



May Advocacy Newsletter 2024

Federal News

The Farm Bill

Also known as the Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2024, H.R 8467.

The House Agriculture Committee held a markup hearing on the Farm Bill, and it passed out of the committee on May 24 by a vote of 32 for to 21 against. While there are provisions in the legislation that are good for farmers, we and the entire Feeding America network have concerns. Areas of concern are:

- Provision that would prevent future SNAP benefits from reflecting the costs associated with updated nutrition guidance—a cut of nearly \$30 billion in food assistance over the next decade.
- An insufficient funding increase for The Emergency Food Assistance Program that moves food from farms to food banks to individuals who face hunger.
- Other provisions that would weaken the structure of nutrition programs.

It is unclear when the Farm Bill will go to the full House of Representatives for a vote. The Senate will release their final draft at the end of June. Given the slim political majorities in each house, it is unclear if a Farm Bill will be passed before the September 30, 2024, deadline or before the election in November.

Take action now to tell your representative that you want a strong Farm Bill – [click here](#).

New Data on Food Insecurity in the United States

Feeding America released their most recent [Map the Meal Gap](#) study that provides local-level estimates of food insecurity and food costs for every county and congressional district. The study builds upon the USDA's latest report of national and state data, which showed a sharp increase in food insecurity in 2022.



Food Insecurity in the United States

13.5% of people in the **US** face hunger, or **1 in 5**, 44 million, **up** from 10.4% in 2021.

18.5% of those are **children** who face hunger, or **1 in 5**, 13 million, **up** from 12.8% in 2021.

23% of the **Black population**, **up** from 19.7% in 2021.

21.4% of the **Latino population**, **up** from 16.6% in 2021.

9.6% of the **White, non-Hispanic population**, **up** from 6.7% in 2021.

Source: USDA Economic Research Service *Household Food Security in the United States in 2022*.

Food Insecurity in Texas



Texas ranks 1st in the U.S. in the number of food insecure people, with nearly **5 million** Texans facing hunger.

16.4% of **Texans** face hunger, or **1 In 6**, 5 million Texans, **up** from 13.7% in 2021.

22.8% of **children** face hunger, or **1 in 4**, 1.7 million, **up** from 4.7% in 2021.

28% of the **Black population**, **up** from 23% in 2021.

23% of the **Latino population**, **up** from 16% in 2021.

10% of the **White, non-Hispanic population**, **up** from 8% in 2021.

Source: Feeding America, *Map the Meal Gap 2022*, released May 15, 2024.

Food Insecurity in the 13-County North Texas Food Bank Service Area



North Texas ranks 4th in the number of people facing hunger, behind Los Angeles, New York and Houston.

14.2% of **North Texans** face hunger, or **1 in 8**, 777,690 individuals, **up** from 11.9% in 2021.

20.8% of **children** face hunger, or **1 in 5**, 286,860 children, **up** from 15.8% in 2021.

28% are **Black**, or **1 in 4**, **up** from 22% in 2021.

20% are **Hispanic**, or **1 in 5**, **up** from 14% in 2021.

9% are **White**, or **1 in 11**, **up** from 7% in 2021.

51% of **people facing hunger** have a family income under the SNAP Income Threshold.

Source: Feeding America, *Map the Meal Gap 2022*, released May 15, 2024.

“While Texas boasts of being bigger in many aspects, leading the nation in food insecurity is not a badge of honor we can proudly wear. The new data from Feeding America confirmed what we already knew. As government aid wanes and the cost of essentials soars, more families turn to food assistance, many for the first time.”, said NTFB President and CEO Trisha Cunningham. Through the

dedication of generous supporters and steadfast partnerships, the North Texas Food Bank delivered a record 144 million meals in FY23, a testament to the power of collective compassion and action in the face of adversity.

Local NTFB News

Annual Mayor Day Event



Nearly 20 mayors from around the region gathered at the North Texas Food Bank on May 15 for the Food Bank's fourth annual Mayor Day. Hosted each spring, the event aims to give mayors from the 13 counties served by the NTFB a look at food insecurity in their communities as well as an understanding of how the NTFB is working to meet the needs in their cities.

Along with receiving information about the NTFB's overall service area, each mayor was provided with data about their community, including the number of people facing hunger and the NTFB partner agencies working in their cities to ensure neighbors have access to nutritious food. Mayors also had the chance to hear from leaders at NTFB's two distribution hubs: Crossroads Community Services' Chief of Staff Taylor Hall and Sharing Life Founder and CEO Teresa Jackson.

Taylor echoed what Trisha shared, telling leaders that the needs among neighbors are higher now than even at the height of the pandemic. She said that Crossroads is focused on ensuring neighbors have consistent access to food, rather than relying on pantries for emergency access only. That means they provide neighbors with monthly appointments to shop at Crossroads' market, and also work to provide neighbors with access to other services.

Teresa agreed and said she believes housing prices are the biggest factor in the higher needs being seen now. She said with rent and housing costs up significantly in the past few years, many of their neighbors cannot afford housing, insurance, transportation costs and groceries. Sharing Life works to

ensure groceries aren't something families are going without, and Teresa said they're doing that in some innovative ways, including through an app that allows neighbors to order the groceries they can use and pick them up at a designated time.

Teresa and Trisha also both emphasized to mayors the importance of advocating with legislators for a strong Farm Bill. Trisha told mayors that NTFB and its partners have proven they know how to meet the need in the community, but they can only do that if the resources to provide access to food are available. The Farm Bill covers several crucial feeding programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program that serves seniors and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.

Along with learning about the latest data on food insecurity, several mayors participated in a short volunteer experience. Mayors in attendance included Addison Mayor Bruce Arfsten, Bonham Mayor H.L. Compton, Fairview Mayor Henry Lessner, Forney Mayor Jason Robeson, Garland Mayor Scott LeMay, Gunter Mayor Karen Souther, Howe Mayor Karla McDonald, Lavon Mayor Vicki Sanson, Lancaster Mayor Clyde C. Hairston, Lewisville Mayor TJ Gilmore, Little Elm Mayor Curtis Cornelious, Mesquite Mayor Daniel Aleman, Plano Mayor John Muns, Prosper Mayor Marcus Ray, Shady Shores Mayor Pro Tem Tom Newell, Richardson Mayor Bob Dubey and Sachse Mayor Jeff Bickerstaff.

The Nakayoshi Initiative: NTFB's newest cultural affinity group



From left to right): James Huang with NiHao Food Bank Initiative, Trisha Cunningham with North Texas Food Bank, Dr. Sam Shichijo with Nakayoshi Initiative, Plano Mayor John Muns, State Senator Nathan Johnson, and HungerMitao founders Raj and Anna Asava.

[Nakayoshi Initiative](#) is a volunteer-driven grassroots movement to channel resources and contributions of the Japanese community to fight hunger through the work of the North Texas Food Bank.

The Japanese affinity group celebrated its founding during an April 6, 2024, event at NTFB's Perot Family Campus that featured State Sen. Nathan Johnson, Plano Mayor John Muns, NiHao Food

Bank Initiative founder James Huang, HungerMitao founders Raj and Anna Asava, and Dr. Sam Shichijo, the honorary consul of Japan in Dallas who is spearheading the Nakayoshi Initiative.

Nakayoshi Initiative joins [HungerMitao](#), [Niaho Food Bank Initiative](#) and [SinHambre](#) as the latest cultural affinity group. Nakayoshi will work to bring together the Japanese community in North Texas to increase awareness of food insecurity while supporting the NTFB's mission of closing the hunger gap through advocacy, volunteerism, and financial donations.