



**NEIGHBORS.
EMPOWERED.**

2024 Advocacy Agenda

Our Advocacy Agenda creates clear priorities for Northern Illinois Food Bank's Advocacy Team during calendar year 2024. In addition to these targeted issues, we will track and take action on legislation that could impact the neighbors and communities we serve or our Food Bank. By focusing on key issues and relationship building, we will advocate for everyone in Northern Illinois to have the food they need to thrive.

Local Priorities:

- **Educate and advocate with our local government entities** to influence community hunger relief programs, partnerships, and initiatives

State Priorities:

- **Advocating for continued funding for programs such as the Illinois Farm to Food Bank program** in order to ensure fresh/locally grown products continue to arrive at the Food Bank
- **Continuing to engage legislators regarding funding certain new initiatives** such as Breakfast After the Bell and the Higher-Ed Hunger Free Campus Initiative

Federal Priorities:

- **Supporting and advocating for a strong Farm Bill through the following marker bills (bills that legislators introduce with the hopes they are included in a larger piece of legislation like the Farm Bill):**
 - **HR 6203 (Farmers Feeding America Act of 2023)** - This bill would add around \$500 million in additional funding for TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) entitlement commodities and also increase funding for TEFAP Storage and Distribution
 - **HR 1763 (Military Family Nutrition Access Act)** - This bill would exclude the Basic Allowance for Housing from being counted as income for the purposes of SNAP. Research shows roughly 1 in 4 U.S. service members have experienced food insecurity. In 2020, nearly a quarter (24%) of active-duty service members were food insecure.
 - **HR 3037 (Closing the Meal Gap Act)** - This bill would increase SNAP benefit adequacy by replacing the Thrifty Food Plan with the more appropriate Low-Cost Food Plan as the basis for SNAP allotments. Currently, about 89% of SNAP benefits are exhausted by the third week of the month, meaning benefits are not sufficient to meet participants' nutritional needs.
 - **HR 3183 (EATS Act)** - This bill would no longer condition SNAP eligibility for most people attending college at least half time on performing work study, or 20 hours or more per week of outside employment.
 - **HR 3519 (Hot Foods Act)** - This bill would permanently end the prohibition on use of SNAP benefits to purchase hot prepared foods from food retailers. The proposed change would afford SNAP customers broader choices available to other food shoppers.
- **Pushing for other important measures such as** Child Nutrition Reauthorization, a strong National Defense Authorization Act that includes increased support for active-duty military members, and a Federal Budget that fully funds all our priority programs, including WIC.

For more information, please visit www.SolveHungerToday.org/Advocate