

Issue:

Food stamp allotments

Recommendation:

Food stamp benefit amounts should be raised significantly so that low-income beneficiaries have adequate resources to purchase a healthy diet.

Rationale:

The federal food stamp benefit allotments are predicated on “The Thrifty Food Plan,” an outdated government construct for short-term use by families with considerable time to shop and cook. Moreover, the government doesn’t pay 100% of the Thrifty Food Plan. Beneficiaries need more adequate resources if they are to achieve food security and have a meaningful opportunity to purchase a healthy diet.

Issue:

Healthy nutrition in afterschool programs

Recommendation:

Federal nutrition programs should reimburse afterschool programs (both school-based and community-based) in low-income areas for suppers when care goes into the late afternoon or evening.

Rationale:

More and more low-income parents working and commuting long hours or working non-traditional jobs leave their school-aged children in afterschool care for long hours. Providing healthy (federally-funded) suppers will fight both hunger and overweight. The current system of reimbursing suppers only under narrow circumstances and with too much paperwork is broken.

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Issue:

Expanding school breakfast participation

Recommendation:

The federal government should provide funds for schools to significantly expand school breakfast participation, including through use of breakfast served in the classroom.

Rationale:

A healthy breakfast is essential to reducing hunger, promoting school achievement, and fighting obesity. For many low-income and middle-income children, school breakfast is the best opportunity to obtain a healthy breakfast. Strategies like “universal breakfast” and in-classroom breakfast are the most efficient and effective way to expand access to a healthy breakfast for school children.