



NTFB VOICE

Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

Surplus Agricultural Products Grant - Advocacy Day!



The Surplus Agriculture Act in the Texas State Budget started as a small grant program of about 1 Million dollars and has grown to \$9.4 Million in funding over the past 4 legislative sessions. This grant allows Texas Food Banks to receive produce from farmers that otherwise would be plowed back into the fields because it doesn't meet "grocery store beauty" quality. Our ask to the Texas Legislature is to increase funding for this program. Today all 21 food banks and Texas anti-hunger advocates will ask the 88th legislature to support this request. We ask you to join us.

ACTION: [PLEASE GO HERE](#)

- and let your legislators know how important produce is to the health of our communities. There is already sample text written for you, but I encourage you to add your own words too. Please let Melissa's* story inspire you to use your voice to help amplify hers.

Melissa is a 65-year old African American woman who lives with her brother and son. Both she and her brother receive Social Security, while her son receives SSI. Neither of the family members owns a vehicle, nor is anyone employed at the house. Melissa has been receiving SNAP for 25 years and currently

receives \$250 per month, which lasts her about two weeks. She relies on Brother Bill's, Salvation Army, and grocery stores like Cash Savers and Walmart for food. To get around, she uses Circuit, a free carpool service.

It's hard to find reliable work in her community, with transportation issues and most neighbors working in customer service or entry-level jobs. She also believes that there is a food shortage in her community, as food pantries are always packed. Although she and her household have run out of food before, they have never gone hungry thanks to the North Texas feeding network. However, she wants to buy more healthy food, produce and less off-brand products if only she had more money.

Are you able to get enough healthy food? - "I wouldn't say that. We eat canned goods and I drain out the water. I like when we can get produce here [at Brother Bill's]; that helps us out a lot. Some produce lasts; some doesn't. We could use produce a couple times/ month. We could use a little more produce, but I'm grateful for what we get. Some people don't get as much as we do." – Melissa

Despite her challenges, Melissa remains grateful for the help she receives and the community resources available to her. We want to make sure Melissa and her family can receive more produce.

**Recorded by permission during interview January 2022 in 75212 by Dan Adriansen, name changed*



Hunger is on the rise due to inflation and the expiration of pandemic benefits, but the amount of food donations is not keeping up with demand. Texans are struggling with the cost of food, increasing the need for emergency food assistance from local food banks.

Although the demand for food assistance has decreased since the peak of the pandemic, food banks are projecting a 65% increase in the number of people seeking assistance in 2023 as compared to 2019. The need for food assistance is growing, and the supply of charitable food is not keeping up, primarily due to a

reduction in USDA foods. USDA foods represented 35% of food donations before the pandemic has dropped to 21% in 2023. That loss must be made up somewhere, and we ask the Texas Legislature for help.

Thank you for using your voice to advocate for hungry Texans.



Questions or Comments? Email us!

[Fun fact: There are no such things as vegetables](#)

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