

Federal Policy Changes and Food Insecurity

IMPACT OF SNAP CHANGES AND FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS TO THE
CHARITABLE FOOD SYSTEM

August 2026



What is a food bank?

A food bank is an organization **that collects and distributes food** to hunger-relief charities and community organizations like food pantries, soup kitchens, schools, after school programs and more.

They work with local grocery stores, restaurants, and other food donors to gather surplus food that would otherwise go to waste.

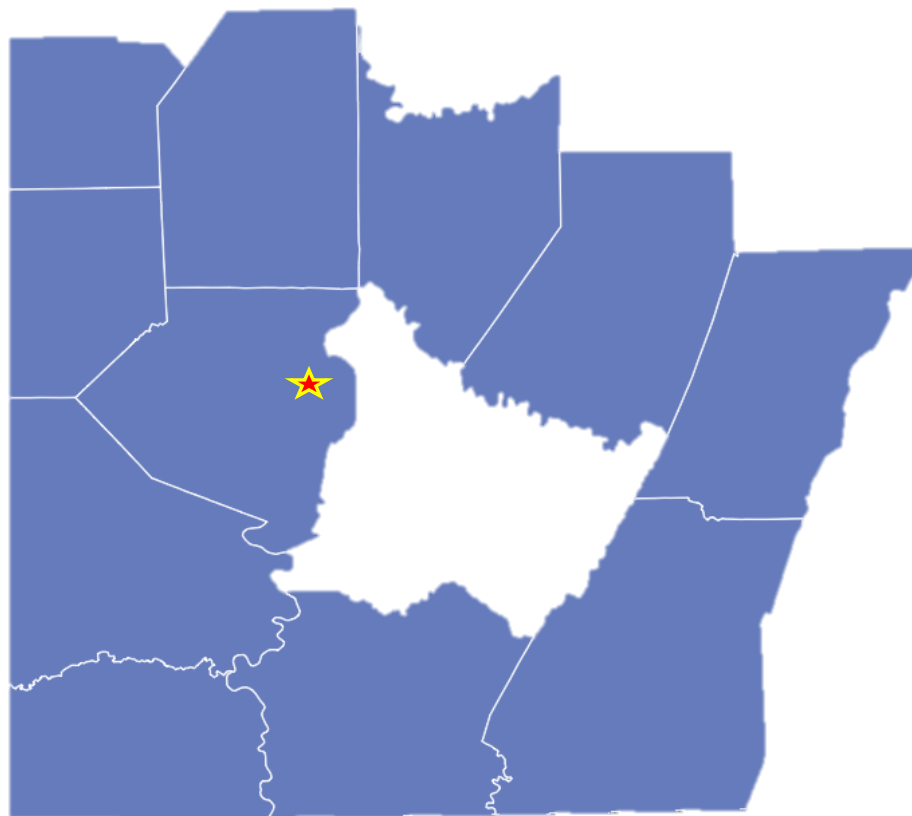




Our Partner Network

- Comprises **1,000** partners.
- Reaches **300,000** individuals annually.
- Enables more than **830,000** service visits and supports nearly **70,000** households monthly.

Allegheny
Armstrong
Beaver
Butler
Cambria
Fayette
Greene
Indiana
Lawrence
Somerset
Washington



WHO WE SERVE

11 counties
in southwestern PA

1000+ agencies,
partners, & programs



Food Insecurity in Southwestern PA

Increasing
Food
Insecurity

1 in 8 neighbors
faces hunger

1 in 5 children
are food insecure

Shrinking
Resources

Federal support is
declining just
as demand
continues to grow

The Food Bank's
role has **never**
been more critical



FOOD INSECURITY IN OUR SERVICE AREA



1 IN 3 BLACK NEIGHBORS



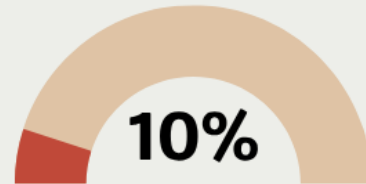
1 IN 4 HISPANIC NEIGHBORS



1 IN 8 NEIGHBORS OVERALL



1 IN 5 CHILDREN



10%
INCREASE IN CHILD
FOOD INSECURITY

Neighbors who are disproportionately affected by food insecurity.

