



Child Hunger in America

The Problem

COVID-19 Has Made America's Child Hunger Crisis Worse

- Due to the pandemic in 2020, the number of children living in U.S. households without enough food to support their growth and development has risen from 11 million to 17 million.¹
- This year, 13 million children may experience hunger, which is above pre-pandemic levels.²
- Federal investment has not been sufficient to address this growing hunger crisis, particularly in rural areas.³ In fact, of the counties with the highest percentage of child hunger, 90% of them are rural.⁴
- Additionally, the pandemic has highlighted how important it is to provide flexibility in how nutrition programs are run in order to reach in-need children. A one-size fits-all approach won't work to reach all hungry children.

Hunger Threatens Growth, Development and Success of Kids, Workforce and Economy

- Hungry children are more commonly at-risk of facing long-term issues with their health, behavior and overall development.⁵ If a child is not properly nourished early on, their brain development could be significantly affected, as 90% of a child's brain is developed by age 5.⁶
- Child hunger can result in adults who are not job-ready, often possessing lower educational and technical skills than their more nourished peers, which significantly affects the strength of the nation's workforce.⁷
- Hunger in America costs over \$160 billion annually, adversely impacting the economy.⁸

The Solution

This year, Congress has the opportunity to update child nutrition programs through a process called the **Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR)**. This reauthorization provides an **opportunity to improve and strengthen child nutrition programs so that they better serve the needs of our country's children, something particularly important in the wake of COVID-19.**⁹ Key provisions we are advocating to be included in the CNR are:

1. **Funding a multi-year investment to modernize Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**, such as technology investment for telehealth/remote services.
2. **Expanding access to, and improving efficiencies of**, child nutrition assistance programs by covering children until they are in kindergarten and reducing paperwork requirements.
3. **Guaranteeing investment in, and flexibilities for**, child nutrition programs during and after the pandemic, including service models flexibilities like home food delivery options.
4. **Enhancing benefits** of federal nutrition programs by providing additional meals and snacks, in addition to making summer electronic benefits programs (EBT) permanent and nationwide.

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¹ [Childhood in the Time of COVID, Save the Children](#)

² [Hunger in America, Feeding America](#)

³ [How to Help Parents Who Are Struggling to Provide for Their Kids, The New York Times](#)

⁴ [Childhood in the Time of COVID, Save the Children](#)

⁵ [Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on our Nation, No Kid Hungry](#)

⁶ [Brain Development, First Things First - Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on our Nation, No Kid Hungry](#)

⁷ [Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on our Nation, No Kid Hungry](#)

⁸ [The Cost of Hunger in the US, Bread for the World Institute](#)

⁹ [Child Nutrition Reauthorization, FRAC](#)