

President Obama Aims to Protect Hunger Safety Net

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By Triada Stampas

In order to pay for improvements to school meals programs in 2010, Congress and President Obama cut \$2.2 billion from future food stamp (SNAP) benefits under the "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act."

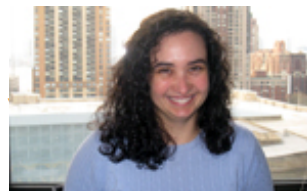
Signing the bill into law, President Obama promised to restore the funds. Last week in his budget request, he did just that, aiming to ensure no family loses the resources they need to provide food for themselves and their children.

In addition to the restoration of food stamp funding, the President's fiscal year budget protects the nutrition safety net at a time when millions of Americans still grapple with unemployment and wage stagnation. Some highlights of the budget request include:

- Increasing support for food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) by \$9.25 million to keep up with rising food prices;
- Fully funding school meal programs; • Designating funds to address food deserts, which means the lack of access to healthy, affordable food in low-income communities;
- Adequately funding the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) to support the 9.1 million participants expected this year.

The President's budget request is a promising starting point for federal budget negotiations. Over the next several months, Congress will hold hearings, propose alternative funding plans and ultimately vote on a final budget that may look much different from the version President Obama presented.

While the past year has seen a number of threats to SNAP and TEFAP , we remain hopeful that Congress maintains the strong support for nutrition programs laid out in the President's budget. To make your voice heard, [contact your senators](#) and representatives and tell them to support these essential nutrition assistance programs.



Triada Stampas works to inform government officials, policy makers and the general public about the needs of the city's network of emergency food organizations and the more than 1.3 million people who rely on them; and to advance public policy that meets those needs.