

Greater Chicago Food Depository
Statement on the White House FY 2018 Budget Blueprint and its Impact on Hunger
March 21, 2017



With 42 million people struggling with hunger in the U.S., it is vital that adequate resources are provided for federal hunger-relief and anti-poverty programs. Below is a summary of proposals included in the President's FY18 budget blueprint and the potential harm they would mean for children, seniors and families striving to make ends meet. This budget includes only discretionary funding proposals (approximately 30% of the overall federal budget). A later, "full" budget proposal is expected to be released and will include taxes and entitlement programs like Social Security and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In the coming weeks, Congress will hold hearings and propose its own budget and spending bills to establish funding levels for the full government as part of the [federal budget process](#). It will be important for organizations and citizens to tell their elected officials about the importance and impact of these programs in the local community. For advocacy action alerts on this and other issues please visit <https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/advocacy/>.

Direct Impact on Hunger Relief

- **WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) - \$200 million reduction:** Reduces total funding from \$6.4 to \$6.2 billion, though language in the proposal commits to full funding and this amount would cover all projected participants. In Illinois, more than 210,000 participants benefit from WIC services.
- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) - \$3 billion cut:** Eliminates all CDBG funding, which provides local communities flexible funding to fight poverty and address other community needs.
 - **Home delivered meals** for older adults and people with disabilities are supported by CDBG funds in some areas, including the City of Chicago and the Chicago Department of Family Support Services manages this program. These services are also funded by the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program – which could also be at risk as the budget proposes cutting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services budget by nearly 18%. The details of those cuts have not been released.
 - **Emergency food assistance:** The City of Chicago also uses \$1,006,000 in CDBG funding to provide emergency food assistance to 150 food pantries and shelters in partnership with the Food Depository.
- **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) - \$715 million cut:** Eliminates all CSBG funding, which funds the operations of local agencies, most of which are Community Action Agencies (CAA), and initiatives to alleviate poverty in communities. The CAA for Cook County is CEDA – the Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc.
 - **Fresh produce distribution:** CEDA partners with the Food Depository to provide CSBG funding for nearly 1 million pounds of fresh produce that is distributed to low-income families through 31 food pantries in suburban Cook County.
- **TEFAP / CSFP:** There is no mention of [the Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#) storage and distribution funding or the [Commodity Supplemental Food Program \(CSFP\)](#) – both are *discretionary* programs and it is unclear at this time if they would be impacted.

Anti-Poverty Programs / Indirect Impact on Hunger Relief

- **Corporation for National and Community Service - \$771 million cut:** Eliminates all funding, which includes AmeriCorps, VISTA, Senior Volunteer Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund. In Illinois, more than 13,000 people of all ages and backgrounds are helping to meet local needs and strengthen communities through national service and more than \$36.2 million has supported Illinois communities through national service and social innovation initiatives. Food Depository AmeriCorps members assist with benefits outreach, nutrition education, staffing our veterans food pantries and more. The loss of this resource would hurt our response to hunger and the response of many nonprofits in our community.
- **21st Century Community Learning Centers - \$1.2 billion cut:** Eliminates the program, which supports after-school and summer programs for low-income students that reach 1.6 million kids nationally. While afterschool and summer meals funding *is not* included in the proposed cuts, this would likely reduce the number of sites offering afterschool and summer meals to children.
- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) - \$3.4 billion cut:** Eliminates the program that helps the elderly and low-income people pay their heating and power bills. In FY14, more than 350,000 households in Illinois received assistance. This proposal would also remove the "heat and eat" provisions tied to SNAP benefit calculations resulting in lower benefits for many SNAP recipients. According to a 2014 study, 73% of the people served by the Food Depository have made the difficult choice between buying food and paying utility bills. Removing this program could force thousands of additional households in our community to make this choice.
- **Legal Services Corporation - \$366 million cut:** Eliminates all funding, which helps support legal aid to low-income people.
- **Overall USDA budget - \$4.7 billion cut:** The USDA oversees agriculture and nutritional programs and would see a \$4.7 billion or 21% decrease through halting funding for rural clean water initiatives and business services, reducing some USDA statistical services and eliminating an international food aid program. Limited details are available for which services would be cut. However, the Food Depository is concerned that any cuts would weaken the federal department that prevents millions of Americans from going hungry while keeping food safe.