



## Food Bank of the Albemarle 2026 Advocacy Agenda

Advocacy is essential to advance and achieve Food Bank of the Albemarle's mission: The Food Bank of Albemarle's mission is to foster community collaboration, connecting people to healthy food and a brighter future.

Public policy and government programs serve a vital role in promoting food security, increasing economic mobility, and ensuring families have the foundational support they need to reach their potential. These policies and programs complement Food Bank of the Albemarle's role in our region. For example, SNAP provides nine meals for every one provided by the Food Bank. In addition, school nutrition programs are the frontline to address food insecurity for children and work in coordination with our services.

Providing opportunities for members of our community to thrive takes more than providing good food; it also requires advocating for effective policies at every level of government.

**Food Bank of the Albemarle is a nonpartisan nonprofit committed to advocating for policies that impact the neighbors we serve.** We believe everyone should be informed about legislation and programs that affect food security, including TEFAP, CSFP, and SNAP. Community engagement is essential to our mission, and one of the most effective ways to create change is by participating in the democratic process.

That's why we partner with nonpartisan organizations to help neighbors learn how and where to register to vote and encourage active participation in national, state, and local elections. Your voice matters—together, we can build a stronger, hunger-free community.

Our policy agenda will focus on protecting and strengthening nutrition programs, the food system, and the health of our communities, and on advancing success for all members of our region.



## Food Bank of the Albemarle 2026 Federal Policy Priorities

### Farm Bill 2025 Priorities: Protect & Strengthen SNAP and TEFAP

The Farm Bill is a comprehensive piece of legislation that authorizes most federal policies governing food and agriculture programs. Approximately every five years, Congress reauthorizes the Farm Bill. This reauthorization process offers policy makers an opportunity to review programs included in the legislation and consider programmatic changes. Title IV, the “nutrition title”, authorizes several federal nutrition programs and comprises approximately 80% of the funding in the Farm Bill.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as “food stamps”) is the nation’s first line of defense against hunger. [In North Carolina, SNAP is known as FNS or Food & Nutrition Services.]
  - Ensure SNAP’s purchasing power aligns with rising grocery prices and provides adequate support during tough economic times.
    - With the passage of the FY25 budget, SNAP benefits will be based solely on inflation. This may not cover the costs for recipients to maintain a healthy and reasonable diet; therefore, we need to educate elected officials on the impact of the recently approved approach and encourage it to be reassessed.
      - This will decrease the need for charitable food assistance, helping to reduce the strain on food banks.
  - Simplify SNAP eligibility and enrollment for older adults, college students, veterans, working families, immigrants and other people facing challenges to accessing the program.
    - We need to educate elected officials on the impact of these changes and seek to reverse them.
      - New work requirements and taking away some exemptions under the FY25 budget has made it more difficult.
  - Improve assistance to individuals seeking employment by supporting effective state employment and training programs and ensuring people have access to SNAP benefits as they find work.

**Note:** With the changes to SNAP, more children will not be automatically eligible for free breakfast/lunch. They are still eligible; however, families who will no longer be eligible for SNAP, due to new requirements, will need to complete paperwork for the program for their children.

- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is the cornerstone of the emergency food assistance program and 38% of the product Food Bank of the Albemarle has distributed in FY26. The Storage and Distribution reimbursement for receiving, storing, and distributing TEFAP product only covers 16% of actual Food Bank costs. For FY25, the Food Bank received over 1,945,065 pounds through TEFAP.
  - Reauthorize and maximize annual mandatory funding for TEFAP food purchases, adjusted for inflation.
  - Reauthorize and increase discretionary funding for TEFAP Storage and Distribution.
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides nutritious food boxes to seniors aged 60 and above each month living at 135% of poverty.
  - Maintain current level of funding.

### **SNAP-Ed Funding**

- Restore funding for the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program (SNAP-Ed). SNAP-Ed is a proven, cost-effective program that delivers evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions to individuals and families eligible for SNAP.

### **Bills Investing in Local Farmers to Support Our Mission**

- H.R. 4782, Local Farmers Feeding Our Communities Act
- S.2338, Strengthening Local Food Security Act of 2025
  - Both are LFPA funding bills.

### **Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR): Protect and strengthen child nutrition programs by improving program access, ensuring nutrition quality, and streamlining program administration and operation**

The Child Nutrition Reauthorization is the process used to update child nutrition programs, including the School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), summer and afterschool nutrition programs, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). CNR generally occurs every 5 years, but Congress has not passed a CNR since 2010 – leaving programs without significant improvements.

- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally-funded, state-administered program that was established to ensure that children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. When school is out, SFSP provides free meals to kids and teens in low-income areas.
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides healthy meals and snacks that support good nutrition, helps children fully develop, and prepares them to be ready to learn at school. CACFP also provides high-quality, affordable childcare that supports parents' ability to work.
  - SFSP and CACFP both feed children but have separate rules, paperwork, and funding. Streamlining into a single, year-round program would reduce red tape and ensure consistent, nutritious meals.

