

As hunger and poverty grow, Trump halts \$500 million in deliveries to food banks

Samuel Davidson
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As hunger across America grows, the Trump administration has stopped food shipments to food banks, including milk, eggs, meat and other perishables that are already sitting in trucks.

At food banks throughout the country, deliveries of millions of dollars' worth of food were abruptly stopped last week by the Trump administration.

"Too stupid for words" was how one Cleveland, Ohio-area podcaster described the decision to stop the delivery of 20 semi-truck trailers full of food that was set to be delivered to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. Much of that food is now sitting and rotting on trucks.

The shipments of food are part of a \$1 billion program run by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that buys fresh food from local farmers and provides it to local schools and food banks for distribution.

There is not a state or city unaffected by these cuts. Some of the headlines from throughout the country read:

- "Feds cancel \$4.3M worth of poultry, cheese, eggs to Michigan food banks"
- "Trump administration halts millions of dollars in deliveries to Oregon food banks"
- "Trump administration's cuts cancel food deliveries to Harvesters" (Kansas City)
- "Food bank in 'crisis mode' after federal cuts cancel food deliveries" (Orlando)
- "Too Stupid for Words': Trump pulls back 20 semi-trucks of food from Cleveland's food bank"
- "Delaware Food Bank loses nearly 1M meals after Trump administration ends food aid funding"

The list goes on.

"I come here once a month," said Lori Scott, a young mother with two children who was in line at a food pantry near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where volunteers

placed a large box of food into the trunk of her car.

Lori works as a caregiver, but between the low pay and the few hours, she says it is not enough to pay her bills and buy food.

"Grocery prices, rent, clothes, even water keep going up. Food stamps only last about two weeks, and this helps fill the gap. My children don't go hungry, but sometimes I skip meals."

Like millions of workers who are part of the uncounted unemployed, Lori only works part-time. They are not counted in the official unemployment rate as long as they work even a few hours each week. If they were, the true unemployment rate would be closer to 26 percent instead of the official 4 percent.

"I work hard taking care of elderly people in their homes, but we don't get paid enough. We're saving Medicare thousands of dollars a week by keeping people out of nursing homes and giving them a better quality of life. But I only get paid \$15 an hour, and I work just four hours a day, four days a week.

"This is hard work. They depend on you to cook, prepare their meals, help them get dressed, and go to the bathroom. Some clients we even have to bathe."

Poverty and hunger have been on the rise, especially in the last two years, as the expanded Child Tax Credit and other pandemic programs were cut during the Biden administration.

"These politicians don't care about the people," Lori told the WSW. "I see what Trump is doing, and I don't know how people are going to survive. You should be expanding programs for low-income people, not cutting them."

In Cleveland, Ohio, the abrupt stopping of the USDA program meant that 20 tractor-trailer trucks, already loaded and on their way to deliver food to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, were pulled back.

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank, in turn, delivers food to area food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, and other organizations that provide food to those in need.

Milk, eggs, poultry, and other perishables were on the trucks and will now have to be thrown away.

“For the month of January, we served almost 600 people,” said Lauren Reese, who works at the Friendly Inn Settlement in Cleveland, Ohio. “That’s about an average.”

The Friendly Inn Settlement has been providing services for over 150 years. In addition to running a food bank, the organization provides a range of services, including youth programs, programs for young mothers and community-building events.

Reese lists a number of factors for the increase in need. “Prices of food have increased, that’s a big, big factor. Just having access because this area is a food desert.”

From December 2021 to December 2022, food prices increased a whopping 12 percent. For people in lower income brackets who spend a greater proportion of their income on food, rent, gas and other necessities, the increase is even greater.

Reese pointed out that the center serves as a primary provider of food for many people but has had to reduce the number of days they give out food from twice a week to just once. “We are unable to fully fulfill their needs because of our shortage of resources.”

She also cited a fact sheet published on their website that highlights living standards in the Central Cleveland neighborhood where the Friendly Inn Settlement is located, noting that 90 percent of the residents earn less than 200 percent of the poverty level. “The average household income is just \$10,000 a year.”

In 2023, Cleveland had an overall poverty rate of 30.8 percent, with childhood poverty at a staggering 45.3 percent.

Nationally, hunger has been rapidly growing in the United States. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, which advocates for children in the US, found in a recent report on childhood hunger that 19 percent of children—roughly 13.4 million—“lacked reliable access to adequate food in 2022.” They noted that this is a 50 percent increase since 2021 and the highest level in eight years.

These figures don’t capture the full crisis, and they were taken before the cutting of several programs that

addressed poverty. “Pandemic relief measures, including the expanded Child Tax Credit, [have] expired. The loss of this support contributed to historic increases in poverty, leaving families with fewer resources for food,” the Foundation noted.

The most recent cuts made by the USDA under the Trump administration will add to an already intolerable situation for millions.

These cuts are just the beginning. The Trump administration under billionaire Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) has pledged to cut \$2 trillion from the federal budget. This cannot be accomplished without deep cuts to food stamps, TANF, Medicaid and other social programs. As has already been shown, Democrats in Congress will capitulate to these deepening attacks.



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