

NTFB VOICE

Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS



November Edition

Federal Advocacy News

As you have probably heard, Congress approved a two-tiered, short-term measure to fund the government, referred to as a “laddered” continuing resolution. The bill would fund some government departments until mid-January and the rest through early February. This measure avoids a government shutdown during the holidays and allows lawmakers more time to negotiate and agree on funding levels.

So, what’s happening with the Farm Bill?!

It expired on September 30. However, the four leaders of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees agreed to a one-year extension of the 2018 Farm Bill, which maintains funding for important programs like SNAP. U.S. Sen. John Boozman (AR), ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, said, “It is more important than ever to pass a farm bill that reflects the needs and challenges of today and gives certainty to those responsible for producing the food and fiber that feeds and clothes the world. We owe it to them to get this farm bill done right.”



North Texas Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett (TX-30) recently co-sponsored the *Farmers Feeding America Act* ([HR6203](#)). This legislation would significantly increase funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). TEFAP provides commodities like fruits and vegetables, as well as monetary support to food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other types of emergency feeding organizations. In addition to serving individuals, TEFAP supports local agriculture by enabling USDA to purchase food directly from producers.

Crockett also introduced the *Delivering For Rural Seniors Act* ([HR4745](#)), which would seek to improve nutrition access for low-income seniors living in rural areas by providing additional resources to pilot and partner with local organizations, like Meals on Wheels, to deliver nutritious foods to the home through the Commodity Supplemental Nutrition Program (CSFP).

NTFB President and CEO Trisha Cunningham with Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett in March 2023.



Texas Sen. John Cornyn introduced the *Meals for At-Risk Americans Act* ([S3034](#)) that would streamline the application process, provide guidance to states, and increase oversight of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Restaurant Meals Program (RMP). Currently only nine states (*not* including Texas) participate in the program because of the cumbersome, time-consuming application, which must be submitted by mail. The RMP is a state option to allow certain SNAP clients, who might not be able to prepare meals for themselves or who do not have permanent housing for storing and preparing food, to be able to buy prepared meals at restaurants with their SNAP benefits. “The Restaurant Meals Program is an important resource for Americans struggling with food insecurity,” said Sen. Cornyn. “This bill would increase oversight, cut red tape and modernize the application process to make it easier for more states to utilize this critical program.”

USDA Report: Household Food Security in the US in 2022

According to a recently released USDA Economic Research Services report, **Texas is the second-most food-insecure state in the nation behind Arkansas**. An average of 15.5% of households in Texas reported a lack of consistent access to affordable and healthy food between 2020 and 2022. That is more than 4% higher than the national average. Nationwide, food insecurity has increased sharply, with 44 million people living in food insecure households in 2022, up 31% from the previous year.

In our North Texas community, 1 in 8 people, or nearly 640,000, face hunger. The USDA says that typically, children are protected from missed meals and reduced consumption caused by food insecurity. However, this report found that households with children now report higher rates of hunger. **In North Texas, 1 in 6 children face hunger—the fourth highest rate in the country**. The rise in neighbors facing hunger is attributed to a combination of sustained higher prices due to inflation coupled with the end of pandemic-era assistance programs, including changes that had increased access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Local NTFB Advocacy News



The 10th Annual Peanut Butter Drive took place in September as part of National Hunger Action Month. The drive began in 2014 when Plano Mayor Harry LaRosiliere became aware that children were going hungry in his community. He immediately connected with the North Texas Food Bank and our partner agencies to find ways to feed these children and their families. What began in the City of Plano has now expanded to our entire 13-county service area and has become a friendly competition between the area's mayors. To watch the mayors race [click here](#) and for the results of the 2023 Peanut Butter Drive [click here](#).

November at NTFB:

- NTFB provided access to **12,490,537 million meals** in October 2023, including nearly **10.7 million physical meals** and **more than 1.8 million meals through SNAP**.
- The number of physical meals provided in **October is a record high and surpassed the 10.1 million meals** distributed in March of 2021, when North Texas experienced an ice storm during COVID-19. It is also about a **20% increase from the previous month and from a year ago**.



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