

USDA halts millions of dollars worth of deliveries to food banks

Summary

The article describes the USDA's decision to halt millions of dollars worth of deliveries to food banks. The halt comes after the Trump administration slashed 1 billion for schools and food banks to buy food from farms. The article also mentions that the Biden administration has supplemented the emergency assistance funding with roughly 2 billion from the CCC fund.

The halt in deliveries comes after the Trump administration separately slashed \$1 billion for schools and food banks to buy food from farms.

[Marcia Brown](#)



USDA did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

The collective cuts are expected to make it more difficult for food banks to meet families' needs, with food prices [now 20 percent higher than they were in 2020, food bank leaders say](#).

“I certainly look at our lines and look at our shelves and say we need some relief,” said Joree Novotny, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, which also reported canceled deliveries with no indication they would resume.



Nebraska GOP senator reacts to USDA food bank cuts

For the Central California Food Bank, that means a loss of 500,000 pounds of expected food deliveries worth \$850,000 just for April through July, according to co-CEO Natalie Caples. Cathy Kanefsky, president of the Food Bank of Delaware, said between 20 to 24 full truckloads of food were canceled for the next four months.

The money that was clawed back across the three programs came from the Commodity Credit Corporation, a New Deal-era fund that gives USDA flexibility to prop up farmers facing natural disasters or adverse market conditions.

It's not clear how much of the \$500 million for the emergency assistance program has been cut, but one USDA employee, granted anonymity to discuss private conversations, said the Trump administration has been trying to claw back CCC money the Biden administration previously allocated in order to devote funds to other priorities.

USDA was supposed to spend \$148 million of the \$500 million early this year to buy dairy products, eggs, blueberries and more. But last month, the department notified state agencies that it was canceling solicitations from suppliers, according to a Feb. 20 email that Feeding America sent to its network of food banks and was viewed by POLITICO.

"USDA has not yet announced plans to move forward with the canceled food orders," the email states. "We believe the best approach is for network members to work through state agencies to obtain clarification from USDA."

Feeding America did not respond to a request for comment. Caples, the California food bank leader, said that she has not received any assurances from USDA on whether the delivery cancellations are temporary.

Chad Morrison, president of West Virginia's Mountaineer Food Bank, said it is "really challenging" to meet the need in this state.

"We can try to figure out how to make up the gaps, which is a hard lift, or ultimately there's less food on the table," Morrison said.

The emergency food assistance network gets its funding from a mix of money from the farm bill and through commodities USDA purchases.

But the patchwork funding system has left the program unable to meet increasing hunger needs, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent years of food inflation, anti-hunger advocates say.

The Biden administration responded to the demand on food banks by supplementing the emergency assistance funding with roughly \$2 billion from the CCC fund in 2022 and 2023, then the additional \$500 million in 2024. But Republicans have argued that President Joe Biden used the CCC money for climate and nutrition initiatives that are outside the congressional mandate of the fund.

Many of the organizations that rely on funding from the emergency assistance program were also receiving funding from the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement, one of the other food programs USDA axed recently.

The clawbacks come as Congress is weighing shrinking the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which helps 40 million low-income Americans afford food. That could further exacerbate the pressure on food banks, [which provide just one meal for every nine that SNAP supplies](#).

"We're not intended to be a frontline grocery store and unfortunately we are that for more people than ever before," said Novotny.