



Arizona
Food Bank
Network

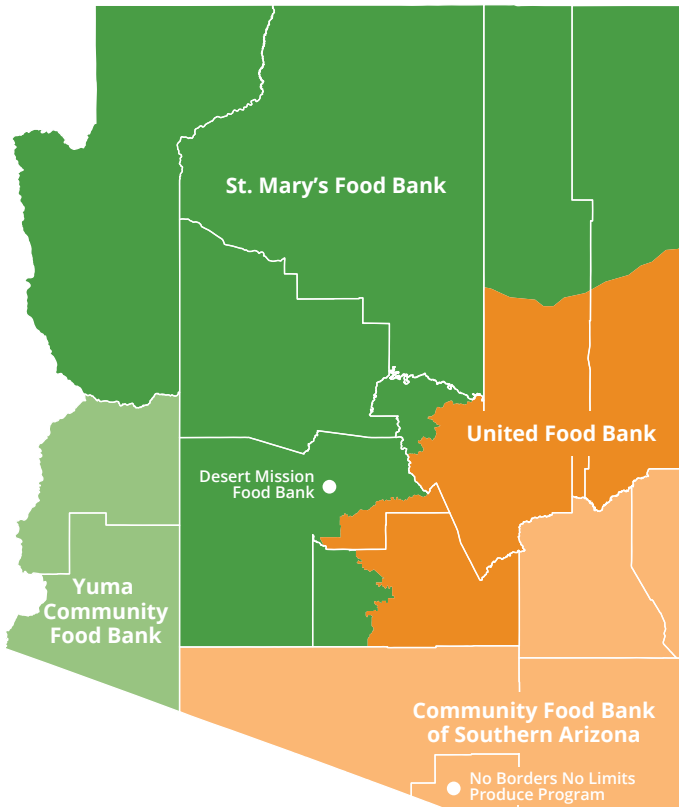
Anti-Hunger Playbook

56th Arizona State Legislature
First Regular Session



A legislator's guide to ending hunger in 2023

Arizona Food Bank Network & Members



About Us: The Arizona Food Bank Network (AzFBN) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to a hunger-free Arizona. Our mission is to develop solutions to end hunger through food banking, public policy, and innovation. We support our member food banks and the statewide emergency food network with transportation and distribution, advocacy, and outreach. In 2022, AzFBN expanded operations in an agreement with food banks across the state to make sure fresh, healthy produce is rescued through our No Borders No Limits Produce Program.

AzFBN Member Food Banks: AzFBN member food banks (above) provide emergency food assistance to people in all 15 counties through a network of nearly 1,000 food pantries, community centers, homeless shelters, and other partner agencies. Collectively, these food banks distributed **more than 172 million pounds of food** (roughly 206 million meals) to Arizonans in need in 2022.¹ The map above reflects each food bank's service area.

NOTE: HonorHealth Desert Mission Food Bank is a member within St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance's service area. No Borders No Limits Produce Program is a cross-border collaboration between AzFBN's new produce rescue team, food banks in the United States and Mexico, and produce donors.

A Note from Angie Rodgers, President & CEO

Congratulations on your recent election to the Arizona Legislature. We welcome you to policymaking and more importantly to the role of helping us to end hunger! By even opening this book, you acknowledge that hunger is a problem in our state and you want to learn more—and commit to doing something about it.

The Arizona Food Bank Network (AzFBN) supports our member food banks in the distribution of emergency food; works with policymakers—like you—to ensure all Arizonans have equitable access to nutritious food; and engages key partners like schools, health care providers, local agriculture producers, and other nonprofits in providing meals to our communities. As we continue the recovery from COVID-19, we know there is much work to do to ensure we meet the growing demand for nutrition assistance. **Legislators will have a significant role in passing and implementing strong nutrition policy.** This playbook can be your guide.

In the past, legislation and resource allocation have been critical to addressing food insecurity. In addition to ongoing support for storage and distribution within our network, the state has invested one-time funds to help food banks meet high demand during the pandemic and at other times. Additionally, AzFBN's farm-to-food-bank program, **Friends of the Farm**, launched just three years ago with state resources and is already helping 32 small producers in 6 counties to bring a wide variety of Arizona-grown produce, dairy, and protein to Arizonans in need.

We know many first-time legislators have questions about resources to address hunger. In addition to our facts about hunger in Arizona and what our network does to address it, we have also included some information about nutrition programs in Arizona. You will also read insights from Arizonans impacted by hunger to better understand how the decisions you make affect real people.

