



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK
Everyone should have enough to eat.



Updated August 1, 2023

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank 2023 Public Policy Agenda

[Urge Congress to Protect and Strengthen Hunger Relief Programs in the 2023 Farm Bill](#)

For 42 years the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank has been the backbone of the region's charitable food assistance network. Last year the Food Bank distributed 27.4 million pounds of food to neighbors who needed it. However, food banks like ours are struggling to keep up with the need for food assistance. Government nutrition programs for children, families and senior citizens are vital and need to be improved and expanded.

Please join the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and our partners in urging your Members of Congress to strengthen and protect America's most important food security programs in the 2023 Farm Bill. Some impactful programs that the bill includes:

- [The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#) is a federal nutrition program that moves food from farms to food banks to people facing hunger. The U.S. Department of Agriculture purchases healthy foods from U.S. growers and producers, then food banks and other organizations work with states to distribute this commodity food at no cost.
- [The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP, formerly called food stamps\)](#) is the most efficient hunger-fighting program in the country and provides 10 times the amount of food as food banks provide. We need your help to make sure our elected leaders improve SNAP at a time when food banks and community pantries are stretched to the limit. Currently, about 800,000 Virginians receive SNAP benefits. However, only 70% of those who are eligible actually receive benefits, and among seniors, that number drops to about 30%. We can and should make SNAP easier to understand and apply for, especially for our rural and senior neighbors.
- [The Commodities Supplemental Food Program \(CSFP\)](#) is a means-tested program for low-income seniors ages 60 and older. It provides nutritious food to help supplement their diet. Local nonprofits, including the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, are key anti-hunger partners in monthly food box distributions through this program. The program needs to be expanded and become more flexible because food insecurity is growing faster and with more severity among seniors than any other age group.

Our policymakers need to hear your voice of support.

Together, we can make our voices heard and urge our elected leaders to strengthen and protect critical food security programs on which so many of our neighbors rely.

Please send a message to Congress today.

[Tell Congress: Pass a strong 2023 Farm Bill to help people facing hunger.](#)

About this document

This policy statement was developed by the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and reflects shared policy priorities with Feeding America and the Federation of Virginia Food Banks. We encourage interested stakeholders to share this document with their networks.

We also welcome feedback or questions from policymakers. Please share your thoughts with Blue Ridge Area Food Bank CEO Michael McKee at mmckee@brafb.org.

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- [U.S. Senate](#)
- [U.S. House of Representatives](#)

STATE GOVERNMENT

- [Senate of Virginia](#)
- [The Virginia House of Delegates](#)

ADVOCACY PARTNERS

- [Feeding America](#)
- [Federation of Virginia Food Banks](#)

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