



SAN FRANCISCO FOOD BANK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Federal budget cuts leave 1,000 San Francisco seniors facing hunger

San Francisco, March 24, 2006 – In April, over 1,000 seniors will be cut from the rolls of San Francisco’s Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which provides a monthly box of nutritious USDA commodities to low-income seniors, women and children.

The U.S. Congress recently approved a cut to CSFP funding, requiring San Francisco to reduce its caseload by 1,026 seniors.

An average of 10,500 seniors in San Francisco are currently receiving the food boxes, which contain canned fish or meat, cereals and grain products, fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, and cheese and other dairy products. The boxes are valued at \$50 each, yet cost the USDA only \$15.

“CSFP is not only a cost effective program – it’s a lifeline for thousands of San Francisco seniors,” said Paul Ash, Executive Director of the San Francisco Food Bank. “At a time when hunger is on the rise both locally and nationally, taking food away from our elderly neighbors is a truly unconscionable act.”

The CSFP program in San Francisco is administered by the San Francisco Food Bank, which took over management in 2004 at the request of the City of San Francisco.

Next year, the White House is proposing to eliminate CSFP entirely, claiming that the program is duplicative and participants can receive assistance elsewhere. Yet most seniors enrolled in CSFP are either ineligible for food stamps or would not receive a comparable level of nutrition through the food stamp program alone.

According to Ash, “Many of these seniors, who have worked hard all their lives, will be left facing the threat of hunger and malnutrition.” Malnutrition is a major health risk for senior citizens in the U.S., often resulting in extended hospital stays and increased healthcare costs. Studies indicate that for every \$1 spent on senior nutrition programs, \$3 are saved in federal Medicare, Medicaid and Veterans’ health care costs.

“CSFP plays an important role in helping low-income seniors remain healthy and self-sufficient,” Ash said. “As hunger continues to increase across the country, we need Congress to voice its support for effective federal nutrition programs.”

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Member, America’s Second Harvest — The Nation’s Food Bank Network

The San Francisco Food Bank is urging people who are concerned about the CSFP cuts to contact their members of Congress. For information on how to take action against the cuts, visit www.sffoodbank.org.

About the San Francisco Food Bank

The San Francisco Food Bank's mission is to end hunger in San Francisco. It works toward that goal by distributing food and advocating for improvement in government food programs and policies. A nationwide network of food suppliers allows the Food Bank to turn each dollar donated into \$9 of non-perishable groceries, fresh produce, bread, and meat for the community. A member of America's Second Harvest – The Nation's Food Bank Network, the San Francisco Food Bank supplies food to more than 450 nonprofit anti-hunger programs — from senior centers and after-school programs to soup kitchens — reaching tens of thousands of individuals each month. This year, the Food Bank will distribute 25 million pounds of food — enough food to provide more than 53,000 meals to hungry San Franciscans every day.

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