We look forward to working with you this year to improve nutrition policy in our state. Please consider the Arizona Food Bank Network a resource and welcome to our fight to end hunger.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angie Rodgers". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Angie Rodgers
President and CEO

What is food insecurity?

The inability to reliably access sufficient nutritious food to support an active, healthy lifestyle, due to a lack of physical, social, or financial resources.²

Solving food insecurity requires both immediate relief, such as emergency food assistance from food banks, and long-term answers focused on reducing poverty and increasing equitable access to healthy food.

Who is food insecure in Arizona?



798,790 Arizonans



269,610 children



Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap 2020* estimates that nearly 798,790 people are food insecure in Arizona, a rate of 11.1 percent. Children in Arizona are food insecure at a rate of 16.4 percent, or 269,610 children. During the pandemic these numbers decreased due to the increase in public benefits and tax credits. However, **food banks are now reporting record numbers served.**

Who lives below the poverty line in Arizona?³



1 in 8 Arizonans



1 in 5 children⁴

Arizonans living in poverty dropped from 13.5 percent to 12.8 percent, the lowest rate in the last ten years. Contributing factors included a strong economy, low unemployment, and federal pandemic relief. However, **with the turn in the economy and no additional supports, families will continue to struggle** to meet basic needs.

Food banks are critical to helping children, families, and older adults meet immediate nutritional needs. But they can't fight hunger alone. Instead, they work in tandem with key federal nutrition programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) and those outlined on the next page.

SNAP is America's largest and most effective anti-hunger program. Eligible families use an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card to purchase food at more than 4,200 retailers and grocers across Arizona.

\$2.05 ^{5*}	SNAP benefit per person per meal (2022 monthly average) ⁶
\$273,893,360	infused into Arizona's economy each month (2022 monthly average) ⁷
872,780	Arizonans participating in SNAP each month (2022 monthly average) ⁸
68%	Arizonans who participate in SNAP are children, older adults, or people living with disabilities ⁹
43%	SNAP participants in Arizona are in working families ¹⁰
80	farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs and corners stores accept Double-Up Food Bucks, the nutrition incentive program that helps SNAP participants access more fresh fruits and vegetables ¹¹

State & Federal Nutrition Programs

In addition to SNAP, the following key federal nutrition programs administered by state agencies are critical to children and families struggling with food insecurity.

School Meals



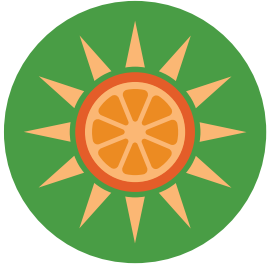
The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides healthy free or reduced-price lunches to children from low-income households. Prior to the pandemic, nearly 1.1 million students in Arizona participated in NSLP, and 56 percent of them were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.¹²

Flexibilities from the USDA allowed all schools operating NSLP and the School Breakfast Program to offer meals to all students at no cost from March 2020–Summer 2022. These COVID-19-related waivers were discontinued in School Year 2022-23, however, so families must again submit an application to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

Students at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL)—\$29,940 per year for a family of three—can receive a free lunch. Students between 130 percent and 185 percent FPL—or, \$29,941–\$42,606 per year for a family of three—qualify for a reduced-price lunch. Students in households earning more than 185 percent FPL can receive a low-cost, full-price lunch.

The fee for reduced-price school meals (including breakfast and lunch) will be waived for the remainder of the current academic year and all of School Year 2023–24, using federal COVID relief funding. Advocacy to waive this fee permanently starting in School Year 2024–25 is underway.

Summer Meals



Food insecurity rises in the summer, when school meals aren't available. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides meals at participating sites, including schools, parks, community centers, and other sites, but Feeding America estimates that only 17 percent of children eligible for free or reduced-price meals during the school year access Summer Meals, often due to barriers like lack of transportation and regulations that require kids to eat their meals on-site. In Summer 2022, nearly 1,250 sites provided 4.3 million meals to children and teens across the state, according to data from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), which administers both School and Summer Meals.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)



WIC provides nutrition education and breastfeeding support, supplemental nutritious foods, and referrals to health and social services. WIC serves pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children under five. In 2022, WIC served more than 141,000 individuals on average each month in Arizona.¹³

Families receive an e-WIC card to purchase specific foods designed to supplement their diet. WIC foods include infant formula and cereal, juice, eggs, cheese, milk, peanut butter, and more. A family of three may qualify if their annual household income is less than \$42,606. WIC is administered by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)



Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) was authorized by the USDA in 2020, to reimburse families with children eligible for free or reduced-price meals for meals missed due to school closures and disruptions. An estimated 677,000 children in Arizona will receive Summer P-EBT by the end of 2022. P-EBT is administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES).

