

Right to Food in the United States

Update through the lens of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights

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Geneva

National Right to Food Community of Practice www.righttofoodus.org
with contribution from partners



Topic 1: Social and Economic Protections

Previous Recommendations (third cycle)

- Take steps to **reverse high rates of poverty** and eliminate rich-poor polarization and social inequality (China, Cuba)
- Protect and expand **equitable access to health services**, particularly sexual and reproductive health, without discrimination (Angola, Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, United Kingdom)
- Strengthen the **rights of migrant workers and protections for women** in the workplace (Egypt, Sri Lanka)
- **Reduce homelessness** and housing problems (Azerbaijan, Ethiopia)



Topic 1: Social and Economic Protections

Situation

50 million Americans have to use charitable food access every year. More than 50% of people of these have at least one full-time working adult in their household.

Highest maternal mortality rate of high-income countries globally, **largely preventable**. Rate for **Black women more than 2x higher** than overall.

Highest number of unhoused persons in 2024. Total unhoused in the U.S. **grew by more than 18%**.

7 million low-income renters without affordable homes. More than half of renters exceed the 30% monthly income threshold for housing costs.

Policy direction

\$200 Billion cut from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the largest and most effective anti-hunger program.

\$1 Trillion cut from Medicaid, life-saving protection for low-income children and individuals.

Poverty will increase.



Topic 2: Climate and the Environment

Previous Recommendations (third cycle)

- Reconsider or overturn the decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change (Fiji, Slovenia, Spain)
- Strengthen international cooperation and legislative frameworks to address cross-sectoral environmental challenges and the negative impacts of climate change on human rights (Bahamas, Fiji, Haiti)
- Develop strategies for addressing the housing and sanitary problems of marginalized communities such as indigenous and migrant communities (Azerbaijan)



Topic 2: Climate and the Environment

Situation

U.S. food system accounted for approximately **30% of greenhouse gas emissions**.

Toxic industries are disproportionately located in and around majority Black and Indigenous communities, at a much higher rate than in majority white or high-income areas.

Agribusinesses spent > \$500 Million to influence the Farm Bill between 2019-2023. The agribusiness lobby **spends more on federal lobbying than the oil and gas industry**.

Policy direction

Withdrawal from Paris Agreement and related commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change' in January 2025.

Water crises in predominantly Black cities (e.g. Jackson, MS and Flint, MI) are consequence of **environmental racism and underinvestment in infrastructure**.

Corporate influence is increasing.



Suggested Questions

- What policies and practices can be adopted to end hunger by mitigating poverty and addressing crises in housing and homelessness?
- How are you planning to protect the rights of children, women and historically marginalized groups from cuts to food assistance and health coverage programs?
- What plans are in place to ensure that agricultural production does not contribute to increasingly severe floods, fires and storms in the United States and in other countries?



Recommendations

- Adopt national and state-level plans to end hunger, built on the principle of dignity, with participation from those most affected by poverty.
- Protect and increase public spending for food and nutrition assistance programs, and eliminate ineffective income eligibility guidelines.
- Support, subsidize and incentivize independent and small-scale food producers that implement sustainable, regenerative and agroecological practices.
- Protect the fishing, hunting, water and land rights of Indigenous peoples.
- Enact laws to reverse the effects of *Citizens United* and require increased transparency of corporate campaign donations and lobbying on food and agricultural systems.



Thank you

National Right to Food Community of Practice

www.righttofoodus.org | info@righttofoodus.org

See website for additional information and factsheets

- Right to Food
- Criminalization of Homelessness and Poverty
- Right to Housing
- Drinking Water

