



Beyond the Food Drop: Restoring Resilience Food Security Activities

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Policy Shifts and Executive Actions on Non-Emergency Food Aid

For decades, the [Food for Peace Act](#), authorized through the Farm Bill, has shown the generosity of the American people by purchasing food from U.S. farmers and delivering it to people in urgent need around the world. Less well known, but equally important, is that the law explicitly requires that at least \$365 million each year (and no more than 30 percent of the total appropriation) go to “non-emergency” activities.

Until February 2025, the government directed this funding to Resilience and Food Security Activities (RFSAs).¹ These programs complement food aid by addressing the root causes of hunger, reducing the need for costly emergency assistance year after year, and promoting more stable and prosperous regions that benefit both vulnerable communities and Americans. As the examples below explain, RFSAs have helped prevent ISIS recruitment in northern Mozambique, strengthened food security and reduced migration in the Sahel, and lowered the need for food aid in Bangladesh and Uganda.

In February 2025, as part of the foreign aid stop work order, the Administration canceled all but four RFSAs. While the Administration transferred these RFSAs to the State Department, they have directed the remaining RFSAs to close by the end of FY2026.

In December 2025, State told partners implementing resilient food security activities in conflict-prone and fragile contexts that *“the U.S. government is undertaking a broad, strategic shift”* in foreign assistance policy. Under this shift, the government will prioritize life-saving emergency food assistance over development programming and the *“decision to close out most resilience and food security activities is final.”*



Ethiopia SPIR RFSFA participant from an extremely poor household who received poultry along with training in child nutrition, poultry rearing, household savings, and drought and disaster preparedness. (Photo Credit: D Norell)

¹ Previous terms for food security resilience awards include “Development Food Security Awards (DFSA),” and “Multi-Year Assistance Programs (MYAPs).”

The Administration's decision to shutter the RFSAs marks the culmination of a broader retreat from long-term global food security investments. It follows the dismantling of [Feed the Future](#) programs last year, a \$1 billion U.S. global hunger initiative that supported private sector engagement and agriculture

research through innovation labs, driving food security and resilience as a central goal of the [U.S. Global Food Security Strategy](#).

In the new recently passed funding bills, Congress has rejected the Administration's retreat on food security. Lawmakers approved **\$1.2 billion for Food for Peace** in the [FY2026 Agriculture bill](#), and **\$720 million for Feed the Future** agriculture and food security programming in the [FY2026 State and Foreign Operations](#).

Now Congress **must** make sure these laws are actually carried out. This means holding the Administration accountable for properly staffing and managing these programs at the State Department and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It should also build on this progress through the FY2027 budget and Farm Bill processes by reauthorizing Food For Peace. Reinvesting in RFSAs in hunger hotspots will help reduce long-term hunger and strengthen U.S. security, economic growth, and global leadership.



What Can Congress Do

1) Protect Funding and Require Implementation of Existing Law

Congress should build on the FY2026 State and Foreign Operations funding bill which allocates \$720 million for long-term investments in agricultural development and food security and requires the State Department to submit an investment strategy aligned with the [Global Food Security Act](#) within 120 days (June 3, 2026). Congress should:

- a) Provide additional funding for long-term agricultural development and food security in the FY2027 State and Foreign Operations budget.
- b) Clearly state that Congress expects RFSAs to continue as intended, targeting the root causes of food insecurity in fragile and conflict-prone areas with high food aid needs.

2) Re-authorize RFSAs in the Farm Bill; Appropriate FY2027 funds for Food for Peace in Agriculture Appropriations

- a) Congress should reauthorize the Food for Peace Act in the Farm Bill and retain all statutory language that directs funding towards non-emergency activities (RFSAs).

- b) Congress should appropriate enough funding for Food for Peace in the FY2027 Agriculture appropriations bill to meet emergency needs and fully carry out the RFSAs directive.
- c) Congress should also make clear that the Food for Peace funding supports full RFSAs implementation and prevents the Administration from waiving the directive.

3) Rebuild Expertise

- a) Food and nutrition programs require specialized expertise. The Administration fired most of the USAID staff who oversaw these programs. Given Congress's significant appropriations for both Food for Peace and long term Feed the Future initiatives, Congress must ensure that the State Department and USDA employ enough qualified staff to design, manage, and oversee these programs, including personnel overseas. Without the right expertise, even well-funded programs will fall short of their intended impact.
- b) Should the U.S. Government reactivate RFSAs, lawmakers must ensure that these investments are coordinated with other long-term food security efforts that Congress has directed the State Department to carry out under the reauthorized [Global Food Security Act](#) and related U.S. [Global Food Security Strategy](#). In recent years, both Feed the Future and Food for Peace appropriations funded RFSAs, so it is important that the State Department and USDA remain coordinated in RFSAs design, implementation, and management.

Note: These recommendations are made with the full understanding that OMB must first apportion funds as appropriated by Congress to administer humanitarian food aid and long term food security investments in FY2026.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do RFSAs matter?

More than 735 million people worldwide face hunger, and 318 million² require immediate food assistance. Food insecurity is not only a humanitarian crisis, but it is also a driver of global instability—fueling conflict, displacement, migration, and economic fragility in regions critical to U.S. national security.

Emergency food aid saves lives but cannot solve hunger on its own. Programs that address the root causes of hunger are essential complements. They give poor farmers and small agricultural businesses a boost, connecting them to financing, markets, quality seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, and other inputs. These investments raise agricultural productivity, lower food prices, reduce aid dependence, and help build future trading partners for the U.S. in the process.

Eleven of America's 15 largest trading partners today—including South Korea and Vietnam—were once recipients of U.S. food assistance. As U.S. farmers and agribusinesses seek to expand and diversify export markets, the fastest growing opportunities lie in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In addition to USAID purchasing more than 1 million metric tons of food from U.S. farmers and ranchers each year,³ American farmers export \$5 billion annually to the 20+ countries that benefited from Feed the Future and RFSAs. The impact is clear: countries that have broken the cycle of mass starvation—such as India, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia—have done so through a combination of food aid and sustained U.S. investments in more resilient food systems.

What has been lost?

RFSAs are multi-year investments targeting some of the world's most food-insecure communities—places with chronic hunger and historically high food aid needs. **They are uniquely focused on fragile and conflict-affected areas often overlooked by traditional development assistance, helping prevent hunger and malnutrition before crises escalate, reducing conflict and migration pressures in the process.**

In closing RFSAs, decades of proven, bipartisan investments have been cast aside. Programs that help communities and countries build resilient food systems, reduce dependence on aid, ease the stresses that drive migration, and emerge as stronger U.S. trading partners have been abruptly ended.

RFSAs traditionally operated in countries such as Niger, