

Statement from the American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) on Critical Need to Reauthorize FARM Bill with Nutrition Support

August 29, 2025

American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) calls on Congress to pass a Farm Bill that protects nutrition, advances food security, and strengthens equitable food systems for all Americans—especially the low-income, immigrant, tribal, and faith-based communities we serve. As clinicians and public-health professionals, we view the Farm Bill first and foremost as a health bill: federal nutrition and food-system investments determine who eats, who thrives, and who falls sick from preventable, diet-related disease.

The scale and stakes of this reauthorization are clear: Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP) and other nutrition programs account for the largest portion of Farm Bill spending and are the primary safety net keeping millions from hunger; decisions made in this bill directly affect food security, maternal and child health, and chronic-disease prevention across the nation.

AMHP urges Congress to adopt a Farm Bill that follows basic public-health principles:

- **Protect and strengthen SNAP and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**—preserve benefit adequacy tied to the Thrifty Food Plan, maintain broad-based categorical eligibility, eliminate arbitrary time limits (including the three-month able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) rule), and resist proposals that would shrink program reach or purchasing power. SNAP and WIC are proven to reduce food insecurity and improve maternal and child health; weakening them will increase hunger and downstream health costs.
- **Ensure culturally appropriate access—including halal options—within federal nutrition programs.** Many American families require foods that meet religious dietary standards. Federal program guidance and procurement should recognize halal and kosher needs, expand vendor flexibility where feasible, and support third-party verification pathways so participants are not forced to choose between religious practice and nutrition.
- **Invest in emergency food infrastructure and community distribution (TEFAP, CSFP, local capacity).** Mandatory and stable funding for Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and related distribution systems—plus support for culturally appropriate inventory, storage, and distribution—are essential to meet surges in need and to serve communities with limited retail access.

- **Fund nutrition incentives and local markets (GusNIP, farmers markets) to expand healthy purchasing power.** Nutrition incentive programs, like the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) increase fruit and vegetable consumption and strengthen local food economies; expanding incentives—especially in low-income and Muslim-minority communities—boosts both health and economic resilience.
- **Support small, diversified, and historically underserved farmers.** Direct resources and technical assistance to small, Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and women farmers; strengthen specialty-crop and urban-agriculture programs; and remove barriers that prevent new and beginning farmers from accessing conservation and market supports. Strong local production improves availability of culturally relevant foods.
- **Improve data collection, equity metrics, and tribal self-administration.** Better disaggregated data on food insecurity, program utilization (including by religion, language, and immigration status), and culturally appropriate needs will drive more effective policy. Expand Tribal self-administration options and ensure territories are transitioned from NAP to full SNAP access.
- **Modernize benefits and reduce barriers.** Improve EBT security and technology to reduce theft and diversion, allow practical purchases (including prepared and hot foods where appropriate), and eliminate punitive exclusions—such as bans on eligibility for people with prior drug convictions—that undermine public-health goals.
- **Protect school meals and child nutrition programs.** Expand funding for school and summer meals, support culturally responsive menu planning, and minimize administrative burdens that limit participation in high-need districts.

Why AMHP is raising its voice

Many American Muslims live in communities hardest hit by food deserts, unstable employment, and immigration-related vulnerabilities. For families juggling work, caregiving, and cultural food needs, federal nutrition policy can be the difference between healthy pregnancies, thriving children, and avoidable disease. A Farm Bill that preserves benefits, improves access to halal and culturally relevant foods, invests in local food systems, and centers equity will save lives and reduce health-care costs.

What Can Congress Do?

- Oppose cuts that reduce SNAP/WIC eligibility or benefit levels.
- Enshrine protections for culturally and religiously appropriate food access (halal) in procurement and program guidance. <https://alliancetoendhunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Alliance-to-End-Hunger-U.S.-Farm-Bill-Summary-update-Nov-2024.pdf>
- Increase mandatory TEFAP/CSFP funding and expand GusNIP and other nutrition incentives.
- Prioritize funding and technical assistance for small and underserved farmers, Tribal self-administration, and territories.

AMHP stands ready to provide technical briefings, clinical testimony, and community data to congressional offices and agency staff as the Farm Bill moves through committee and floor consideration. We urge policymakers to treat this reauthorization as an opportunity to reduce hunger, improve health equity, and ensure that federal nutrition investments reach every community—including Muslim families who require culturally appropriate options.

For more information on our policy proposals or regarding halal food standards, please contact our Health Policy and Advocacy Program at Advocacy@amhp.us.

Sincerely,

American Muslim Health Professionals



**American Muslim
Health Professionals**