

Advocacy Update 10.11.2018

TOP 3 Need to Know

USDA Trade Mitigation Outlook

As part of the Trade Mitigation Program, put in place to ease the tariff's enacted by China and the United States, the Administration is purchasing up to \$1.2 billion in food will be purchased for distribution to food banks and other nonprofit feeding programs.

Food banks already partner with USDA to distribute bonus commodity purchases annually through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and have the expertise and infrastructure to safely distribute the food into the community.

At NTFB, the first of four allotments of food will arrive beginning in late December 2018 and continue through March of 2019, we are current expecting 131 truckloads (approx. 5.24M pounds) of various nutritious foods during this window

Though we are grateful to receive the product, storage and distribution funds were not tied to this the trade mitigation program, leaving food banks to come up with solutions.

Feeding America is asking the USDA for an additional \$200-300M for storage and distribution for their food banks, however, creative solutions may be necessary if funds are not allocated

NTFB has been speaking with news outlets about this opportunity

Public Charge

Public charge is the term for designating whether someone who is seeking permanent resident status (aka a "Green Card") in the US is likely to become dependent on the government to survive. It is used to determine whether or not someone may receive a green card.

A change in the public charge rule was officially published in the Federal Register, yesterday, opening the 60-day public comment period expiring December 10, 2018. As a reminder the executive order will expand the definition of public charge to include other programs such as Section 8 housing vouchers, enrollment in Medicaid Part D, and participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The proposed rule change does not include the Women, Infant & Children Program (WIC).

While many groups are taking supportive or opposing stances on this rule change, North Texas Food Bank is remaining in an educational role only.

As a reminder of our statement:

NTFB feeds hungry people. When there is increased hunger, there is an increased need for food assistance. If this rule change results in decreased participation in federal feeding programs it could increase food insecurity rates. The charitable sector would then need to step up to replace any increased meal gap this will cause. As one of the largest hunger relief organizations in the region, a heavy responsibility would potentially fall on NTFB.

North Texas Food Bank provides food to our partner agencies and through our programs to feed those in need. If the result of this rule change is more hungry people, then it will require increased resources to meet the needs.

SNAP Fraud

Many smaller retail stores claim that the USDA's algorithm method for detecting fraudulent transactions in SNAP has caused them to be dropped from the program, taking away up to large portions of their income. Once the computer program detects an atypical pattern in sales the store owner is issued a letter and must provide transaction evidence within 10 days, a short time window and a process that rarely reverses the decision. Family owned smaller stores often have different ways of transacting business with their local customers against large retailers who typically have predictable patterns. These differences trigger the ALERT system, often resulting in

their ability to take SNAP. Smaller retailers are banding together to fight for their positions as SNAP often makes up a large portion of their sales.