



City of Golden

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2/9/2023

Members of the Senate Health & Human Services Committee,

The City Council of Golden is expressing its support for SB23-027 Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program. The City of Golden believes that this bill would help provide the Public-Private Collaboration Unit with tools that will help alleviate the need for affordable housing in Colorado. The Food Pantry Assistance Grant program provided assistance to several Golden-based food pantries who have contributed significantly to addressing food inaccessibility in our community. While the state of emergency that prompted the Food Pantry Assistance Program initially has ended, the ongoing effects of the pandemic and higher food costs continue to put pressure on those in our state most in need. Food pantries across Colorado are experiencing higher demand for their services than they ever have before

Senate Bill 23-027 would fund this grant program into future years, which support pantries in their incredible community service. This would not only help the pantries provide much needed assistance and it would also provide Colorado agriculture producers with support for their operations.

This bill would advance the ability of the City of Golden to reach its goals, stated through Council's adopted Strategic Action Plan and Legislative Policy Statement. Golden has an express interest in maintaining a community that is vibrant, safe, affordable, and has a high quality of municipal services, and the Council believes that his bill would help the City to achieve its goals.

The Golden City Council strongly supports Senate Bill 23-027. We urge you to support this bill through the committee review process and the general floor votes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

JJ Trout

District 1 Councilor, Mayor Pro-Tempore

Don Cameron

Ward 3 Councilor

Written Testimony
Health & Human Services Committee
Meeting Date and Time: Feb 9, 2023, 1:30 pm
Hearing Item: Senate Health & Human Services SB23-027
(Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program [Cutter])



On behalf of Community Table, we are submitting written testimony in support of the Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program and in support of the amendment put forth by Feeding Colorado and its associated food banks.

We are in full agreement that FPAG funding is absolutely essential to the thousands and thousands of families across Colorado struggling to put food on the table. However, we do not feel the current process of accessing and using those funds is as equitable and efficient as it could be.

We understand that 90% of the nearly 1,200 pantries that are members of Feeding Colorado do not currently benefit from the FPAG program. Many of these are grass root operations that lack the ability to source and purchase food on their own. We were also alarmed to learn that last year 29 counties in Colorado did not receive funds from the FPAG program. That's a lot of hungry people.

Community Table is one of the larger hunger-relief organizations in the metro Denver area. We are most grateful for the support we have received from the FPAG program over the years. Without the funding, we could not provide the same level of support to families in need during the pandemic and its aftermath.

Given the number of families currently hungry across Colorado and the upcoming end of the SNAP Emergency Allotment, we feel the FPAG funding mechanism needs to be as efficient and as equitable as possible. Allowing Colorado's food bank network to disburse funds in their own communities will make the program much more equitable. And by taking advantage of the buying power and efficiencies of Colorado's food bank network, there will be more food for all. It is our feeling that the regional food banks should oversee and disburse the funds locally, in their own communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

About Community Table

Founded in 1982 by concerned citizens, the Arvada Food Bank, now known as Community Table, began distributing food to hungry families from a small house. Now in our 41st year, we have become one of the largest emergency food assistance providers in the metro area, serving Arvada, Edgewater, northern Denver, Lakeside, Mountain View, Federal Heights, Golden, Thornton, Westminster, Wheat Ridge and surrounding communities. Community Table employs nine staff members and 500 volunteers to feed and provide support and resources for thousands of struggling families annually.

Although providing food is still our core, our support for those in need extends far beyond. In 2014, we added a 'hand up' by adding programs and resources struggling families need to lift themselves out of poverty, including emergency financial assistance for rent and utilities, public benefits application assistance, client computer room and more. In 2019, we began hosting showers for people experiencing homelessness, and we opened an onsite health clinic for underinsured and uninsured adults. Our support for those in need continues to grow. We now offer laundry and dental services and even cooking programs for those on a budget. We know we can do even more to help people in need with continued community support. Community Table, a 501(c)(3) public charity, depends on support from individuals, corporations, foundations, churches and service organizations. For more information, visit cotable.org.

