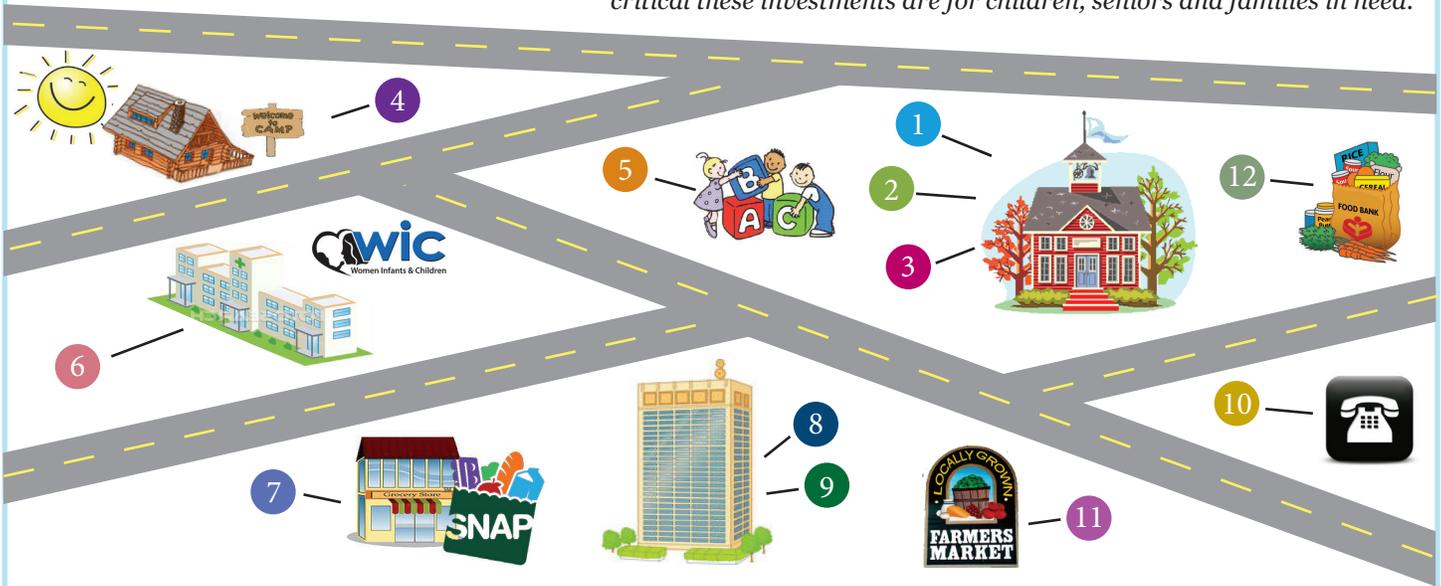


Anti-Hunger advocates are inviting Members of Congress to visit Child Nutrition, SNAP, and other nutrition program sites in their state or district. By visiting community-based programs, Members can see firsthand how critical these investments are for children, seniors and families in need.



MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: NAVIGATE YOUR WAY TO CONSTITUENT NUTRITION PROGRAMS

1 Alternative Breakfast Models and Free Breakfast to All

Members of Congress interested in education and child nutrition could visit schools that have expanded breakfast through alternative serving methods as well as by offering breakfast free to all students. Visiting a school that provides free breakfast to all, and operating a breakfast in the classroom, “grab and go,” or second chance breakfast program would allow Members to see creative approaches to increasing school breakfast participation. *When to visit: Members can visit a school breakfast program anytime during the school year. Schools that operate year-round and also have alternative breakfast serving methods could be ideal site visits this summer.*

2 Afterschool Snack and Meal Program

Members of Congress could visit afterschool programs (including a school, 21st Century Community Learning Center, Boys and Girls Club, Kids Café, YMCA, park and recreation center) to see how the food and activities combine to keep children engaged and learning after school.

When to visit: Afterschool programs usually operate during the school year after the school day ends, often between 3:00 - 6:00 pm. Early fall may be an excellent time to visit a program.

