



THE POLICY PAGE

An update on state and federal action from

The Center for Public Policy Priorities

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FY 1999 Appropriations for Federal Nutrition Programs Underway:

Funding for Child Nutrition Programs and WIC Under Debate

Critical deliberations regarding funding levels for food and nutrition programs are currently underway in Congress. Several key actions on child nutrition programs reauthorization and FY 1999 agricultural appropriations are expected before Congress leaves for the August recess. Every five years, the authority to operate most of the child nutrition programs expires, requiring Congress to reauthorize the operation of these programs. This reauthorization process provides an opportunity to make any changes or improvements deemed necessary. Child nutrition programs that will expire this year without reauthorization include the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Bill

For the first time in 20 years, Congress is considering a positive child nutrition bill. The House passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Amendments of 1998 (HR 3874) on July 20th, by a vote of 383-1. The bill reauthorizes the SFSP and the WIC program and includes a range of positive changes in several of the programs. The proposed changes take steps toward increasing access to food programs by expanding eligibility, reducing stigma, and streamlining the participation process for participants and providers. The bill would

- reduce barriers preventing private non-profits from SFSP participation,
- expand the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to serve older low-income teens in after-school settings, and
- authorize universal School Breakfast Program (SBP) pilot projects.

A companion Senate bill (S 2286) is expected to come to the Senate floor in the next few weeks. Although several differences between the two bills will have to be resolved in a House/Senate conference committee, in general the improvements to child and nutrition programs enjoy strong bipartisan support. Anti-hunger advocates are hopeful that the proposed legislation will lay the groundwork for expanded and stronger child nutrition programs and after-school programs to keep children healthy and safe.

FY 1999 Agricultural Appropriations

Final decisions on FY 1999 Agricultural Appropriations are expected before the end of July. On June 23rd, the House passed its version of the bill (HR 4101). The House bill increases funding for the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, calls for cuts in funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and freezes funding for the Nutrition Education and Training Program and WIC at FY 1988 levels. On July 16th, the Senate approved its version of the bill (S 2159). Members voted unanimously to increase funding for the WIC program by \$24 million, but eliminated funding for NET. The key differences between the House bill and the Senate bill are summarized below:

	House Bill	Senate Bill
WIC Funding	\$3.924 billion (FY 98 level)	Increases funding by \$24 million
WIC Farmer's Market Program*	\$12 million	\$15 million
TEFAP mandatory commodity purchases†	\$90 million	\$80 million
NET	\$3.75 million (FY 98 level)	\$0

*Both bills increase funding over the FY 1998 level

† Both bills decrease funding from FY 1998 level

The Community Food and Nutrition Program

As in past years, the House Appropriations Committee failed to provide any funding for the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CNFP), which supports statewide and community-based anti-hunger efforts. CNFP was funded at \$4 million in FY 1998. Funding for CNFP for FY 1999 depends on the Senate Appropriations Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Subcommittee, which is expected to begin its deliberations at the end of this month.

Call to Action

- Call your U.S. Senators asking them to vote for S 2286, the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill. Thank your Congressperson for his/her support of child nutrition programs.
- Call your Congressperson and U.S. Senators urging them to support the Senate version of WIC funding, restore TEFAP funding, and fund NET at the House level in the final decision for FY 1999 Agricultural Appropriations.
- Call U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and urge her to support CFNP funding.
- Urge your Congressperson to oppose the restrictive spending levels for human needs programs in the House-passed budget resolution, especially the \$2.3 billion cut assumed in the Food Stamp program, and support the Senate budget proposal.
- Start Today. Key decisions are already being made.

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison	Senator Phil Gramm
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For more information about these issues, please contact Celia Hagert at the Center.

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