Linda Funke
Coordinator, Food Pantry
Saint John's Lutheran Church
305 E. Elizabeth Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524

February 8, 2022

TO: Honorable Committee Members - Feeding Colorado

RE: SB23-027 Proposed Amendment
Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program

Our Food Pantry is very thankful for and dependent on our partnership with the Food Bank of Larimer County. Without this partnership, even with great support from our church members, we are confident that we would not be able to remain in existence. Because of this partnership, we are able to continue to serve a growing clientele. Closed during the Pandemic, we have increased our clientele from approximately 13 family units/week at the beginning of 2022 to 27-33 family units per week. Last year we served 150 unique family units. We expect this growth to continue and anticipate increased numbers after March 1st when the SNAP Emergency Allotments cease.

Our pantry is operated solely by volunteers. We'd like to expand our days/hours, but due to the amount of time we spend shopping, sorting, serving our clients and keeping records, we have no time (or expertise) to devote to grant-writing. Our budget has increased astronomically due to increased client numbers and increasing prices. We depend on donations from our church members. We have tried to work with local vendors to purchase/order large quantities of items so we don't have to drive store-to-store, but we lack the purchasing power to accomplish streamlined shopping and lower costs. We find we are wasting time, money, and resources (including gas).

Thankfully, we were able to receive 6,647 pounds of food from the Larimer County Food Bank in 2022 with a total cost to us of \$198.93. Even with that assistance, we spend \$1,000+ a month to purchase additional items needed by our clientele. The allotments we receive are very beneficial, but we find that when the Food Bank uses their purchasing power to provide food items needed by our

demographic and we can “shop” for those items at the Food Bank, that is most beneficial to us.

Our pantry’s demographic is at least 90% Latino. We provide foods specific to their culture, so they may cook healthy meals. We purchase rice, dried pinto beans, tortillas, maseca, in addition to sugar, flour, etc. To provide what they want and need, rather than just fill a box with foods they don’t need and may toss away, we feel we are listening to their needs and wasting less. Last year, after visiting with us, the Food Bank representatives were able to secure in bulk dried pinto beans and maseca, even packaging them themselves and provided them to us at no cost. This is just one specific example of how the Food Bank listens to the pantries and provides for our needs.

The Food Bank has the purchasing power necessary to lower our costs, to work with farmers to provide fresh meat and produce, and share the resources from the Food Pantry Assistance Grant program with many food pantries instead of only those who have paid staff or volunteers with grant-writing experience. What a shame to have grant funds available to pantries who are often unable to apply for those much-needed funds to feed the hungry in their communities.

We encourage you to consider and pass the proposed amendment which would enable the Food Banks to better empower our small, local pantries by allowing them to receive grant money for their pantry partners. Together, we can be more effective, more equitable, and reach more people.

We also invite you to visit our local charitable pantries to see how we depend on and partner with the Food Bank. It is a powerful and mission-minded partnership. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Linda Funke
Charitable Food Pantry Volunteer Coordinator