*2026 Map the Meal Gap Study (2024 data)

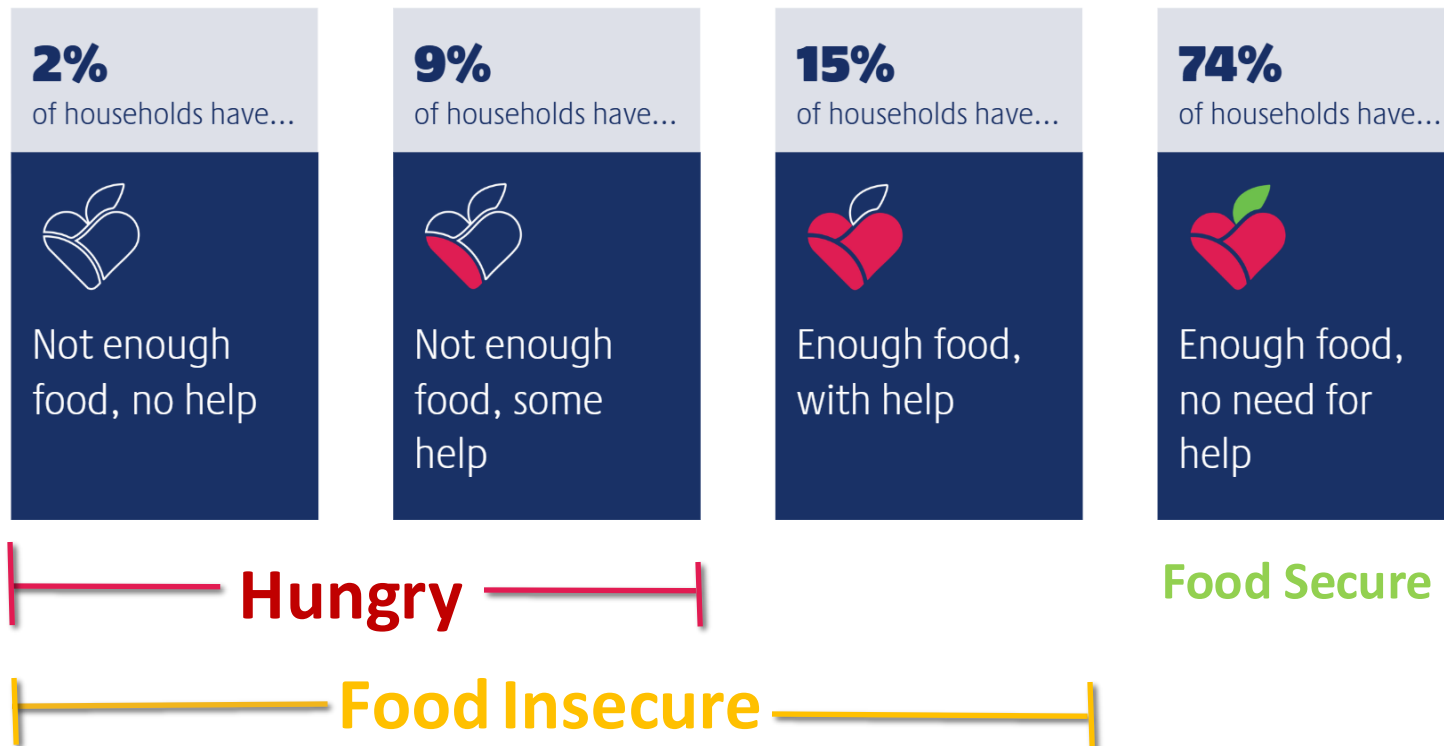
Food Security in our Region

How income, affordability and access shape household stability

As we evolve our role in helping neighbors move beyond the need for assistance, we partnered with Wilder Research to take an in-depth look at hunger and food insecurity across our region. The result is the Food Access Report.

The hunger continuum represents levels of food security for neighbors in our service area, developed alongside our strategic planning process and aligned with its Priority Areas. By deepening our understanding of where needs are greatest, this analysis provides essential context to guide future priorities and initiatives.

Where our region's households fall on the continuum:



More than 600,000 neighbors are either experiencing hunger or are at the risk of hunger.



FY26 Food by the Numbers

Over 300,000 people received more than 53 million meals

44 million pounds of food distributed, of which

- 27 million pounds = fresh (meat, eggs, dairy, produce)
- Including 18 million pounds of produce (40% of total pounds)

\$18 million in food purchases (14.6% increase)

- \$2.4 million over budget

56,000 service visits to The Market (9% increase)

- 3,000 more people than FY25

Increased Demand for Services



Demand rises as federal resources decline, making the Food Bank's role more critical than ever.

