



Food Bank of Alaska is concerned with Governor Dunleavy's proposed cuts to programs critical to low-income Alaskans. These proposed cuts not only include important funding streams to us and our partners, but also programs that low-income Alaskans - our clients - rely on. Cuts to programs like SNAP, Senior Benefits, and Adult Public Assistance will increase the pressure on the anti-hunger network to fill the gap at the same time many in our network will be grappling with their own funding cuts.

Some programs/funding streams we want to protect include:

- The **Senior Benefit Program** funding of \$24.4 million will be eliminated, and the Governor is seeking a full repeal of the program altogether. This program provides cash assistance to more than 11,000 low-income Alaskan elders so they can afford necessities like food, heat, and medication. The loss of this funding combined with other proposed cuts, like those to the PFD hold harmless fund or to Adult Public Assistance, means that some low-income seniors could be seeing multiple layers of resource cuts.
- **Human Services Community Matching Grant (HSCMG)** funding of \$1.38 million will be eliminated. This is one of the only funding streams to support operations for basic needs services like food and shelter. The loss of these funds to our anti-hunger network would be compounded by the decrease in other benefits for low-income Alaskans, which creates additional need and puts additional pressure on our network.
 - Food Bank of Alaska has been a recipient of this funding in many past years at \$100,000, and we have used the funding to purchase fresh produce to supplement donations and to support our Anchorage holiday distributions (Thanksgiving Blessing and Neighborhood GIFT, which together provide complete holiday meals to over 10,000 families).
 - Additionally, this has been an important source of funding for many of our partner agencies, including Bean's Café, Catholic Social Services, Covenant House Alaska, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), and more.
- There is an overall \$35.4 million cut to public assistance, including cuts to **Adult Public Assistance** (for low-income seniors and disabled individuals), **tribal assistance program**, and the **PFD Hold Harmless Fund**, which will likely reduce eligibility and benefits for many public assistance programs.
 - Public Assistance Field Services – There is a \$2.2 million cut, which we believe represents a reversal in funding for the 20 additional DPA staff positions that we advocated for last year to help address the SNAP/Medicaid backlog. The State is doing

much better on the backlog, but we worry that additional cuts will put us into a backlog situation again.

- The Permanent Fund Dividend Hold Harmless – This is cut in its entirety, about \$17.7 million. This funding stream is a bit complicated, but plays an important role in allowing low-income Alaskans to maintain eligibility for programs like SNAP when the PFD comes out. From what we have gathered there doesn't seem to be a clear plan for how the State would implement this in an effective way. For example, it seems like without the PFD Hold Harmless supplement, most SNAP recipients would be kicked off the program in October due to the injection of income. If those same people were to spend down their PFDs and then reapply, it would be an administrative nightmare, and I would imagine end up costing the State a lot in additional administrative costs. Additionally, customer service for clients would be a concern.
- The **Homeless Assistance Program (HAP)** will be cut from \$7.9 million dollars to \$950,000, and the **Special Needs Housing Grant (SNHG)** will be cut from \$1.9 million dollars to \$200,000. Thousands of Alaskans will lose access to homeless prevention supports (rental/utility emergency assistance and long-term rental assistance), emergency shelter options, and the ability to be rapidly rehoused in multiple communities.
- There are huge cuts to **Medicaid**, including a \$249 million general fund reduction, which would make us ineligible to receive \$465 million in federal funds. Cuts to healthcare for low-income Alaskans will undoubtedly increase hunger, as we know many food insecure Alaskans already report having to choose between food and healthcare on a regular basis.
- While child nutrition programs weren't cut directly, the massive 25% in reductions to public education will almost certainly result in the reduction of the **school meal program** in many districts. Some rural districts have already cut this critical program because of insufficient budgets, and this is of huge concern to us, given the critical role that school meals play in addressing childhood food insecurity. The State of Alaska Child Nutrition Programs are reporting that they already have several districts not committing to operating a school meal program for fear of budget cuts.

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