Our Stories: Advocates with Lived Expertise



David Sheppard

LAVEEN

"The barriers people in prison face when they come out—to find housing, employment, even food—are doing a lot of damage. I was formerly incarcerated and know what it means to pay your debt to society but continue to be punished by losing the right to vote or find a place to live. We're all human beings—we all live, we all die, we all have the same needs, the same things going on. Food stamps can help people start over."



Tina Phalen

PHOENIX

"I dropped out of school when I was young, got caught up in the lifestyle, and ended up in prison. I've been clean and sober for 15 years now though, and I still had to jump through hoops to get food stamps. I had to agree to random drug testing, which I already had to do for parole, for jobs, for my halfway house. But without food stamps, I would just not eat, because of rent and bills. I'm not a bad person, I just made bad choices when I was young that I don't want to be defined by anymore."



Leyla Havok

PHOENIX

"I'm an artist, an African/Mexican-American woman, and, most importantly, the mother of a beautiful one-year-old boy. My experience as a new mom hasn't been as enjoyable as I'd hoped though, with health issues, job losses, a brief period of homelessness during my pregnancy due to my significant other's marijuana felony charge from years ago. Trying to meet my family's basic nutritional needs has felt like an endless cycle of failure—requiring excessive documentation, hours on the phone, then losing benefits because our income was \$1 over the allowable amount to qualify. I'm just continuously struggling."

Take Action: Support AzFBN's 2023 Policy Priority

Our legislative and administrative advocacy centers on ensuring emergency food assistance is available to anyone who needs it; improving accessibility of federal nutrition benefits; and addressing the root causes of food insecurity and poverty.

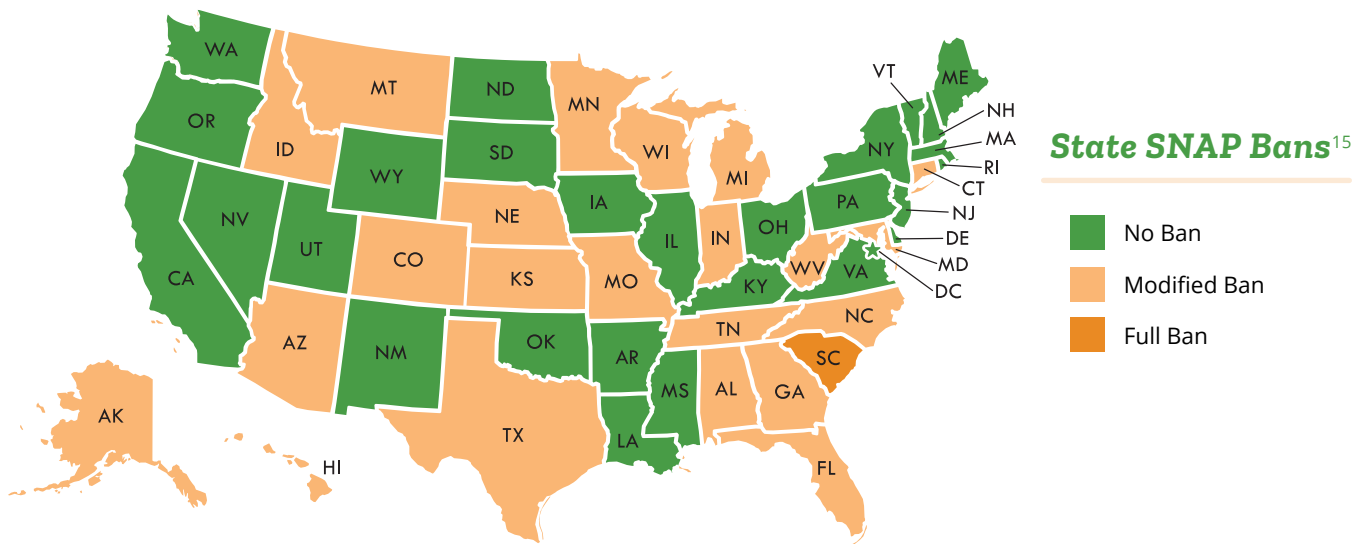
Reduce Recidivism & Help Families: SNAP Drug Felon Application Modernization



As the nation's most effective anti-hunger program, SNAP helps Arizonans who are struggling to make ends meet and that includes people re-entering society after serving time in prison. Federal law allows states discretion to authorize SNAP for specified felony drug offenses. Currently, Arizona law prescribes actions and activities to allow convicted drug felons to access SNAP benefits that are oftentimes duplicative of their probation.