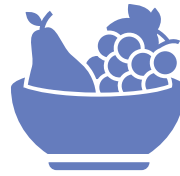
November SNAP shutdown alone saw:

- 22% increase across the network
- 43% increase at Food Bank Market
- 116% increase in calls for assistance

Impact of Federal Funding Cuts on Food Insecurity



The government plays a key role in helping food banks serve neighbors facing food insecurity.



200,000 fewer Pennsylvanians on SNAP, including 60,000 children (July 2025 – April 2026)



Any items sourced with public funding (local, state, or federal) are free to community partners.



How the SNAP Changes Cut Food Access

Shifts Costs to
States

4 Billion Meals Lost

- Ends the national guarantee of access to food.
- States would have to shoulder more of the cost, even if they can't afford it.
- Creates ZIP-code-based disparities in food access.

Cuts to SNAP
Benefits

1 Billion Meals Lost

- The average SNAP benefit is **just \$6.16/day**—already a tight squeeze.
- Cutting benefits means even fewer groceries for families.

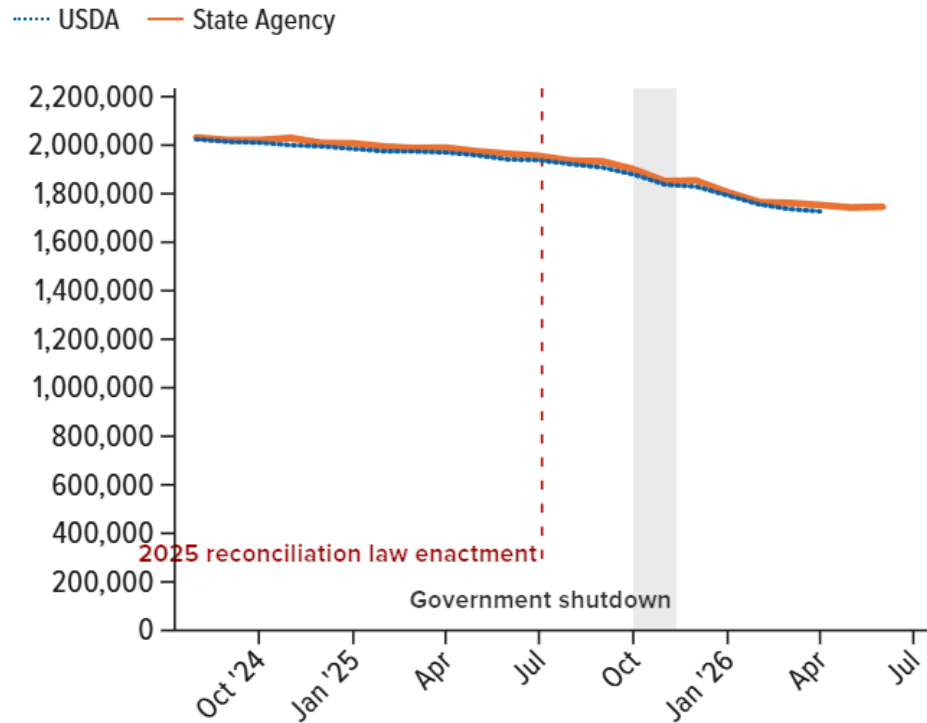
New Barriers to
Access

4 Billion Meals Lost

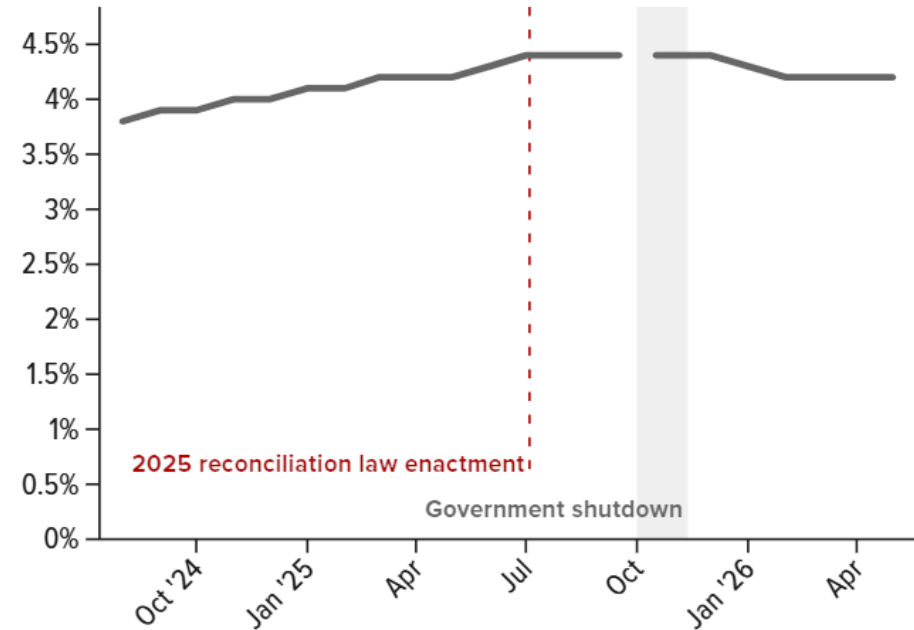
- More paperwork, red tape, and restrictions = lost benefits.
- For the first time, parents and adults **aged 55–64** could lose access.
- Families may have to choose between food, rent, or medicine.

SNAP loss vs unemployment

SNAP Participation in Pennsylvania



Monthly Unemployment Rate in Pennsylvania





Impact on Child Hunger

When parents/caregivers lose SNAP:

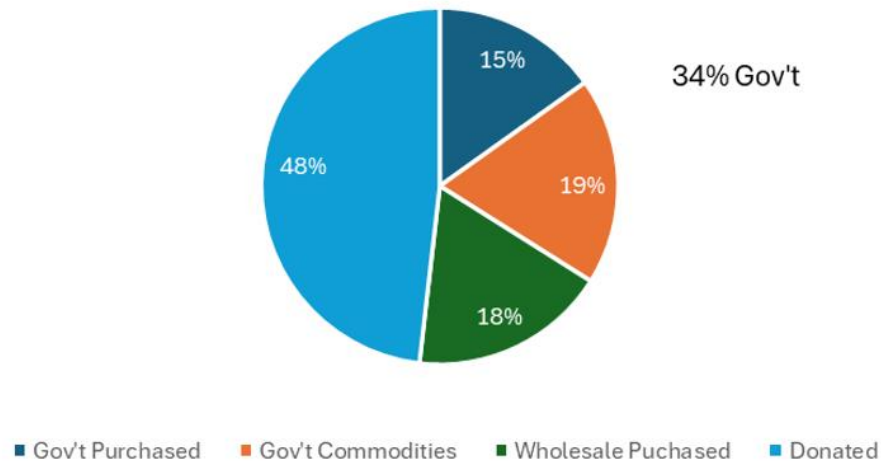
- decreases overall family budget for food. Parents were already skipping meals to provide more to their children.

When children lose SNAP:

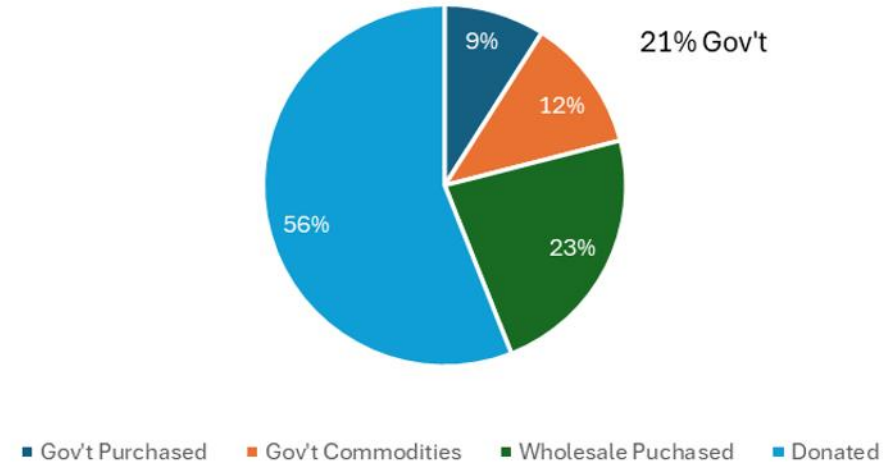
- Decreases access to free school meals and WIC

