

Three Square Food Bank - 2019 State Legislative Priorities

Issue #1: Food for People, Not Landfills

Purpose: To unite Nevada around a common goal on meals distributed through food recovery

Background: Food waste is a significant social and environmental issue as billions of pounds of edible food is wasted or not consumed in the United States. Donating food for human consumption is a successful strategy to reduce food waste in landfills, increase food supply chain efficiency, and most importantly meet the needs of hungry people. The primary sources of our nation's food supply includes growers, manufacturers and processors, grocery retail, and restaurants. Working with those on the supply side, consumers, and government, we can turn unwanted food into a valuable resource.

In 2017, Three Square Food Bank sourced more than 13 million pounds of rescued food (the equivalent of 11 million meals) from grocery retailers.¹ Additionally, Three Square recovered more than 80,000 meals in surplus banquet food.² Three Square is grateful for these donor partnerships, and we understand that in working together to achieve a larger state goal we could rescue more. Millions more in grocery product and meals. Furthermore, other stakeholders in the production of food like restaurants, manufacturers, and growers will heed the call to implement systems and programs to capture edible food before it becomes waste.

In many other states, government and business play more significant roles in food recovery. In 2012, Vermont became the first state in the nation to legislatively adopt priority management for food before it is discarded. The result was a 40% increase in donated food for people in need.

Proposed Solutions:

- ***Establish a state goal of at least 6 million pounds (5 million meals) per year, and 25 million over five years (scaling up), to increase available food resources for hungry people through reduced waste.***
- ***Non-monetary incentives for establishing and implementing a waste reduction plan that diverts edible food resources to food banks.***
- ***Track progress toward a state goal through the Governor's Council on Food Security.***

Issue #2: Reimbursement Rate Increases for Senior Congregate Meals

Purpose: To increase participation and reimbursements for senior citizens' congregate meals

Background: Nearly 80,000 older Nevadans (ages 60 and older) were food insecure in 2016 and our state will see a 36% increase in the older adult population over the next decade.³ Therefore, it is estimated by 2025, 17,000 additional older Nevadans will need nutrition services than those today, totaling almost 100,000 individuals. Congregate settings provided more than 608k nutritious meals, as well as social connection for older Nevadans. Many of these seniors would otherwise spend much more of their time in isolation. Presently, Nevada ranks at the bottom of reimbursement rates for sponsors (\$2.20 per meal); this is also lower than the reimbursement rate set (federally) for children's meals at \$3.20 per meal. Congregate meal providers have not seen an increase in reimbursements for 18 years. A recent meal cost study conducted by NV Aging and Disability Services Division demonstrates that the operational cost incurred by sponsors exceeds \$10 per meal.

This bill seeks to cover the \$1 gap between the current reimbursement rate through the Older American's Act, with state funds, to achieve a reimbursement rate of \$3.20 per meal, equal to that of children's nutrition programs. The cost to the state to ensure reimbursement parity is estimated \$1.2 million biennially. Three Square, and the Governor's Council on Food Security, advocate parity as the minimum reimbursement.

¹ Three Square Food Bank Core Data, May 2018

² Three Square Food Bank Core Data, May 2018

³ "Nutrition Programs Gap Analysis for Older Nevadans", Nevada Office of Food Security 2016.



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Proposed Solution:

- ***Increase reimbursements for congregate meals to equal children's meals through legislative action.***
 - ***Increase reimbursement rates until there is parity between senior nutrition and children's nutrition programs (\$1 per meal).***

Issue #3: The Governor's Council on Food Security

Purpose: Establish the Governor's Council on Food Security as a permanent body advising the Governor

Background: Governor Brian Sandoval issued an Executive Order on February 12, 2014 establishing the Governor's Council on Food Security within the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Food Security. The Council was created to implement the goals of The Food Security State Plan in Nevada. The Council has been active since formation and championed important pieces of legislation including:

1. SB503, the "Breakfast After the Bell" bill, signed into law by Governor Sandoval in 2015. The legislation mandates schools with an eligibility rate of free and reduced lunch at 70 percent or greater to serve breakfast after the start of the school day. Statewide improvement catapulted Nevada from the bottom of breakfast participation compared to other states, to 7th in the United States.
2. GCFS Committees have tackled issues such as: addressing gaps in senior nutrition, improving summer meal access, increasing dual enrollments in SNAP/WIC among eligible households, and implementing workfare in Nevada for the first time to mitigate the impacts of time limits on SNAP benefits for unemployed adults without children.

Proposed Solution:

- ***Make the Council permanent through a legislative act to provide stability in hunger insecurity policy making***

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