

## Greater Chicago Food Depository

### Statement on the U.S. House of Representatives FY18 Budget and its Impact on Hunger July 19, 2017



The U.S. House of Representatives FY18 Budget Blueprint and Concurrent Resolution, released on July 18, proposes deep cuts to vital programs that prevent hunger in our community. The Greater Chicago Food Depository strongly opposes these recommendations, which would hurt our most vulnerable neighbors and create more demand than the charitable response could serve.

The budget blueprint proposes sharp reductions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), our nation's most effective program for alleviating domestic hunger. It recommends additional work requirements for SNAP recipients and block granting SNAP funding to the states. These measures could cut SNAP funding by \$163 billion over the next decade and would create more need at a time when 42 million Americans are at risk of hunger.

Block granting SNAP would end the program as we know it. Under this model, states would be given fixed amounts of federal funds to administer SNAP. While this is proposed as shifting flexibility to the states, it would permanently cut funding for a program that protects tens of millions of Americans from hunger during times of economic hardship. SNAP would lose its ability to grow in times of increased need, including economic recessions and natural disasters.

Additional time limits and work requirements on able-bodied adults without dependents who receive SNAP benefits are framed as an incentive for unemployed SNAP recipients to rejoin the workforce. In reality, 82 percent of SNAP households with working-age adults have been employed within a year of receiving benefits. Our experience in the community tells us that such rules would simply take benefits away from struggling households with no regard for the availability of jobs or training programs in their community.

The House's Concurrent Resolution also advises the Committee on Agriculture to submit changes in laws to reduce the federal deficit by \$10 billion over the next decade. While detail is lacking on what might be cut, these reductions would likely cut billions of additional dollars from vital and effective nutrition programs, including SNAP.

SNAP is our nation's frontline defense against hunger. The majority of SNAP recipients are children, older adults and people with disabilities. SNAP protects these vulnerable populations from the worst cases of hunger while also lifting millions of working families out of poverty. According to Moody's Analytics, SNAP generates \$1.22 in economic activity for every \$1.00 in benefits. **SNAP is important, efficient, and effective.**

Across the United States, SNAP and food banks work in tandem to prevent millions of Americans from going hungry. We are proud of this public-private partnership that responds to hunger every day in our community. If the House's proposed cuts were enacted, or if unnecessary restrictions were placed on the program, food banks and pantries could never cover the difference.

As a proud member of the Feeding America network of food banks, we aim to end hunger in our community by feeding our neighbors and addressing the root causes of the problem. But we can only achieve our mission if the public response to hunger remains strong.

This is one step in a lengthy process and we will continue advocating for the future of SNAP and other programs. If you believe that we should end hunger in Chicago, Cook County and the United States, we encourage you to write and call your members of Congress and tell them that "SNAP Works." For action alerts and more information, please visit <http://chicagosfoodbank.org/advocacy>