The 2022-23 Budget Must End Poverty for 1.1 Million Living on SSI/SSP

_We ask the Legislature to enact the vision outlined in the Master Plan for Aging to Prevent Poverty and Hunger for People Struggling to Live on SSI:_

California’s older adults and people with disabilities on SSI have held jobs, provided caregiving to children and elders, continue to make valuable contributions to society, and have dreams for the future. Due to gender and racial discrimination, most SSI recipients are women and people of color. The COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated these injustices. Ending state budget cuts that have forced poverty & hardships on the 1.1 million Californians who rely on SSI/SSP grants will make a significant impact in meeting their basic needs and reversing these inequities.

I. **Accelerate the SSP grant cut reversal to 2023 and restore all SSP grants to above federal poverty level.**

While Great Recession era grant cuts will be partially restored in Jan. 2022, they will still remain below the poverty level. In many counties, the grant will not cover the cost of a studio apartment. For those who can obtain below-market rent, grants cannot provide for utilities, food, medicine, toiletries, clothing and other necessities. This has pushed people into homelessness and hunger, and is a significant reason why California has the highest percentage of seniors living under the Supplemental Poverty Measure of any state. We must accelerate the restoration of the grants, and ask they be fully restored in the 2022-2023 budget.

II. **Establish grants at the Elder Economic Index, setting a minimum level for a dignified life.**

In order to eventually fulfill the vision of the Master Plan on Aging, we must base the grants on the Elder Economic Index, in order to reflect the true cost of living.

III. **Include SSI recipients in all future Golden State Grants:**

We appreciate the inclusion of SSI recipients in the Golden State Grant, but increased costs during the pandemic have resulted in continued hardship. We ask for the Grant to be made permanent and for SSI recipients to be included.

IV. **Fulfill the CalFresh Expansion to SSI Recipients.**

The CalFresh Expansion for SSI/SSP recipients has been a strong success and we must continue to fulfill the “hold harmless” goals of the Supplemental Nutrition Benefits (SNB) & Transitional Nutrition Benefit (TNB) programs. The USDA released the re-evaluation of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), which is used to calculate SNAP/CalFresh benefits and is based on factors needed to eat a balanced diet. As of October 1, 2021, CalFresh participants are receiving an average maximum $36 per month increase in benefits per person. Households receiving SNB and TNB should receive an increase in benefits that is equivalent to the respective improvements by household size in CalFresh due to the Thrifty Food Plan update.

_Californians for SSI (CA4SSI) is a statewide coalition of over 200 organizations across the aging, disability rights, housing and homeless, anti-hunger and anti-poverty sectors. CA4SSI seeks to ensure that blind, aged, and people living with disabilities living on SSI/SSP obtain adequate support to lead their lives with dignity._

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CA4SSJ Statewide Organizational Endorsers
AARP, ACLU California, AllCare Alliance, The ARC CA, California Association of Food Banks, California Alliance for Retired Americans, California Association of Public Authorities for IHSS, California Church IMPACT, California Council of the Blind, California Emergency Foodlink, California Food Policy Advocates, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, California IHSS Consumer Alliance, California Partnership, California Senior Legislature, Californians for Disability Rights, CLUE: Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Community Services Unlimited Inc., County Welfare Directors Association of CA, Courage Campaign, Disability Rights California, Educate Advocate, Food Chain Workers Alliance, Housing California, IHSS Consumers Union, Insight Center, Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California, Justice in Aging, Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California, Magnolia Women's Recovery Center, Meals on Wheels California, National Association of Social Workers/CA Chapter, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Produce Good, SEIU, UDW/AFSCME Local 3930, Western Center on Law and Poverty

Bay Area

Central Valley
Central California Food Bank, Centro La Familia Advocacy Services, Community Action Partnership of Kern County, Disability Resource Agency for Independent Living, FoodLink for Tulare County, Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, Kern County Independent Living Center, Neighborhood Industries, Second Harvest Food Bank of San Joaquin & Stanislaus Counties, We Are Not Invisible

Los Angeles / Southern California
ACLU of Southern California, Adams Vermont/Gardena CFMS, Center for Health Care Rights, Clergy Caucus of Inland Congregations United for Change, Communities Actively Living Independent & Free, Community Action Agency, Community Action Partnership of San Bernardino, Dayle McIntosh Center, Educate. Advocate., Disabled Resources Center, Inc., Downtown Women’s Center, Fair Trade LA, Feeding America Riverside-San Bernardino Counties, FIND Food Bank, Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County, Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, Food & Water Watch, Friends Across The Line, Friends In Deed, Guerrilla Food Not Bombs, Homeless Action Center, Homeless Health Care Los Angeles, Hunger Action LA, Huntington Hospital Senior Care Network, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, Jewish Labor Committee Western Region, John Tennant Memorial- Episcopal Senior Communities, Latino Diabetes Association, Latino and Latina Roundtable of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valley, Los Angeles Aging Advocacy Coalition, Los Angeles Community Action Network, Los Angeles LGBT Center, Los Angeles for a New Economy, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, Orange County Food Access Coalition, MLK Coalition of Greater Los Angeles, Orange County Food Bank, Orange County Hunger Coalition, Personal Assistance Services Council of LA County, Project Angel Food, Prototypes, Retirement Housing Foundation, Santa Barbara Food Alliance, Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, SEIU Local 721, Service Center for Independent Life, Social Justice Learning Institute, Southern CA Resource Services for Independent Living, Starting Over, Inc., St. Barnabas Senior Services, Thai Community Development Center, The East Los Angeles Community Union, Time for Change Foundation, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College, VELA, Veterans For Peace Los Angeles, Westside Center for Independent Living, WORKS (Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge & Services), Youth Justice Coalition

Sacramento/Northern California
2-1-1 Humboldt, Area 1 Agency on Aging, California Emergency Foodlink, Capitol People First, Cottage Housing Inc., DOGFITE (Disability Organizing Group for Initiating Total Equality), Food for People, Inc., Ford Street Project, Life Support Alliance, Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction, Mary Immaculate Residential Facility, Mendocino Food & Nutrition Program, Placer Food Bank, Placer Independent Resource Services, River City Food Bank, Sacramento Housing Alliance, Resources for the Independent Living-Sacramento, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, Sacramento Loaves & Fishes, Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness, The Resource Connection Food Bank, Yolo County Commission on Aging and Adult Services, Yolo Food Bank, Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance, Yuba-Sutter Gleaners Food Bank, Inc.

San Diego