Access to SNAP reduces recidivism. Arizonans who have spent time in prison require strong social and economic supports for successful re-entry. SNAP helps them put food on the table as they go through the difficult process of seeking housing and employment. Drug offenders that are eligible for SNAP at release are 13 percent less likely to reoffend in the year following release.¹⁴

AzFBN proposes the modification of SNAP eligibility for drug felons to eliminate duplication with probation requirements, encourage more successful reentry, and reduce rates of return to prison. In doing so, Arizona would join 29 other states that have eliminated the lifetime ban.



Take Action: *Support AzFBN Partners*

Let's Grow Arizona (Nutrition Assistance Benefit Match Appropriation)



Double Up Food Bucks doubles the value of SNAP benefits used at farmers' markets, mobile markets, and corner stores across Arizona, helping people to bring home more healthy produce while also supporting local farmers. **We support Pinnacle Prevention's efforts** to continue a much-needed expansion of this program statewide through a request for **\$5 million annual ongoing funding**.

Extend the Agriculture Workforce Development Pilot Program



Agriculture is one of Arizona's top industries, and our agriculture workforce is aging. This important pilot program is requesting **a two-year appropriation of \$500,000 per year to provide internships and apprenticeships for beginning farmers to enter the workforce**. AzFBN supports an extension of this pilot program, and we encourage you to do the same.¹⁶

Contact the Arizona Food Bank Network

Ashley St. Thomas
Director of Public Policy
ashley@azfoodbanks.org
602-775-5035

Laney Meeker
Public Policy Manager
laney@azfoodbanks.org
602-999-4647

1. Monthly data collected from AzFBN member food banks (listed on Page 1) from November 2021–October 2022.
2. USDA-ERS (United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service). *Measurement: What Is Food Security?* www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.
3. In 2023, the federal poverty line is \$13,590/year for an individual and \$23,030/year for a family of three.
4. U.S. Census Bureau. *Poverty & Income Data*. www.census.gov/quickfacts/AZ.
5. Prior to the pandemic, the average SNAP benefit in Arizona was \$1.30 per person per meal. The 2022 average is higher for two reasons: (1) SNAP Emergency Allotments were issued in Arizona through April 2022, when the governor ended the public health emergency declaration. (2) In October 2021, the USDA re-evaluated the Thrifty Food Plan, which is used to calculate SNAP benefits; this led to a slight permanent increase in monthly household SNAP benefits.
6. DES, Family Assistance Administration. *Statistical Bulletins January 2022–November 2022*. Available for download here: <https://des.az.gov/documents-center>.
7. According to Moody's Analytics, every \$1 in SNAP benefits spent generates \$1.70 in economic activity. The figure cited is an average of the monthly "total issuance" of SNAP statewide in 2022 multiplied by 1.7.
8. DES, Family Assistance Administration. *Statistical Bulletins January 2022–November 2022*. Available for download here: <https://des.az.gov/documents-center>.
9. DES, Family Assistance Administration. Public Records Request: "SNAP Recipients: Seniors & People Living with Disabilities, January 2022–November 2022."
10. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. *A Closer Look at Who Benefits from SNAP: State-by-State Fact Sheets, Arizona*. www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/a-closer-look-at-who-benefits-from-snap-state-by-state-fact-sheets#Arizona.
11. Double Up Arizona. *How It Works*. www.doubleupaz.org/how-it-works.
12. Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services. *Free and Reduced Price Percentage Report: SY 18-19*. Accessed here: www.azed.gov/hns/frp. Due to pandemic-era flexibilities, School Year 2018–19 is the most recent year where school meal applications were required, so that is the data reflected here. School meal applications are required again in SY 2022-23.
13. USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). "Notes on WIC Agency Level Monthly Spreadsheets: Fiscal Year 2022." Accessed here: www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/WICAgencies2022ytd-12.xlsx.
14. Yang, Crystal. "Does Public Assistance Reduce Recidivism?" *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings 2017*, 107 (5): 551–555.
15. Thompson, Darrel, and Ashley Burnside. "No More Double Punishments: Lifting the Ban on SNAP and TANF for People with Prior Felony Drug Convictions." The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). April 2022.
16. For more information about the Nutrition Assistance Incentive Benefit Match or the Agriculture Workforce Development Pilot Program, please contact Jessie Gruner at jessiegruner@pinnacleprevention.org.



Arizona Food Bank Network

Arizona Food Bank Network
340 E. Coronado Rd., Ste. 400
Phoenix, AZ 85004

(602) 528-3434 : Local
(800) 445-1914 : Toll-Free
(602) 528-3838 : Fax

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