

IN THE NEWS: *California Budget Season Recap*

On June 27, 2023, Governor Newsom signed the [Budget Act of 2023](#), which protects critical programs and makes investments to support California's most vulnerable communities despite facing the reality of a projected \$31.5 billion state budget deficit.

With the [ending of CalFresh Emergency Allotments](#) and the soaring cost of food, hunger is again on the rise. Food banks are responding to this increasing hunger crisis, but we can't do it alone.

Here are some of the investments in the 2023 Budget that will help support core anti-hunger programs:

CalFood: \$60 million for food banks to purchase California-grown foods to distribute across their communities.

CalFresh Minimum Nutrition Benefit Pilot Program: Pilot program to increase the CalFresh minimum benefit from \$23 to \$50.

School Meals for All: More than \$300 million in new investments to fully implement and ensure continued free school meals for all California children.

Summer EBT: Investments for outreach and automation costs to phase in the new federal Summer EBT program for children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals beginning in Summer 2024.

LEARN MORE: [Read the full statement on the budget from the California Association of Food Banks](#)

BEYOND POLICY: *Community Conversations Launching this Summer*

Later this summer, Second Harvest Food Bank will begin to hold regular in-person listening sessions with our neighbors facing food insecurity.

These small and intimate sessions, called **Community Conversations**, are intended to aid in community-building by fostering ongoing two-way communication with partners, community leaders, and, most importantly, *neighbors with personal, lived experience of food and nutritional insecurity*.

Our goal for the Community Conversations is to help facilitate solutions within our communities *by listening directly to those who have lived experience of food and nutritional insecurity*. Regular dialogue between Second Harvest and the communities we serve will not only allow us to be able to collect ideas, suggestions, and stories from our neighbors, but also aid in identifying and keeping a pulse on the root causes of hunger that are specific to Orange County.



ENGAGE: [Sign up for the Second Harvest Engagement Network](#) to learn more about food insecurity issues and how you can advocate on behalf of the Food Bank.

ON THE CALENDAR:
July 31 – September 4: Congressional Summer Recess