

## Advocacy Update 10.14.2021



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### In Brief -

- End of year federal policy priority updates
- American Rescue Plan Act funds see movement

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## Federal: End of Year Policy Priorities

End of the Year? How are we already near the end of 2021!

The US Congress and the federal government are working on multiple legislative vehicles that need to get through the lengthy process to a Presidential signature. The Build Back Better (aka: The Reconciliation Bill), increasing the debt ceiling, end of year spending appropriations, a budget bill, and not to mention regular order of business, you can imagine that Washington DC is a busy place right now.

The North Texas Food Bank, Feeding Texas, and Feeding America have been focused on a few key federal priorities that we have discussed with our lawmakers, here I wanted to share them.

- The Build Back Better Act (aka: The Reconciliation Bill)
  - Lawmakers hope to pass this bill by Oct 31, 2021
  - Original draft was a \$3.5T spending package
  - Likely to be under that amount (which means things may get cut)
  - Priorities:
    - (Included) Summer EBT - Provides a Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) grocery card to families with children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals during the summer months

and when schools are closed to supplement their household food budgets. This would eliminate the need for congregate feeding sites (group mealtimes and food plans) and allow recipients to purchase meals that fit their needs at their own local grocery retailer.

- (Included) Extension of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) - The American Rescue Plan increased the value of the Child Tax Credit this year to \$3,600 for children under age 6, and \$3,000 for those age 6-17. The CTC is now fully refundable, ensuring families with lower incomes receive a greater increase in the amount received, and making the credit available to many extremely low-income families for the first time.

It is estimated that these changes will allow the parents of 27 million children to receive the credit for the first time and reduce child poverty by half.

- (Not Included 😞) \$900M for USDA to make The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in food purchases to support the program.
  - Though it has not been included, there is still opportunity to receive additional TEFAP support, but it may come through the end of year spending appropriations. More to come on this later.
- National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)'s Military Families Basic Needs Allowance - This provides military families with a monthly stipend for service members whose income is below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (approx. \$28,500 for a family of three).
  - The House passed the 2022 NDAA that will establish this Basic Needs Allowance, the Senate version has passed the Armed Service Committee but is awaiting further action.
- [Dairy Donation Program](#) - \$400M this program reimburses dairy producers and distributors for the donation costs incurred when partnering with local organizations. Funding will be issued in two rounds of \$200M. To learn more information please contact [Emily.DeBord@usda.gov](mailto:Emily.DeBord@usda.gov)

***Top Line Federal Priority: Ensure that the end of year spending bill supports TEFAP food purchases for the emergency feeding network***

## American Rescue Plan Act Support

Authorized American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding has begun finding its way into local appropriations. State and Local governments will soon be able to put their designated plans on how to spend this money into place. The \$1.9 trillion package is intended to combat the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, the State of Texas has recognized the critical nature of the emergency food assistance network and has included potential funding for Texas Food Banks in both the House and Senate ARPA bills. We thank our Texas Legislature for recognizing the work of the 21 food banks in Texas and for their commitment to increasing food security for all Texans.

Additionally, Dallas County has opened their portal for potential proposals from non-profits. [If your Dallas Country organization is interested in submitting a preliminary funding request to support efforts and operations allowed under ARP guidance, please go here.](#)

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Questions or Comments?

[You cannot beat me in NES ExciteBike](#)

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