

## Advocacy Update 12.22.2020



Congress has passed the next COVID-19 Relief bill, and it now awaits the President's signature.

### You may remember

Phase 1: The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act – March 6th, 2020

\$8.3 billion emergency funding bill designed to treat and prevent the spread of COVID-19

Phase 2: Families First Coronavirus Response Act – March 18th, 2020

\$104 billion in expanded nutrition assistance, paid sick leave, enhanced unemployment insurance coverage, free coronavirus testing, and increased federal Medicaid funding

Phase 3: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act – March 27th, 2020

\$2+ trillion in cash relief payments to individual citizens, loan programs for small business, support for hospitals and other medical providers, and various types of economic relief for impacted businesses and industries

### Now Appearing:

Phase 4: Consolidated Appropriations Act - —CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT

\$908 billion - \$284B in Paycheck Protection Program, \$69B for vaccines, testing and health providers, \$25B in rental assistance, \$82B for schools and universities, \$26B in food and farm aid\*\*, \$10B for childcare facilities, \$10B to the post office

\*\*Within the package the most notable items for Food Banks are:

- **A \$13 billion package to increase SNAP benefits by 15% for 6 months**

- Roughly for a family of 4 on SNAP, they will receive about \$100 extra per month
- \$400 Million for TEFAP and up to 20% coverage for administrative, storage and distribution expenses
  - This is being called "Funding for Food Banks"
- \$13M boost to the monthly food box program for seniors, Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

Items that will support our communities & decrease food bank demand:

- Excludes unemployment payments from being counted as income for SNAP eligibility guidelines
- \$5 million to increase SNAP online retailers
- Ensures college students have access to SNAP
- Expands access to P-EBT for children under 6 years old in school or day care feeding programs
  - Previously children in daycare weren't able to receive P-EBT
- Provides \$600 check for Americans making up to \$75k
- \$300 per week in extra unemployment benefits for 11 weeks
- A whole host of smaller items that will bring some relief to families

Also **very** notable is the inclusion of this language:

Subtitle B - Chapter 1 - Agricultural Programs - Section 751

Supports food purchases, donations, and worker protection by including no less than **\$1.5 billion to fund purchases of food for distribution to those in need**, and to provide worker protection measures, and retooling support for farmers, farmers markets, and food processors to respond to COVID-19. Includes a mandatory review of USDA food purchasing and distribution.

We aren't exactly of the details, or what the mechanism is, but this could be really good news for food banks. We will let you know as soon as more information becomes available.

We are grateful for the inclusion of these items. Hunger advocates have been working on these asks, especially the 15% SNAP increase for months, and it is so satisfying to see that all the advocacy work has paid off.

The \$400 Million in funding to TEFAP (aka "USDA foods") is extremely helpful as food banks prepare for the loss of the Food Purchase and Distribution Program (aka "Trade Mitigation").

However, though helpful, it will still not be enough to fill the gap the loss of this program leaves.

Hopefully the \$1.5 billion to fund food purchases and distribution mentioned above will be that gap-fill we have all been asking for.

Stay Tuned!

Questions or Comments?

1994 was the last time congress passed a budget on time

Valerie Stone Hawthorne, PhD

Director, Government Relations

North Texas Food Bank

832.851.0303

[policy@ntfb.org](mailto:policy@ntfb.org)

Don't want these updates any longer? Email [policy@ntfb.org](mailto:policy@ntfb.org) and let me know, I'll remove you quickly but remorsefully...

