US COVID-19 Legislative Relief Responses: Second Update on Food and Nutrition

Sheila Fleischhacker, PhD, JD
Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law School
Editorial Board, Nutrition Today

As previously shared, the US government has utilized a variety of legislative tools to aid the food insecurity and economic impacts of Covid-19, including the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-123) and The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127). Most recently, the President signed the third covid-19 emergency spending package of about $2 trillion, known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act, P.L. 116-136). This spending package – the largest in US history - included the following funds for nutrition programs:

- $15.5 billion in additional funding for SNAP in anticipation of a spike in participation in this entitlement program,
- $8.8 billion in additional funding for Child Nutrition Programs to support meal provision while schools are not in session,
- $450 million for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), including $300 million for commodities and up to $150 million for distribution costs, and,
- $820 million for the Older Americans Act programs, including nutrition programs ($520 million), home and community-based services ($200 million), and family caregivers support ($100 million).

Congress is exploring additional food assistance, including increasing SNAP benefits, in future legislative relief packages.

Over the last month, a variety of resources, perspectives, and working groups have emerged regarding the food, nutrition, and health implications of the Covid-19 response. Here are just some examples:

- The Library of Congress Coronavirus Research Guide
- Food Research & Action Center Covid-19 Updates
- National WIC Association COVID-19 Resources
- Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry
- School Nutrition Association Coronavirus Disease Resources
- American Heart Association Voices for Healthier Kids Covid-19 Resources You Can Use
- The Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy at the Teachers’ College at Columbia University Covid Federal Update
- University of California, Agriculture and National Resources Nutrition Policy Institute Covid-19 Resources