

Written Testimony
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Subcommittee on Nutrition
Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Chairwoman Hayes and Members of the Nutrition Subcommittee,

My name is Frank Kubik. I am the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) Director at Focus: HOPE in Detroit, Michigan and I am also a board member of the National CSFP Association. Thank you for the invitation to speak about CSFP here today. I am grateful for the opportunity to share the efforts and effects of the CSFP over the past two years.

CSFP has a long history of supporting our senior population by providing regular access to food items that supplement a healthy diet for seniors. The monthly food boxes provide a variety of items that can be incorporated into meals throughout a given month, reducing out of pocket food costs, and allowing senior income to be used for other food, medicine, or personal and household needs.

I want to thank this subcommittee for improvements to the certification process for CSFP in the last Farm Bill. Extending the certification period for our senior participants from one year to three years resulted in easing the paperwork burden on program operators. More importantly, it allows senior participants, whose financial situation is not likely to change significantly, to stay enrolled on this important program while they need it the most. We are hopeful that the next Farm Bill will address the issue of allowing seniors to receive the program services while they may currently be ineligible but still in need of CSFP. Removing the Medicare deduction from a senior's income determination is one idea that we are looking at.

CSFP provides more than just food. Our distributions provide information on healthy meal planning and lifestyle choices. Where possible, some offer health screenings, cooking demonstrations, tax assistance, utility assistance, and even access to other food programs such as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). CSFP distributions provide social interaction and connection for seniors 60 years of age or older, providing comfort in the face of need.

My comments today are mostly representative of the experiences and efforts in Michigan, with some additional awareness of national efforts from my role as a member of the National CSFP Association. These past two years have been challenging, not only for our participants, but for the staff and volunteers who run CSFP. Normal practices had to be quickly set aside in the face of the pandemic to protect those most susceptible. Stay at home orders, social distancing, and personal protection for essential workers combined to help keep us safe but forced our agencies to revamp many of their distribution practices for the safety of all involved.

The practice of participants entering a building to stand and wait in line for food was replaced by drive through distribution of boxes at many sites. Agencies set up social distancing areas and used personal protection equipment and drive through pick-up to allow participants to stay safe in their cars. Some put up tents in their parking lots to keep staff and volunteers out of the elements. Others added or expanded delivery programs. They continued and expanded the use of proxies for food box pick up, allowing seniors to stay home. They used automated calling services to announce closures and

rescheduled distributions. They used phone apps and signage to keep the lines moving. Some agencies used a third party, such as Amazon, to help deliver boxes to seniors who were homebound. And while these efforts kept distributions going, there were areas beyond their control that limited program operations.

At times, some agencies had to close down due to quarantine and outbreaks. Stay at home orders kept participants away from distribution sites. New Covid variants, personal safety concerns, and lack of personal transportation continue to limit participation. The availability of CSFP food items decreased. Canned fruit and vegetables due to packaging material shortages, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) fluid milk due to increase prices in the commercial food market, resulted in reduced food packages for extended periods of time, continuing still today for canned fruits and vegetables as national inventories continue to be replaced and built up to previous levels.

CSFP became available in all 50 states in 2019, as well as in six Federally recognized Tribes and Puerto Rico. National program caseload has remained the same since 2019, with caseload adjustments made between regions and states to support distribution trends. We are working to maintain distribution levels and expect higher participation rates as the pandemic subsides and participant levels rise as previous participants return and new participants join to become active participants. In addition, beyond the effects of the pandemic, the population of potentially eligible CSFP participants is projected to grow as baby boomers age into the required age bracket.

While additional food program support was much needed over the past two years, programs such as CARES, Families First, Covid Supplemental, Farmers to Families, and others provided alternatives to CSFP participants that may have been more accessible at times. Those programs provided temporary support and have ended or transitioned into other programs, and CSFP is working back to full packages for distribution as participants both old and new seek food support moving forward. States and partner agencies had the benefit of maintaining CSFP caseload and funding last year and would benefit from the same opportunity moving forward as the program and participation stabilize.

Thank you again for the chance to share with you today.

Frank Kubik

Frank Kubik is the Director of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program at Focus: HOPE in Detroit, Michigan and has served in that capacity since 2011.

Focus: HOPE is a metropolitan Detroit nonprofit civil and human rights organization whose purpose is to resolve the effects of discrimination and injustice and to build integration. Focus: HOPE employs over 200 colleagues and involves more than 7,000 volunteers annually. The Focus: HOPE CSFP issues food on a monthly basis to over 41,000 senior citizens in Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, and Washtenaw counties. Under Frank's direction the Focus: HOPE food centers have brought in additional services to the community including free income tax preparation, utility payment assistance, and numerous free health screenings.

Frank has been with Focus: HOPE since 1981. He started in the food program warehouse, moved to the finance department in 1983, then returned to the food program in 1987 as assistant manager and became manager in 1990. In October 2011, he was promoted to director. In addition to directing the food program, he is a current board member and four-time president of the National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association. He also co-chairs the NCSFPA Education Committee and has served as vice president, past president, and local agency director. He was a participant in the July, 1998 "Fighting Hunger at the Grassroots" workshop, jointly sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and World Hunger Year. He was invited to and served on the Commodity Supplemental Food Program team that participated as expert consultants to the USDA Business Process Reengineering program in April 1999. In January 2007, he gave testimony on behalf of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to the United States Senate Committee on Agriculture as well as in March 2017 to the United States House of Representatives Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition. He was formerly chairperson and a charter member of the Detroit Meals On Wheels Board of Directors. He has been a member of the American Commodity Distribution Association TEFAP/CSFP Committee.

Frank is a lifelong resident of Detroit and has been described as "all Detroit" by the New York Times in December 2011. He studied accounting at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Michigan and Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. He has successfully completed the "SCR Leadership in Transition" program at Ford Motor Company as well as the University of Michigan Business School "Building the Leadership Engine: Transforming Human Service for the 21st Century" program. He received the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr "Keep the Dream Alive Award" from the Archdiocese of Detroit in January 2008. He was given the "Unsung Hero Award" from the Detroit Community Health Connection, Inc. in October 2012. He was also awarded the first "Leona Martens NCSFPA Champion Award" by the National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association at their annual conference in November 2012. In October 2015, he received the "Eleanor Josaitis Unsung Hero Award" from the Detroit Free Press and the Metropolitan Affairs Coalition. He was spotlighted as an Unsung Hero in the April, 2016 USDA Foods from Farm to Plate newsletter.

Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

Committee: Agriculture

Subcommittee: Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations

Hearing Date: 12/08/2021

Hearing Title :

Review of USDA Nutrition Distribution Programs

Witness Name: Frank Kubik

Position/Title: CSFP Director

Witness Type: Governmental Non-governmental

Are you representing yourself or an organization? Self Organization

If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:

Focus: HOPE/National CSFP Association

FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.

Yes.

Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

None.

Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.

None.

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

- I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(iii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.