Beyond SNAP: Impact of Federal Cuts to Food Bank

2024 Actual Pounds Delivered



2027 Budget Pounds Delivered

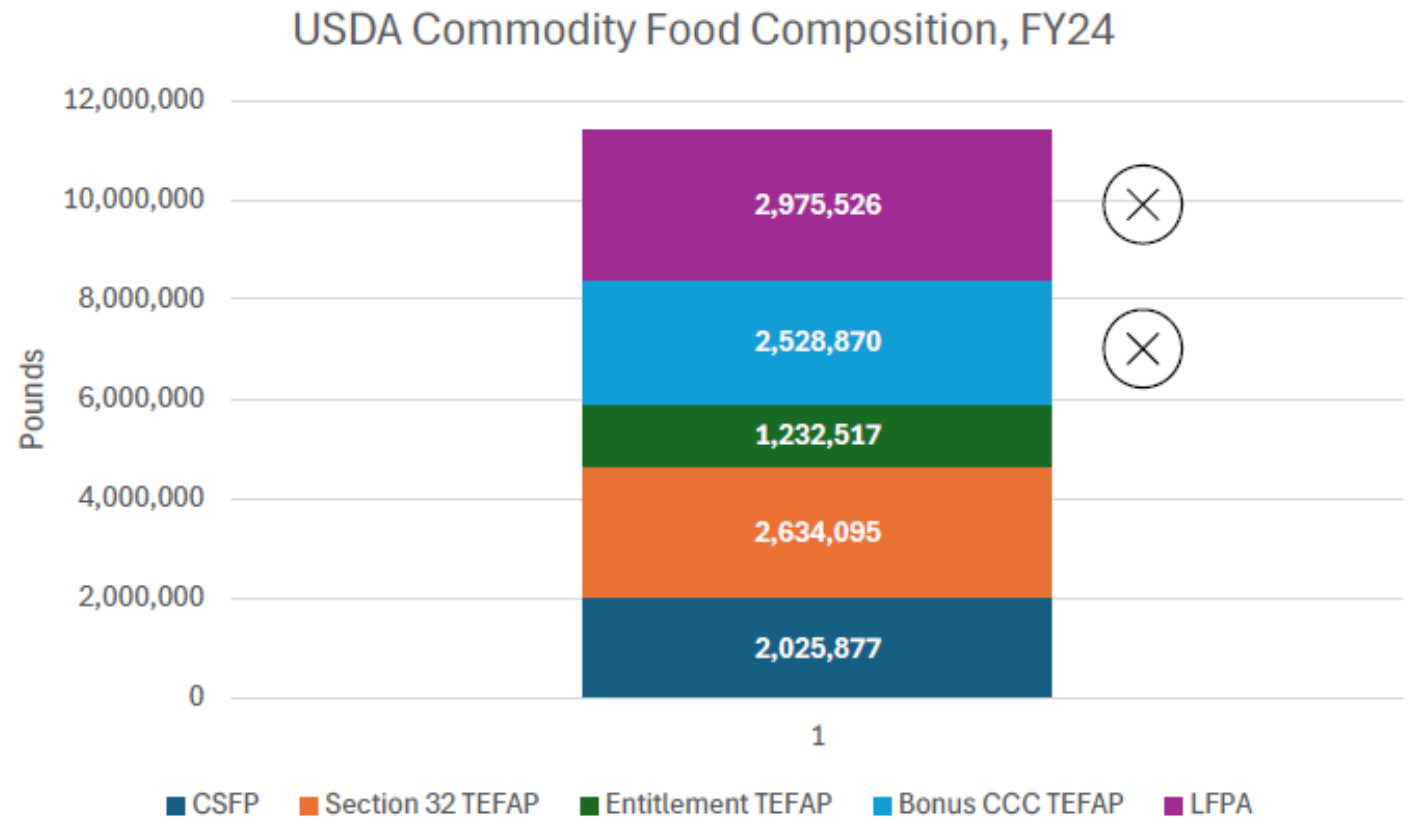


Mar - Jun 2025: USDA Cuts Food Access

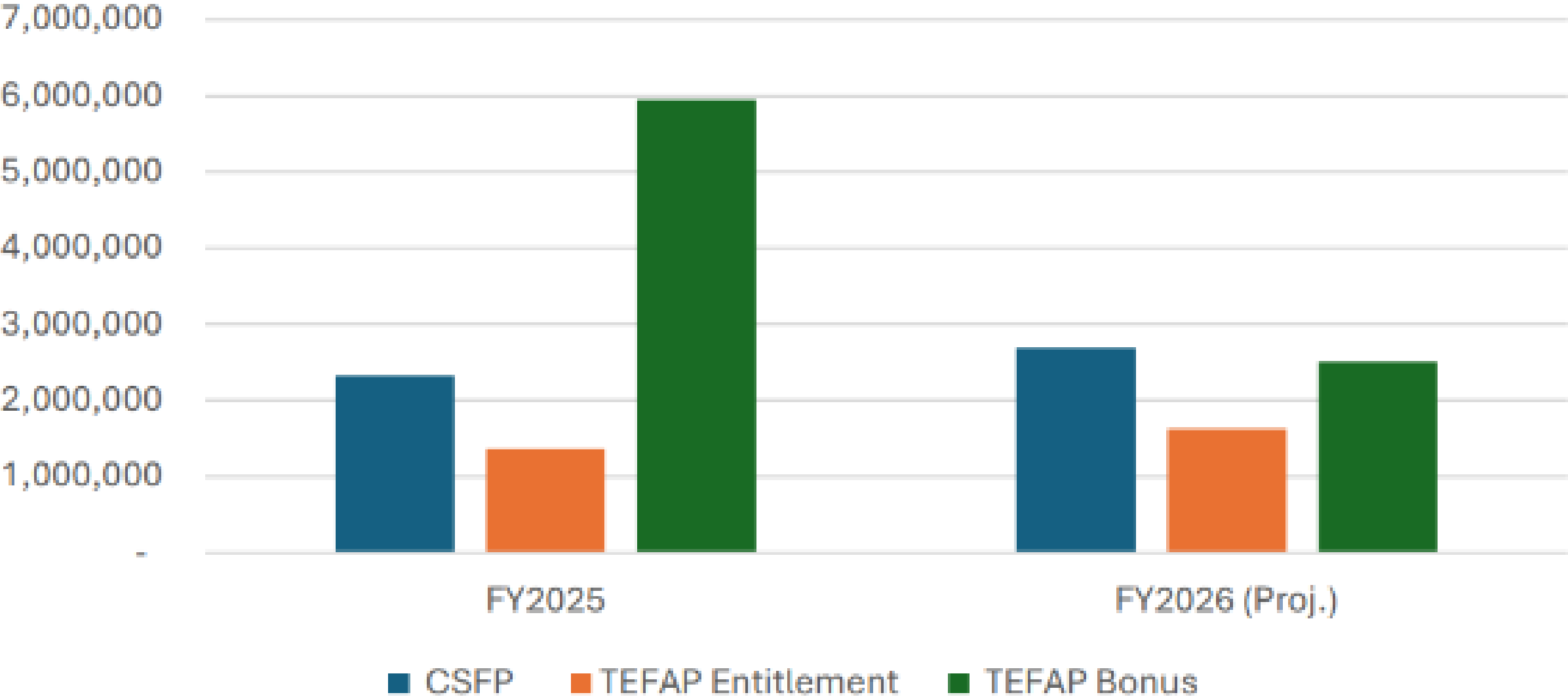
- In March 2025, the USDA eliminated two critical programs funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC):
 - § Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA)
 - § The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)



FY24 Food Sources



USDA Foods (TEFAP Entitlement, Bonus, CSFP) FY25-FY26



What the Food Bank Lost

The elimination of LFPA and cancellation of TEFAP contracts means:

- A loss of **\$5 million in annual food value**
- Significant strain on the Food Bank to replace this volume
- Fewer healthy food options available to families in need



Why These Programs Mattered



Delivered **high-quality, nutritious food** from Pennsylvania farms



Provided food **at no cost to partners or directly to neighbors**



Strengthened local agriculture and food access at the same time

Belle



“I made \$1 too much...Then they took [SNAP] off me, and I haven't been able to get anything since.”

Belle and her husband have complex medical needs and live on a fixed income. When her social security payments increased, she lost access to food assistance. She comes to The Market twice a month for help.

Rebecca



Rebecca is 52 and lives in Greene County. She lost access to SNAP benefits after the new paperwork requirements were implemented.

