



D.C. Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger in the nation's capital

Summary of the 2008 Farm Bill: What does it mean for Washington, D.C.?

Every five years, Congress reauthorizes and revises the Farm Bill, a comprehensive bill that includes both agricultural and nutrition provisions. There are many titles in the Farm Bill, but Title IV (the nutrition title) includes many key nutrition programs such as the Food Stamp Program, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

The food and nutrition provisions included in the 2008 Farm Bill are now law. The Farm Bill makes several improvements to food stamps and other nutrition programs, with the new provisions taking effect at the start of the new fiscal year (October 1, 2008). It substantially invests in nutrition programs, with more than \$10 billion in new funding going to the nutrition title. Of that, \$7.8 billion goes to the Food Stamp Program.

Critical food stamp benefit changes will:

- Increase the \$10 minimum monthly benefit for recipients (unchanged for 30 years) to \$14, and index it for inflation;
- Increase and index the standard deduction for households of three or fewer members;
- Remove the cap on the deductible amount of child care expenses in eligible households;
- Index the food stamp household asset limits (\$2,000 for most households; \$3,000 for households with elderly or disabled), which have gone unchanged for decades; and
- Exclude permanently special military combat pay from countable income

The 2008 Farm Bill also:

- Increases funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) by \$1.26 billion to help strengthen the nation's emergency food network's ability to serve those in need.
- Includes \$1 billion for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provides free fresh fruits and vegetables as snacks to elementary school children. States select the schools to participate and must make sure that at least 50 percent of students in these schools are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- Expands the use of EBT cards at farmers' markets.

Fast Facts: Washington, D.C. and Hunger

- In D.C., one out of eight households faces a constant struggle against hunger.
- One-fifth of residents live in poverty, and more than 36,000 are children. That's one out of every three children.
- The Food Stamp Program is the nation's first line of defense against hunger. In July of 2008, over 90,000 D.C. residents participated in the Food Stamp Program, an increase of 9% from July of last year.

An initiative of the Food Research and Action Center