3 Nutrition standards.

Members of Congress interested in child nutrition could visit nearly any school to see the more robust school meal standards and gain an understanding of how much children are benefiting since 99 percent of schools nationwide have implemented the new standards as of October 2016. Research shows that the school nutrition standards improve the food offered in schools, reduce school meal disparities, and improve student nutrition-related outcomes. For example, the new school meal nutrition standards are having a positive impact on student food selection and consumption, especially for fruits and vegetables.

4 Summer Nutrition Service Program Site

Members of Congress could visit Summer Nutrition Program sites, especially sites that include enrichment programming and physical activity. Summer schools, camps, faith-based and community programs, as well as open sites would all provide Members with greater appreciation for the importance of the Summer Food Service Program.

When to visit: Summer Food Service Programs operate during summer vacation. The best month to visit (June, July, or August) depends upon the school calendar. In states where the school year ends early, June is a great month to visit. In states where schools break later in the summer, July offers a good opportunity for members to visit Summer Food sites.

5 Child Care Center or Home Utilizing the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Members of Congress could visit child care centers or homes where CACFP is being utilized to serve preschoolers healthy meals. Members would learn more about the benefits of early childhood feeding programs. *When to visit: Child care centers and homes operate all year long. Members could visit during the breakfast or lunch serving time.*

6 WIC Clinic
Members of Congress should visit WIC clinics in their state or district to learn more about the program, interact with recipients and ask them questions about their experience on the WIC program, and get a firsthand look at what is included in a typical WIC food package.
When to visit: WIC clinics are open year-round, so Members can plan visits for whenever they are home.

7 Take the SNAP Challenge
Across the nation elected officials, religious leaders, anti-hunger advocates and others have opted to take the “SNAP/Food Stamp Challenge” (eating only what can be purchased with an average SNAP allotment for a week). Elected officials and their staff can participate in a SNAP challenge and/or join others on a grocery shopping trip to get a concrete idea of the amount of food an average SNAP allotment covers.
When to visit: This is a year-round opportunity.

8 SNAP Site Visit: Take-Your-Member-of-Congress-to-Work-Day
A Member of Congress can be a “Caseworker-for-a-Day.” Visiting a SNAP/Food Stamp office or a SNAP outreach project site where SNAP applicants are prescreened is one way Members can learn more about SNAP and its impact on the community. It is also a great way to let Members hear directly from SNAP applicants and participants.
When to visit: This is a year-round opportunity.

9 The Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) is designed to respond well to increases in need, whether due to economic downturns or natural disasters. In the wake of a natural disaster, many states get authority from USDA to provide SNAP disaster benefits to hard-hit households. Members of Congress can visit sites where D-SNAP applications are taken, SNAP offices where replacement benefits are put onto SNAP EBT cards, and locations where stakeholders such as retailers are helping get word out about the relief. In doing so, Members will learn how constituents are impacted by the disaster as well as help publicize aid to which those constituents may be entitled.
When to visit: Such visits should be considered in the wake of severe weather events giving rise to additional SNAP benefits.

10 Call Center or “211” Hotline
Members of Congress can hear directly from constituents in need by listening in at a call center or hotline. Agency staff, after garnering permission from callers, can offer a Member a headset to listen to emergency calls. Often these calls involve a need for food assistance.
When to visit: Such visits are appropriate throughout the year.

11 Farmers’ Markets
Increasingly, SNAP outreach and SNAP nutrition education activities are occurring at farmers’ markets that accept SNAP EBT cards and sometimes provide bonus dollars to SNAP customers who shop there. Visits to those sites offer Members of Congress the opportunity to talk with farmers and consumers about the impact SNAP has on healthy eating and local economies.
When to visit: In many areas of the country, this opportunity will be limited to the growing season.

12 Mobile Food Pantry – TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
Members of Congress can visit a mobile pantry operated by food banks or an agency pantry that distributes fresh produce, donated food, and food provided by TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) in food packages designed for clients.
When to visit: Food distribution happens continuously throughout the month at a variety of agencies.