## **Child Tax Credit**

Continue to monitor legislation around this issue.

- In the FY25 budget, the maximum refundable amount was increased to \$2200 per child for Tax Year 2025 and it indexes for inflation after 2025.

## **Tracking & Assessing Impact of Presidential Executive Orders**

- Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking (E.O. 14332)
- Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Open Borders (E.O. 14218)
- Possible Executive Order directing the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt status of nonprofits and other tax-exempt entities that operate missions that are inconsistent with priorities of the current Administration.

## **Benefits Cliff**

People face a benefits “cliff” as they secure promotions or new opportunities that raise their wages to support their families. Existing rules for many benefit programs dis-incentivize individuals from seeking improved incomes by eliminating this support as they are making strides to improve their situation for themselves and their families. The result maintains generational poverty, prevents company growth by discouraging impactful worker’s growth, and suppressing economic mobility.

- Support changes to government support programs (such as SNAP, housing, childcare, and health insurance) that allow benefit amounts to taper off (creating a “slope” versus a “cliff”) as individuals receive promotions or secure new opportunities in their careers to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families.



## **Food Bank of the Albemarle 2026 State Policy Priorities**

### **State Funding for Food Banks**

Historically, the North Carolina Food Banks have received funding that is authorized by the General Assembly in the annual state budget. This funding is used to purchase and distribute locally sourced foods to provide to our neighbors seeking food assistance. Given the historic need being experienced across the state and shifts in federal policy, these funds are more critical than ever.

- Funding for food banks is not in the mini-budget approved by the General Assembly and a full budget may not be approved by the General Assembly this year due to disagreements between the House and the Senate.
  - We will seek to restore funding in the budget and advocate for a total of \$9.1 million for the food banks, which includes \$1.5 million for six food banks (Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC shares their portion with Interfaith Food Shuttle) and \$100,000 for Feeding the Carolinas.

### **Management of SNAP Cost Shift to the States**

SNAP is proven to be one of the most effective anti-hunger programs in the United States. With the federal budget approved shifting costs for SNAP (the amount is based on error rates of the program), we need to advocate with the General Assembly to ensure they will cover these cost shifts without damage to other critical family and community support programming.

- Protect against the elimination of SNAP (FNS) in the state in support of individuals and families most at risk for being food insecure.

### **School Meals for All NC**

Providing school meals for all is positively associated with students' academic performance, attendance, and participation in the school meal programs. School meals for all also eliminates the stigma that arises from school meal debt. Meals served in school have been shown to be of higher nutritional quality than those brought from home. As 1 in 5 children in North Carolina is food insecure, school meals for all can improve food security for those students.

- Provide school meals at no cost for all students in North Carolina schools.

## **Exempt Nonprofits from Paying Sales Tax**

Under current law, 501(c)(3) nonprofits pay sales tax when they purchase goods and services in North Carolina and are eligible to apply to the N.C. Department of Revenue (DOR) for semi-annual refunds of the sales and use taxes they have paid. North Carolina is one of two states with a sales tax refund system for nonprofits, but the only one without a point-of-sale exemption process in place. In most other states, 501(c)(3) nonprofits receive sales tax exemption certificates and vendors do not charge them sales tax at the point of sale.

- Simplify nonprofit sales tax refund process by replacing the nonprofit sales tax refund system with sales tax exemption for most 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

## **Healthy Opportunities/1115 Medicaid Waiver**

This permits the use of Medicaid funding for non-medical interventions such as healthy food assistance. Pilot programs in the state demonstrated positive results along with independent projects that Second Harvest completed in collaboration with Atrium/Wake Forest Baptist and others. Funding for continuation and expansion of the pilots was not provided in the mini-budget approved by the General Assembly.

- We will work with our sister food banks and allies to communicate the positive impact of the pilots – health improvements and reduced health care costs – to members of the General Assembly for its inclusion in the future.
- It is anticipated that the food banks of North Carolina will receive private funding to create plans for developing this work and this will include advocacy plans.

## **Tracking & Assessing Impact of State Policy Changes**

- North Carolina Border Protection Act (which was passed after a Gubernatorial veto was overridden)
  - Lack of clarity on the impact of food assistance programming such as SNAP and funding we've historically received from the General Assembly to purchase and distribute food. Also, the impact of the passage of the federal bill and its requirements are unclear.
- Reintroduction of bills that would broaden the State Auditor's authority over any entity receiving state funding, including nonprofits.
- Reintroduction of bills that would require nonprofits to release their donor list to the Auditor's office.
  - For the above two items, this type of language was removed from bills introduced during the most recent session, but monitoring these issues is vital.