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Senate Health & Human Services
 02/09/2023 01:30 PM
 SB23-027 Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Carol Pace For AARP of Colorado	<p>Madam Chair, Members of the Committee, my name is Carol Pace. I am a volunteer with AARP Colorado. AARP has over 670,000 members in Colorado and is focused on Coloradans age 50 and above, and their families.</p> <p>AARP supports SB 23-027, the Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program. Older adults have an increased risk of being hungry or food insecure. Research shows reasons for this may include being on Fixed Incomes, having Limited Mobility, and experiencing Changes in Health. Research reveals that older adults are concerned about paying for Food, amongst other needs, such as paying for Medicine/Medical Care, Utilities, Rent or Mortgage and Transportation or Gas for a car. Households experiencing food insecurity may not qualify for other federal nutrition programs and rely on local food pantries. Feeding Colorado reports reaching 14,000 older Coloradans, but estimate there could be 90,000-100,000 older adults eligible for their program. Additional issues to resolve for seniors include that some older adults are home-bound, transportation to food pantries is challenging, and food boxes could weigh 30 lbs. and be difficult to lift. Feeding Colorado has developed a statewide map of food insecurity by county. The overall Food Insecurity rate for Colorado is 8.3%. That rises to 13% for the Black population and rises to a high of 18% for the Hispanic population. Food pantries and food banks are critical to address food insecurity.</p> <p>We ask that the committee support SB 23-027.</p> <p>Respectfully, Carol Pace, AARP Volunteer Advocate</p> <p>References</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Colorado Food Insecurity Rates by County. map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/colorado 2.AARP Policy Book 2021-2022: Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs. policybook.aarp.org 3.AARP Policy Book 2021-2022: Drive to End Hunger (DTEH). endseniorhunger.aarp.org 4.Frongillo EA, Warren AM. An Evaluation Report: Senior Food-assistance, Related Programming, and Seniors’ Experiences Across the Feeding America Network: Senior Food Insecurity Exploratory Research. Feeding America, 2022. 5.Ziliak JP, Gundersen C. The State of Senior Hunger in 2020. Prepared for Feeding America, 2022. 6.Gundersen C, Ziliak J. Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2020: An Annual Report. Prepared for Feeding America, 2022.

	<p>7. Feeding America, "Hunger in America 2014: A Report on Older Adult Clients and Households of the Feeding America Network in 2013: Baby Boomers and Beyond – Facing Hunger After Fifty," July 2015. Sponsored in part by AARP Foundation.</p>
<p>Lydia Waligorski For Clayton Early Learning</p>	<p>We are in strong support of Senate bill 27.</p> <p>Clayton early learning directly serves 500 of Denver's more than 7000 children birth to age 5, living below the poverty line as one of the largest head start providers in Colorado.</p> <p>Our whole child, whole family approach to early childhood is the basis for a full complement of wraparound supports and services that build strong families.</p> <p>Nutrition impacts the way our brains develop and 90% of human brain development occurs before age 5 so equitable access to nutritious foods is essentially for healthy growth in learning especially for our youngest children 99% of clayton's school children live at or below the federal poverty line making food insecurity too common for our families.</p> <p>This challenge is not limited to our northeast and our neighborhood. On a statewide basis nearly one in seven Colorado kids may not know when or where they will get their next meal. Additionally, it is important to understand that nationwide one in four childcare providers are food insecure themselves and many rely on federal SNAP benefits to feed their own families. Clayton serves 1,000 nutritious meals daily, all freshly prepared from scratch in the Clayton kitchen, including our own organic baby food. We know 80% of the calories consumed by Clayton children during the school week are provided while in our care.</p> <p>Through our innovative Clayton Cares Market, we are also helping to provide food security for our children when they are not in our care. Each week, our no-cost Clayton Cares Market provides our families with a wide variety of fresh and shelf-stable foods, household and school supplies, diapers and wipes, and more. This all happens in a welcoming environment that allows for a pleasant shopping experience and the simple dignity of choosing the groceries and items that best fit each family's individual and cultural preferences. Since opening in October 2021, through September 1, 2022, Clayton families have made 2,206 shopping visits to the Market and have received more than 52,000 pounds of food.</p> <p>As has been mentioned in the testimony this year's need has only grown. With the reduction in federal SNAP benefits, our families are asking us to help them fill the gaps they've experienced. Senate bill 27 the Food Pantry Assistance Grant program will help programs across Colorado. We are fortunate to see these needed dollars at work in our communities.</p>
<p>Annalise Romoser For Save the Children Action Network</p>	<p>Committee Chair Fields and Vice Chair Ginal,</p> <p>Thank you for considering my testimony in favor of the Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program, Senate Bill 23-027.</p>

