



## CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

*A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families*

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## **Community Organizations Speak Up: Equal Benefits for Hungry Families**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

THURSDAY, FEB. 13 — Seventy-one community based organizations from across the state have joined together to call for full restoration of State Food Assistance for Washington children, elders, and families.

The organizations, representing people in communities of color and anti-hunger organizations like food banks, are asking state legislators to restore full funding to State Food Assistance, a crucial form of food support for children in immigrant families.

For more than 15 years, Washington has strategically leveraged national resources to make sure that food stamps reach families in economic distress. Our legislature led the country in 1997 in establishing the program, and state officials found a way to operate it cheaply and efficiently.

Like food stamps, State Food Assistance grows when times are tough and shrinks when times get better. State Food Assistance creatively piggybacks on the food stamp program to reduce administrative costs and efficiently deliver benefits to eligible individuals, who are migrants lawfully residing in the State of Washington. State Food Assistance helps feed an estimated 12,000 children whose families come from places such as Mexico, Eritrea, Vietnam and the South Pacific.

State Food Assistance recipients were also hit with the Basic Food (SNAP) across-the-board cut on November 1. After the November cut, State Food Assistance benefits dropped to 36 cents per person per meal. The new Farm Bill, passed by Congress on February 5, also brings additional cuts.

“The reduction has caused a lot of hardship,” says Keju Thompson, an Auburn grandfather and citizen of the Marshall Islands. A compact between the United States and the Marshallese government allows Thompson and his fellow citizens to live, work and learn in America.

“It caused many families to visit hospitals and clinics because of belly ache known as ‘Empty Stomach,’” he says. “Then they even had difficulties to pay their medical bills. Their paychecks are not enough to support their families.”

“All children deserve healthy, good food at breakfast, lunch and dinner—so they can grow up and be the strong workers, parents and leaders our future depends on,” says Faaluaina Pritchard, executive director of the Asia Pacific Cultural Center in Tacoma, one of the organizational endorsers of the call to restore State Food Assistance.

The Asia Pacific Cultural Center and community organizations all across the state are asking legislators to fulfill a key part of the American promise—basic help in hard times—by bringing State Food Assistance up to parity with federal SNAP benefits. [Read their letter.](#)

“No matter where you’re from, in America your children deserve a great start in life,” says Pritchard. “That means good schools, health care—and the nutritious food that helps a child learn.”

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*The Children’s Alliance ([www.childrensalliance.org](http://www.childrensalliance.org)) is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the state and federal level to ensure that all children have what they need to thrive.*