

April 5, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins,

On behalf of the undersigned national organizations representing diverse faith communities dedicated to serving the most vulnerable among us, we write to express our deep dismay over the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) recent decisions to cut critical nutrition programs that distribute food from American farmers to hungry families across the country. Over the last month, funding has been cut to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and farm-to-school programs like the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) and the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS) have been terminated. We urge you to reverse these actions immediately.

Through TEFAP, commodities purchased from America's growers and producers are sent to food banks, our hunger ministries, and other emergency food distributors. The reported cancellation of previously approved funding to this program takes away critical resources for hungry Americans and the providers – faith-based and otherwise – who dutifully serve them.

Similarly, vital initiatives like the LFPA and LFS have supported states, territories, and tribal nations in purchasing food from local farmers and distributing it to schools, food banks, and other organizations that provide emergency food assistance. Many states were also proud to provide local foods to childcare facilities to support the nutrition of our youngest learners.

As faith communities rooted in values of compassion, justice, and service, we have seen firsthand the transformative impact of USDA's food and nutrition programs on low-income and poverty-stricken communities that struggle to keep food on the table. These programs not only provide nutritious food to schools and food banks, but also uplift small-scale farmers, ranchers, and producers who desperately need greater market access to support their operations.

The impacted programs align with the USDA's mission to provide leadership on food, agriculture, and economic opportunity for rural and underserved Americans. They also advance our shared moral responsibility to ensure that no one goes hungry in a nation of such abundance.

We urge you to reconsider the termination of the LFPA and LFS and to restore funding to all impacted USDA nutrition assistance programs. Our faith communities remain dedicated to alleviating hunger and supporting American farmers who supply nutritious food across the nation, but charity alone cannot meet the immense need being faced by families across the country.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team to further expound on these urgent concerns. We also welcome the opportunity to engage with the USDA Center for Faith as thought partners on all matters related to food security, child nutrition, emergency food assistance, and faith-based efforts over the course of this administration.