



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Feeding Texas Announces Farm Bill Priorities for 2023 Reauthorization**

***Congress has an opportunity to strengthen our nation's commitment to hunger relief***

**May 3, 2023 (TEXAS)**– As federal lawmakers debate the future of the Farm Bill, the Feeding Texas network calls on our elected officials to reauthorize a bipartisan Farm Bill package that strengthens federal nutrition programs like SNAP and TEFAP and protects investments already made in these critical hunger-fighting programs.

“Everything is bigger in Texas, and that includes the impact of the Farm Bill on our state,” **said Celia Cole, CEO of Feeding Texas**. “Texans represent a major segment of the national food insecure population – 1 in every 12 SNAP recipients, and 1 in every 9 food insecure families reside in Texas. We need Congress to strengthen investments in federal nutrition programs and continue to support Texans facing hunger.”

Feeding Texas recently led Farm Bill visioning sessions with our network of 21 food banks and the Texas Food Policy Roundtable (TFPR), a coalition of more than 60 organizations dedicated to fighting hunger in the state. During these sessions, TFPR and the Feeding Texas network identified shared priorities for this year's Farm Bill reauthorization and created a joint vision statement highlighting ways Congress can fight hunger and strengthen the Farm Bill. The Feeding Texas network is calling on Congress to:

- 1. Improve the adequacy and use of SNAP benefits** by basing the standard SNAP benefit on USDA's Low-Cost Food Plan and/or improving expense deductions. SNAP should also be as convenient to use as cash. Congress should allow SNAP to be used for online or mobile purchases, for hot meals and prepared foods, and at farmers' markets.
- 2. Remove barriers to financial security among SNAP participants** by eliminating the state option to consider assets like vehicles when determining SNAP eligibility and improving access to SNAP for college students seeking to enhance their job prospects and earnings potential.

**3. Bolster the charitable food response** by doubling the current authorization for both TEFAP and TEFAP Storage & Distribution grants and increasing investment in the Farm to Food Bank program.

In addition to these three opportunities to strengthen food security through the Farm Bill, our network is calling on Congress to protect long-time, bipartisan investments in federal hunger relief by rejecting efforts to cut SNAP benefits, rejecting the expansion of ineffective work requirements, and maintaining state options to assign eligibility across assistance programs.

“The federal nutrition programs governed by the Farm Bill are the backbone of hunger relief in our nation,” Cole said. “We urge Congress to pass a Farm Bill that honors the legislation’s bipartisan history while strengthening and protecting valuable investments in hunger-fighting programs for Texas and all Americans.”

Representatives from Feeding Texas and food banks across the state will be visiting Washington, D.C. from May 7-9 for the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference. During this time, we will be meeting with members of Congress to communicate Texas’s vision for the 2023 Farm Bill.

“Commodity food programs provide essential support to U.S. farmers while ensuring a stable supply of nutritious foods for our neighbors,” said **Valerie Hawthorne, Ph.D., Director of Government Relations for the North Texas Food Bank**. “It’s crucial that our country invests in these programs to support both growers and those who rely on their harvests.”

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*Feeding Texas leads a unified effort for a hunger-free Texas. Learn more and find your local food bank at [www.feedingtexas.org](http://www.feedingtexas.org).*

### **About North Texas Food Bank**

The North Texas Food Bank (NTFB) is a top-ranked non-profit hunger-relief organization that sources, packages and distributes food through a network of more than 400 Partner Agencies and organizations across 13 North Texas counties. The organization also provides food to children, seniors and families through various direct-delivery programs, including mobile pantries. It is ranked 87<sup>th</sup> on *Forbes* 2022 Top 100 Charities in America.

In its last fiscal year, the NTFB provided access to nearly 137 million nutritious meals, a 9% percent increase over the prior year. In response to the ongoing elevated hunger crisis, the organization has launched a \$500 million campaign, Nourish North Texas, to provide more food for today and hope for tomorrow by addressing the barriers to food security that our neighbors face.

The North Texas Food Bank is designated a 4-Star Exceptional organization by Charity Navigator based on its governance, integrity and financial stability. NTFB is a member of Feeding America, the nation's largest hunger-relief organization.

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