

Pennsylvania's State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) is Collapsing



Hunger is an Epidemic in Pa.

The State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) is one of Pennsylvania's most important anti-hunger programs. Or, at least, it should be. **But SFPP's purchasing power is severely constrained amid chronic underfunding, rising food prices, and increased demand for services from the state's charitable food network.**

SFPP is a lifeline for food banks across Pennsylvania, enabling them to purchase and distribute food and nutritional supplements to low-income individuals, needy families, and homebound seniors in all 67 counties. SFPP also helps food banks finance necessary transportation and infrastructure improvements to be more efficient at meeting increasing demands while also accessing federal food commodities.



Food Bank Resources Diminished

But today, SFPP serves fewer people, and those it serves often get less food. There is no way around it. **While SFPP funding has remained relatively flat over the years, the cost of everything else has increased while demand—which in some places is higher today than it was during the height of the pandemic—is up.** In 2006-07, the state allotted \$18.75 million for SFPP. Nearly two decades later, funding for SFPP is only at \$20.188 million. The state's 2023-24 proposed budget flatlines the program again. Food banks are using up all the resources they have. But it's still not enough.

Face of Hunger in Pa.

Everyone deserves affordable access to healthy and nutritious food. But in Pennsylvania, hunger remains an epidemic, with nearly 1 in 10 residents facing food insecurity, especially seniors. One in 8 children is food insecure, meaning they don't have regular access to healthy, nutritious meals. No one should be forced to make the impossible tradeoff between paying for food and other basic life necessities, but that's exactly what's happening. That's unacceptable.



Food inflation has soared over the past year. No one is immune to its effects. It's more difficult and more expensive for families to put healthy meals on the table. It's no different for Pennsylvania's charitable food network. While food inflation remains historically high, the number of people food banks can serve diminishes, or the amount of food they can provide drops. It's an unhealthy and unsustainable equation.

40.16%

Increase in bulk staples that food banks purchase, from 2020 to 2023.



PRODUCT	BULK PURCHASING PACKAGE DESCRIPTION	COST/CASE 2020	COST/CASE 2023	COST INCREASE
Milk 1% UHT Fluid	12/32 oz	\$10.18	\$14.51	\$4.33
Canned Tuna	24/12 oz	\$43.30	\$54.34	\$11.04
Apple Sauce	24/#300 can*	\$14.44	\$24.22	\$9.78
Peaches	24/#300 can*	\$18.74	\$24.49	\$5.75
Sweet Potatoes	24/#300 can*	\$16.91	\$27.17	\$10.26
Sliced White Potatoes	24/#300 can*	\$11.55	\$15.72	\$4.17
Spaghetti Sauce	24/#300 can*	\$10.38	\$18.71	\$8.33
Peanut Butter	12/18 oz jar	\$13.09	\$17.52	\$4.43
Corn Flacks Cereal	12/18 oz	\$13.20	\$18.36	\$5.16
Beef Stew	24/24 oz cans	\$58.92	\$72.87	\$13.95
Apple Juice	8/64 oz jar	\$15.57	\$28.43	\$12.86
Pink Salmon	24/14.75 oz can	\$49.54	\$69.75	\$20.21
Rolled Oats	12/18 oz	\$11.77	\$16.89	\$5.12
		\$287.59	\$402.98	\$115.39

* In bulk purchasing, #300 equals approximately 1 pound.

It's time to ramp up the fight against hunger in Pennsylvania. It's time to end the shortfalls and adequately fund SFPP at \$26 million in the state's 2023-24 fiscal year budget.