Greater Chicago Food Depository
Statement on the White House FY19 Budget and its Impact on Hunger
February 12, 2018

The White House's FY19 budget proposal, released on February 12, proposes billions of dollars in cuts to vital programs that prevent hunger in our community and empower our low-income neighbors to lift themselves out of poverty. 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 proposed budget calls to cut $213 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) over the next 10 years – a reduction of nearly 30%. **At a time when more than 42 million Americans and 1.5 million people in Illinois struggle to access food, this budget would result in deeper hardship for our most vulnerable neighbors.**

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, in a strong economy SNAP generates $1.22 in economic activity for every $1.00 in benefits. **SNAP is effective, efficient and essential.**

The White House suggests additional time limits and work requirements on able-bodied adults who receive SNAP benefits. While this is framed as an incentive for unemployed SNAP recipients to rejoin the workforce, 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 White House also recommends reducing SNAP for the elderly and disabled by eliminating the minimum benefit threshold of $16 per month.

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

We are also greatly concerned about the White House's proposal to cut funding for, or eliminate, other effective programs that provide vital services for struggling families in our community. This includes Medicaid, AmeriCorps and much more. Additional detail is forthcoming on how these proposed cuts would impact hunger relief and the people we serve.

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 federal response to hunger remains strong.

This is one step in a lengthy budget process. In 2018 and beyond, we will advocate for the future of SNAP and other programs that are essential to the people we serve. 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