



Dec. 21, 2020

### **Statement on the COVID relief package, a temporary boost in a long-term crisis**

The Greater Chicago Food Depository is grateful and relieved that lawmakers in Congress agreed upon a COVID relief package to provide some measure of relief to the millions of Americans facing hunger during the pandemic.

But this package will provide only temporary aid in a long-term crisis. We call on Congress to provide more comprehensive nutrition support going forward that includes additional funding for food banks and older adult programs.

This legislation will help people who are struggling to afford food. For months now, the Food Depository and food banks across the country have called upon Congress to pass an economic stimulus bill that includes an increase of 15 percent to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. SNAP is the frontline defense against hunger in this country.

We're thrilled that this relief package funds a 15 percent SNAP benefit increase through June.

Unfortunately, the additional funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which supports food banks, was dramatically cut from previous proposals. Likewise, the additional funding for senior nutrition programs – a critical source of nutrition for older adults – is far less than what is needed.

There's more work to be done to ensure that no one goes hungry. The pandemic and job losses have created a need unlike anything we've seen in the Food Depository's 41-year history. Food banks will be responding to the economic crisis for months and likely years to come.

This legislation must be considered a first step in what is likely to be a lengthy and arduous journey. We are proud of the impact we make with our supporters, partners and volunteers, but charity cannot solve this hunger crisis alone.