	<p>I am Advisor for State and Electoral Campaigns, West for Save the Children Action Network (SCAN). SCAN engages volunteers around the state of Colorado and has a digital supporter list of nearly 10,000 in the state.</p> <p>Our supporters are committed to improving child nutrition. This commitment is born out of the belief that all children have the right to the best possible start in life.</p> <p>Unfortunately, for families around the country and across our state, accessing affordable, nutritious food is a challenge, and one that leaves children at a disadvantage.</p> <p>Save the Children and Save the Children Action Network recently commissioned a nation-wide poll of rural and small-town voters. The study found that rural voters are facing many challenges, including feeding their families. In fact, 6 in 10 rural voters are worried they might not be able to afford enough food to feed themselves and their families over the next year.</p> <p>These concerns reflect what we are seeing in Colorado. Hunger Free Colorado reports that 2 out of every 5 Colorado families struggle to put food on the table for their children. Food pantries are an important support, and the demand on these is likely to grow when federal COVID-19 aid for nutrition programs ends, starting in March of this year.</p> <p>Now is the time to support innovative and effective programs to provide nutritious, fresh food to families.</p> <p>The Food Pantry Assistance Grant program is one such program. This powerful program connects and supports Colorado's food pantries around the state to purchase and provide their communities with Colorado-grown fruits, vegetables, dairy, and meat products from local producers.</p> <p>More than 140 organizations in almost every county in Colorado, and more than 60 Colorado farmers, have participated in the program, allowing emergency food providers to serve hundreds of thousands of Coloradans over the past two years.</p> <p>Senate Bill 23-027 would allow for continued funding of this effective program, and thereby support food pantries to offer continued access to nutritious food. Importantly, this legislation supports Colorado's local farmers and ranchers.</p> <p>Senate Bill 23-027 is a valuable investment in nutrition. I ask that you support Colorado families by voting "yes" on SEB 23-027.</p>
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	Thank you for your consideration.
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Senate Health & Human Services
 02/09/2023 01:30 PM
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 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

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Carol Pace For AARP of Colorado	<p>Madam Chair, Members of the Committee, my name is Carol Pace. I am a volunteer with AARP Colorado. AARP has over 670,000 members in Colorado and is focused on Coloradans age 50 and above, and their families.</p> <p>AARP supports SB 23-027, the Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program. Older adults have an increased risk of being hungry or food insecure. Research shows reasons for this may include being on Fixed Incomes, having Limited Mobility, and experiencing Changes in Health. Research reveals that older adults are concerned about paying for Food, amongst other needs, such as paying for Medicine/Medical Care, Utilities, Rent or Mortgage and Transportation or Gas for a car. Households experiencing food insecurity may not qualify for other federal nutrition programs and rely on local food pantries. Feeding Colorado reports reaching 14,000 older Coloradans, but estimate there could be 90,000-100,000 older adults eligible for their program. Additional issues to resolve for seniors include that some older adults are home-bound, transportation to food pantries is challenging, and food boxes could weigh 30 lbs. and be difficult to lift. Feeding Colorado has developed a statewide map of food insecurity by county. The overall Food Insecurity rate for Colorado is 8.3%. That rises to 13% for the Black population and rises to a high of 18% for the Hispanic population. Food pantries and food banks are critical to address food insecurity.</p> <p>We ask that the committee support SB 23-027.</p> <p>Respectfully, Carol Pace, AARP Volunteer Advocate</p> <p>References</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Colorado Food Insecurity Rates by County. map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/colorado 2.AARP Policy Book 2021-2022: Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs. policybook.aarp.org 3.AARP Policy Book 2021-2022: Drive to End Hunger (DTEH). endseniorhunger.aarp.org 4.Frongillo EA, Warren AM. An Evaluation Report: Senior Food-assistance, Related Programming, and Seniors’ Experiences Across the Feeding America Network: Senior Food Insecurity Exploratory Research. Feeding America, 2022. 5.Ziliak JP, Gundersen C. The State of Senior Hunger in 2020. Prepared for Feeding America, 2022. 6.Gundersen C, Ziliak J. Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2020: An Annual Report. Prepared for Feeding America, 2022.

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