The world is living through unprecedented times. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is causing anxiety, uncertainty, and disruptions—threatening to reverse the gains made on hunger and poverty in the past decades. While policymakers have passed legislation over the last few months to help people affected by COVID-19 locally and globally, much more is needed to ensure that families experiencing the most inequities have the support they need. Therefore, we urge members of Congress to do the following:

**Support a COVID-19 recovery package that provides significant relief for struggling U.S. families and individuals.**

- Boost Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) maximum benefits by 15 percent beyond September 30, 2021.
- Increase the minimum monthly SNAP benefit from $16 to $30.
- Suspend SNAP administrative rules that would terminate or weaken benefits.

**Expand Pandemic Electronic Bank Transfer (P-EBT) to all states through the summer.**

- The P-EBT program, created under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, provides nutritional resources to families who are losing access to free or reduced-price school meals as schools across the country close in response to COVID-19.
- Through P-EBT, states can issue eligible households an EBT card with the value of the free school breakfast and lunch reimbursement rates for the number of weekdays that schools are closed due to COVID-19 (estimated to be around $5.70 per day).

**Increase funding by no less than $12 billion for foreign assistance programs that will help protect the world’s most vulnerable in this time of crisis.**

- Coronavirus knows no borders. It is a global threat, and our shared humanity demands a global response.
- Additional funding is needed for the global health and humanitarian response, and urgent economic relief is needed to fight the pandemic internationally and to support the agencies and operations on the front lines of the COVID-19 response worldwide.
- $2 billion is needed to address hunger and malnutrition that will result from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Funds should support a country-led response and strengthen the ability of local public first responders on the front line of community care to be successful.

“For I know the plans I have for you... to give you a future with hope.” —Jeremiah 29:11
U.S. food insecurity and SNAP

- Young children are experiencing food insecurity to an extent unprecedented in modern times. Among mothers with young children, **nearly one-fifth said their children are not getting enough to eat.** This is three times as high as during the worst of the Great Recession.

- **SNAP is America’s most effective anti-hunger program** and one of the best ways to stimulate the economy as people spend their benefits quickly and in their local communities.

- A 15 percent increase in the SNAP maximum benefit would amount to about $25 more per person per month.

- Every SNAP dollar enables low-income families to spend an additional dollar on food or frees up resources for other necessary items. Four-fifths of SNAP benefits are redeemed within two weeks of receipt, 97 percent within one month.

COVID-19’s impact on global food security and malnutrition

- The number of people at risk of starvation is anticipated to **double—rise to 265 million** in 2020, up by 130 million from 135 million in 2019, according to the World Food Programme.

- A rise in malnutrition is inevitable as the economic and health crisis becomes a global hunger crisis and the secondary impacts reduce dietary quality, impair WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) practices, and threaten care services for mothers as well as the continuation of regular health and nutrition programs for children.
  
  - Early estimates suggest that the number of children under age five who are stunted may increase by **5 percent, an additional 7 million children.**
  
  - **Johns Hopkins estimates** an additional **1.2 million child deaths in six months, due to reductions in routine health services and an increase in wasting.**

- At least **$12 billion** is critical to ensuring the most vulnerable communities can prevent, respond to, and mitigate impacts from this devastating pandemic.