOX, NBC, CBS, KRLD, Dallas Morning News and more. We appreciate all team members who are putting in extra hours to make sure we will always remain a leader in the fight against hunger.

As Trisha said, “We are laser focused on ensuring that North Texans in need have access to the food that they need to thrive.”

Early SNAP Benefits

SNAP benefits are being distributed early for the month of February, on or before January 20th. The continuing resolution to fund SNAP requires disbursement of funds 30 days or less after the government shutdown on December 21st. With the early distribution we are advising recipients to space out their food purchases. If food assistance is needed throughout the month of February and early March, our network of partner agencies and pantries will be able to assist them with their needs.

Additionally, we are in close communication with our partner agencies to assess where we are seeing increased need and to let them know we are ready to help them stock their shelves.

We are advising anyone impacted by the government shut-down to visit our website to locate partner agencies near them and encourage you to do so as well.

CSFP aka PAN Program: Senior Boxes

Texas Department of Agriculture TDA has evaluated the availability of funds for each federal nutrition program and estimated that they were able to pay claims for reimbursement. All TDA administered federal nutrition programs are reimbursement programs dependent on the availability of federal funding, which currently has not been filled.

TDA has set February 15th, 2019 as the final date to be able to pay claims for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) from USDA. This information has gone public and we wanted you to rest assured that we are aware and looking into it. We are examining our own inventory and what this looks like for us. Our current complete box inventory is enough for February distribution and more product is ordered to be on the way. Stay tuned as we make sure this program is secure for us and for how long.

86TH State Legislature

In addition to requesting more funding for Surplus Produce through the Texas Department of Agriculture and seeking a bill to make applying for SNAP easier for our seniors, North Texas Food Bank is keeping their eye on pieces of legislation that could impact food security.

Currently the bill roster list includes:

[HB 605](#) Representative Thierry

*Relating to a franchise tax credit for entities that establish a grocery store or healthy corner store in a food desert
(Still investigating impact)*

[HB 285](#) Representative Springer

Relating to work requirements and employment and training services for certain persons receiving benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

(Oppose: It limits Texas' ability in times of unexpected need like disaster and infringes upon States Rights)

[HB 251](#) Representative Farrar

Relating to the exclusion of certain resources in determining eligibility for the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

(Supportive: Removing liquid educational funds and automobiles from the SNAP asset test encourages higher education and work. Possible suggestion by NTFB of an amend to the definition of an automobile to exclude recreation vehicles, inoperable and hobby vehicles)

[SB 236](#) Senator J Nelson

Relating to the use of certain state property for community food gardens.

(Still investigating but overall supportive)

Bills are being filed daily and as legislature members receive their committee assignments, we will begin to develop our Advocacy Day schedule at the Texas Capitol on February 19th.

Questions or Comments? I want to hear from you!

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