“It was a big hit. My husband is disabled and he gets so frustrated. He wants to work. It's not like he doesn't, he's so used to working and then I don't work because he can't do a lot for himself. But trying to get me paid to be able to take care is a hard process.”

Fatima*

Fatima received a letter from DHS telling her she must return to work to keep her SNAP benefits. Despite applying for multiple jobs, she has not found employment that allows her to work and care for her disabled husband, especially without access to transportation.

Fatima also receives Medicaid and is worried about losing access to her healthcare at age 59 because of the new work requirements. Additionally, even though her husband will continue to qualify for health insurance, they are spending out of pocket to cover vision, dental and hearing care which are not included.

“I have no job, but I try to do crafts and sell them, cook or do some baking for those in need to get some money. Watching my husband’s health go up and down and struggling to pay the bills has been really hard, especially these days.”



Julia

When SNAP was disrupted in November, Julie noticed changes in her 8-year-old autistic son's eating. He started telling her he was going to save his food for later and encouraged his younger brother to do the same.

“He always wanted seconds. He always just lived his best life. And for him to be so concerned about eating later, it's just like, it's scary.”



Neighbor Leadership Council Policy Agenda 2026



1 in 4 people in our region are at risk of hunger.

The Neighbor Leadership Council is a group of community advocates with lived and work experience, striving for a better future. The council collectively agreed on the top six issues impacting their communities.

Food Access

Neighbors are experiencing:

- Losing access to SNAP despite eligibility
- SNAP benefits not lasting the full month
- Limited access to fresh and affordable food

Advocating for:

- Strong SNAP protections that reduce barriers and prevent theft
- Increased SNAP benefits to cover real costs of food
- Stronger funding for food banks and meal programs

Economic Stability

Neighbors are experiencing:

- Wages and benefits are not keeping up with the cost of living
- Difficulty affording basic needs (rent, food, utilities, gas)

Advocating for:

- Establishing a livable minimum wage in Pennsylvania
- Policies that support working families (paid time off, tax credits)
- Strengthening and streamlining the social safety net

Housing

Neighbors are experiencing:

- Rising rent and housing instability
- Risk of eviction or homelessness
- Limited access to safe and affordable housing

Advocating for:

- More affordable housing
- Stronger eviction protections
- Investment in housing assistance
- Stronger protections for tenants to have safe, healthy homes

Neighbor Leadership Council Policy Agenda 2026 cont.

Healthcare Access

Neighbors are experiencing:

- Difficulty finding providers
- Long wait times for appointments
- High costs for medications and care
- High rates of denials for care
- Unable to afford insurance

Advocating for:

- Expanded access to insurance including dental, hearing, vision
- More community-based and mobile health services
- Affordable prescription medications and health equipment

Utilities

Neighbors are experiencing:

- Increasing rates that lead to exorbitant utility bills
- Unexpected shutoffs and fees
- Difficulty accessing assistance programs

Advocating for:

- Representation of low-income experience on PUC
- Streamlined applications for assistance across programs
- Increased funding and eligibility for utility assistance

Transportation

Neighbors are experiencing:

- Long wait times, unreliable service, route cuts
- Routes that don't connect to jobs, healthcare or food access
- Paratransit is not convenient or accessible

Advocating for:

- Full funding of public transit, including paratransit
- Reliable routes that connect to jobs, healthcare, groceries and food pantries
- A bus stop at the Food Bank

Join us today!

Scan the QR code on the right or visit
pittsburghfoodbank.org/advocate.



Advocacy Opportunities

Farm Bill: Delay the SNAP Cost Shift to states by 2 years

- ❖ PA could owe as much as \$380 million to cover costs of SNAP in October 2027
- ❖ PA must pay an additional \$87 million this October to cover increased administrative costs (\$120 million next year)
- ❖ Forces decisions on whether to cut benefits, raise revenue, or both

Action: <https://bit.ly/4zjd4Fz>



Get Involved

Sign Up:

- ❖ for our advocacy news and action alerts: pittsburghfoodbank.org/action-alert

Learn More:

- ❖ about the Farm Bill: <https://feedingamericaaction.org/learn/legislation-watch/farm-bill/>
- ❖ about the SNAP cost share: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/new-data-underscore-snap-cost-shifts-harm-to-low-income-families-and-state>
- ❖ about SNAP losses: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-tracker-people-are-losing-food-assistance-as-the-harmful-2025>

