

**White House Conference on Hunger**  
Recommendations submitted by  
Lisa Quigley, Director  
Solving Hunger, Tusk Philanthropies

July 22, 2022

At Solving Hunger, a campaign of Tusk Philanthropies, we run coordinated anti-hunger campaigns to pass laws in states and at the federal level to access more food for people who need it -- especially kids.

At the onset of the pandemic, the federal government moved quickly to ensure the health and nutrition of the nation's children. With school meal waivers and rule changes, the country committed itself to feeding all K-12 public school children regardless of their ability to pay. Children and families were relieved of one of the pandemic stresses, and the program has proved to be very popular. Just this week, a [report](#) by the US Census describes the positive impact on children who were no longer stigmatized by their peers -- during the run of the program -- from participating in a program that has historically served only low-income children. If everyone eats, stigma doesn't exist. Less stigmatization leads to fewer behavior problems and greater academic achievement.

While working at the federal level to continue advocating for anti-hunger measures, Solving Hunger also works in states to pass laws to feed hungry people. We have worked in 24 states in six years and have an 85% success rate. We have spent \$3 million dollars to leverage \$1.5 billion to feed over 12 million people. Most recently, we funded the successful universal school meals campaign in Vermont, the Barriers to Breakfast campaign in Kentucky, and the bill to increase eligibility for free meals in New Jersey.

When the White House conference convenes in September, children will be back in school, and their families will be facing difficult economic realities. High gas prices, high food prices, and record inflation will all contribute to the stresses on families as the nation continues to cope with the challenges of COVID. For the first time in two years, children will not automatically be fed in school.

Solving Hunger's recommendations for the September White House Conference recognize that Congress will also be close to a September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for budget reconciliation. The opportunity to fund programs with only a 50% majority in both chambers, is a rare one, and is unlikely to present itself again through the end of the Biden administration's first term. Anti-hunger efforts for children must be part of any reconciliation law.

As such, our recommendations mirror those of other national organizations and include:

- Reestablishment of all pandemic-era waivers that will allow all K-12 students to be fed for the 2022-23 school year;
- A lowering of the Community Eligibility Provision from 40% to 25%, to include more children in meal programs in subsequent school years; and
- The establishment of a permanent summer Electronic Benefits Transfer program

In this day and age, no American child should go hungry. At Solving Hunger, we know that we do not have a resource problem; we have a political problem. We urge the Biden administration to back anti-hunger policies that will strengthen our political will and make a real difference for all American children.