



June 7, 2021

**Statement on the announcement of \$1 billion in federal funding toward hunger relief**

The Greater Chicago Food Depository commends the \$1 billion in federal funding toward alleviating the ongoing hunger crisis, as announced last week by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The investment, authorized by the American Rescue Plan, includes funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), a federal program that provides fresh fruits and vegetables to people in need via food banks and food pantries. There's also funding for local and regional food purchasing for distribution through nonprofits, among other things, that will help to address the historic spike in food insecurity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wholeheartedly, we applaud the USDA's decision to strengthen emergency food assistance and address hunger in the United States.

Even in normal times, the Food Depository receives a significant amount of food from the USDA, which is then distributed to many of our partner food pantries throughout Cook County. During the pandemic, the USDA's support, including the food box program, served an even more critical role in meeting the heightened need.

However, as temporary food purchasing programs came to an end in 2021, USDA-provided food was expected to decrease 30% to 40% according to Feeding America. Last week's announcement marks a sustained response to hunger, and a significant investment in collaboration between food banks and the growers who feed our nation.

We look forward to further conversations on implementation for this opportunity. And we thank the USDA, as well as the Biden administration and lawmakers in Congress, for their active collaboration to provide nutritious food to our community members in need.

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