

Date of Hearing: April 15, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1618 (Rogers) – As Amended March 12, 2026

Policy Committee: Human Services Vote: 6 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to annually conduct a statewide food insecurity survey unless a comparable federal survey is conducted that year.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires CDSS to annually conduct a statewide survey to assess food insecurity in the state, modeled after the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) national household food security survey.
- 2) Authorizes CDSS to collaborate or contract with a public research institute or other vendor to implement the above requirements.
- 3) Requires CDSS, by July 1, 2028, to complete the first statewide food insecurity survey, and by October 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, to make the results of the statewide food insecurity survey publicly available on its website.
- 4) Prohibits CDSS from conducting a statewide food insecurity survey during a year in which the USDA ERS or other federal agency conducts a similar national household food security survey, as specified.

FISCAL EFFECT:

CDSS anticipates annual General Fund costs of \$550,000 to contract with a vendor to conduct the survey and \$250,000 for two permanent staff positions to establish and maintain the survey contract and to conduct data analysis.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

When the current Administration discontinued the Household Food Security Survey, we lost an important resource that has been used for decades to identify the needs of our communities. Without comprehensive data, food banks, nonprofit organizations, and state

agencies are hindered in their ability to respond effectively, particularly in rural, low-income, and underserved communities where food insecurity is often underreported. By restoring and strengthening food insecurity data collection at the state level, [this bill] will support evidence-based policymaking, improve coordination amongst service providers, and help ensure that resources are directed to the communities that need them most.

- 2) **Background.** In September 2025, the federal administration terminated the USDA’s annual food security survey and related household food security reports, ending nearly 30 years of systematic national measurement of household food insecurity. The USDA further announced it is discontinuing future food security data collection and reporting. The 2024 dataset is the final release, with no further food insecurity estimates planned.

Anti-hunger advocates assert that no other federal dataset produces nationally comparable, severity-scaled estimates of food insecurity in the same manner and they depend on this data to identify regions and populations with the highest rate of food insecurity, target interventions, and allocate resources efficiently. Researchers also note that canceling the federal report makes it harder to assess the effects of recent federal food assistance cuts and understand changes in food insecurity.

To ensure California has access to accurate, reliable, and consistent data on food insecurity across the state, this bill establishes a comparable state-administered food insecurity survey under CDSS to collect data no longer being collected by the federal government.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1734 (Stefani), of this legislative session, requires the State Department of Public Health to establish a two-year pilot program to ensure continued funding and inclusion of standardized questions and data linked to food insecurity within the California Health Interview Survey. AB 1734 is pending in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

SB 1025 (Hurtado), of this legislative session, establishes the Office of Food Security and Affordability to coordinate statewide food insecurity outreach, partnerships, research, and emergency response efforts while administering related funding and programs. SB 1025 is pending in the Senate Government Organization Committee.

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