



July 14, 2022

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing as the inaugural leaders of the [Mayors Alliance to End Childhood Hunger](#), a nonpartisan coalition representing more than 130 mayors from large and medium cities to smaller communities and townships across the nation, working in partnership with Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign to ensure that every child has the healthy food they need to thrive. Our offices are on the frontline of responding to challenges in our communities, and as mayors, we need every option available to fight childhood hunger.

We applaud your ambitious goal to end hunger by 2030 and increase healthy eating and physical activity so that fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases like diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. As leaders on the frontlines of this growing crisis, it is critical we work together to address these issues and find solutions to a solvable problem. As such, we hope you will consider the below recommendations as a part of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

Modernize the Summer Meals Program

The federal summer meals program helps to feed kids at risk of hunger during the summer months, even when schools are closed. But the way the program was designed means it does not fully meet the needs of families and children today, especially those living in rural and hard to-reach communities. During the pandemic, the program reached many more children through increased program flexibility. We urge lawmakers to utilize these hard-earned lessons and:

- Authorize a permanent option for “non-congregate” sites to ensure more children have access to summer meals.
- Lower the area eligibility threshold to give communities more flexibility to select site locations that are accessible to the children who most need meals.
- Reduce red tape and excessive bureaucracy by streamlining the administrative requirements for summer and afterschool meals programs, making it easier for schools and community organizations to serve needed meals year-round.

Support Nationwide Summer EBT

The Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program provides families with children eligible for free or reduced-price school meals with a grocery benefit during the summer months. This program started as a demonstration project in a handful of states and a version of it was implemented during the pandemic. We urge lawmakers to:

- Implement a permanent, nationwide Summer EBT program to reduce food insecurity and improve nutrition.

Strengthen SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a monthly benefit that helps parents and caregivers buy groceries. SNAP is one of the safest, most efficient ways to make sure kids get the food they need. The current program, however, isn't reaching all the kids and families who qualify. To close this gap and improve the program's effectiveness, we urge lawmakers to:

- Enhance SNAP eligibility
- Increase benefits to ensure they more accurately reflect the cost of a nutritious diet.
- Expand the availability of online ordering and delivery using SNAP benefits.
- Invest in program modernization and support program innovation.
- Make permanent the program improvements adopted during the pandemic.

Expand CEP

The Community Eligibility Provision, or CEP, allows schools in high-poverty areas to reach more students with the nutrition they need. Instead of collecting paper applications from each student, eligible schools can offer meals at no cost to all students. This streamlines meal service for schools and removes the stigma from students being singled out as poor. To reduce the administrative burdens of the program, increase its efficiency and eliminate stigma, we urge lawmakers to:

- Extend the benefits of no cost school meals to additional students by eliminating the reduced-price meal category.
- Expand CEP to streamline operations for schools and families.
- Allow for nationwide, permanent direct certification using Medicaid data.
- Improve data systems and technology.

Improve WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supports the health of low-income women, infants and children up to age 5 who are at risk of hunger. It provides nutritious food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and referrals to health care and social services for millions of families. However, WIC participation rates face a sharp decline due to many barriers, including challenging shopping experiences during the pandemic. To modernize the program and increase WIC participation, we urge lawmakers to:

- Remove barriers to accessing and utilizing WIC.
- Expand access to online shopping and delivery.
- Increase the flexibility of WIC appointments with remote visits.
- Extend program certification periods.

We are committed to continuing to work together to build stronger, healthier communities with more opportunity for all. While government cannot undertake this effort alone, as elected leaders, we must use our voices to articulate a bold vision, convene leaders from across our communities, and advance policies designed to ensure all children have the opportunity to be safe and nourished, and live up to their full potential. We know when children have access to consistent daily nutrition, their overall academic, health and economic outcomes improve.

We look forward to continuing in this work together and thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Levar Stoney
The Honorable Levar M. Stoney
Chair
Mayor, City of Richmond, Virginia

John Giles
The Honorable John Giles
Vice-Chair
Mayor, City of Mesa, Arizona