

May 23, 2025



By Electronic Mail

Senator Ernie Otten
Lead Co-Chair, Joint Committee
on Appropriations
500 East Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Representative Mike Derby
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on
Appropriations
500 East Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

CC: Members of the Joint Committee on Appropriations

RE: Impact of Federal Cuts

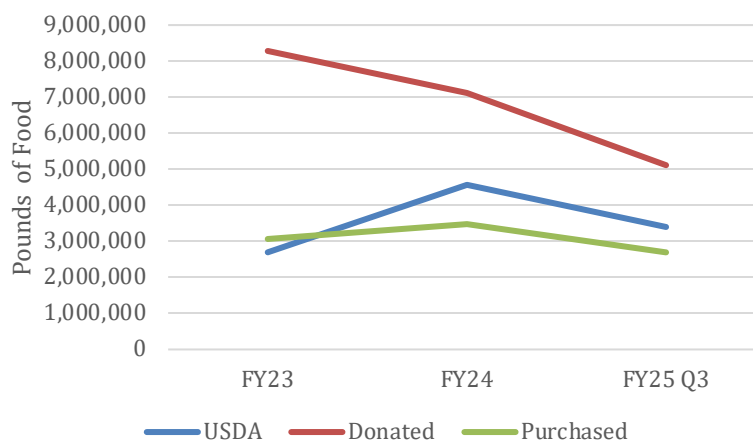
Dear Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

On behalf of the nearly 113,000 South Dakotans who are food insecure, including 1 in every 5 children, I am taking this opportunity to share with you the impacts Feeding South Dakota is experiencing due to federal cuts and how further decisions at a federal level could impact all South Dakotans.

Feeding South Dakota is a non-profit organization driven by our mission to end hunger in South Dakota. As the largest hunger-relief organization in the state we distribute food into all 66 counties including rural, metro, and reservation areas. The success of our work is dependent on receiving financial donations, donated food items, and food through federal USDA programs, which equate to an average of 31% of our overall inventory.

In the past year, our organization has experienced a 15% decrease in donated food at a time when the need for food assistance increased by 16% through our Mobile Food Distribution alone.

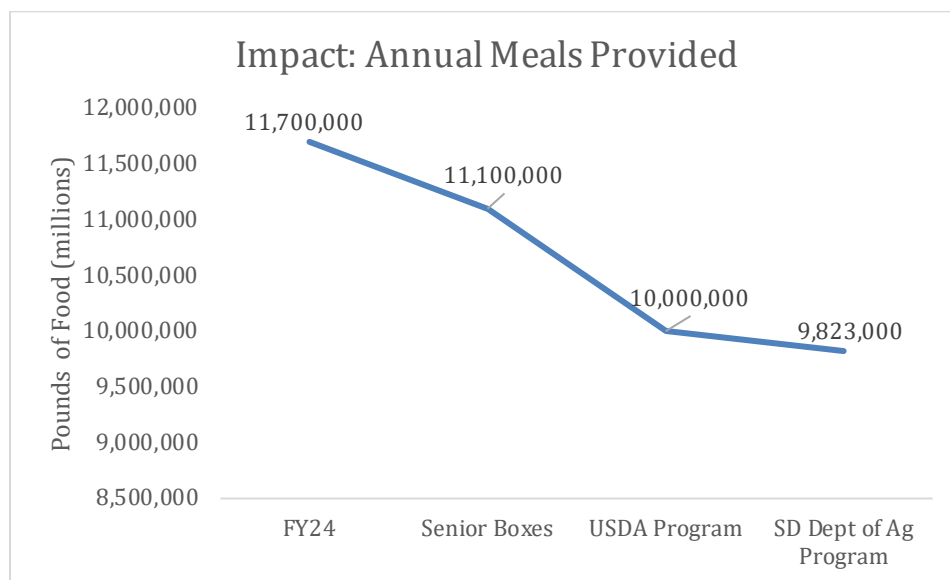
Feeding South Dakota: Recieved Food



Our 2025 Fiscal Year began with this strain on resources and the gap widened in March 2025 when federal decisions resulted in:

- **March 2025: 5,000 monthly meals for Seniors cancelled** leaving 200 **low-income seniors** without consistent access to a box of food – *every month*.
- **April: 2025: 148,000 meals permanently cancelled** when 177,000 pounds of food scheduled for delivery between April and August were **IMMEDIATELY cancelled**.
- **July 2025: 177,000 meals cancelled and 22 producers not receiving revenue** when funding to the Department of Ag & Natural Resources, which allowed us to purchase food directly from South Dakota producers, will be discontinued.
- **September 2025: 1.1 million meals permanently cancelled** when funding for the USDA program does not continue.

Right now, as I am writing this letter to you, replacing the immediately cancelled food inventory comes at a cost of \$308,000. When our next fiscal year begins on July 1, we will need \$2.6 million to replace the USDA food inventory that is permanently cancelled. Without it, the number of meals we can provide will drop by over 1.8 million.



These changes are very real, and our neighbors facing hunger – living in your communities - are feeling the impact as we've already had to put program changes into effect.

Senator Ernie Otten and Representative Mike Derby
Members of the Joint Committee on Appropriations
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I don't know that we'll be able to close the gap between resources and the number of seniors, veterans, families, and children seeking food assistance through our programs and partners, which continues to rise month-over-month.

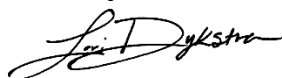
Even more concerning, is what is on the horizon that could increase our challenges:

- **Additional loss of USDA foods**, up to an additional **1.5 million pounds**.
- **Complete discontinuation of the Senior Box Program**, impacting **2,300 South Dakota Seniors**.
- **Cost shift of SNAP benefit expenses to the state** (**a minimum of \$9 million**), could result in benefit cuts or tax increases which would bring more people to our food line.

We are a non-profit, but also a business, and at the end of the day my board and I will need to make difficult decisions. We cannot start this work "in the hole" in July, which means **we will need to begin planning on how we will cut programs and food distribution across the state**.

I welcome the opportunity to address the committee at your upcoming May 30 meeting to provide a more thorough update on these impacts on our state. It's important that you are fully aware of what's real – right now – for fighting hunger in our state and are prepared to assist us with messaging to your constituents when we are no longer in their communities.

Sincerely,



Lori Dykstra, CEO
Feeding South Dakota

lori.dykstra@feedingsouthdakota.org
605.335.0364 ext. 101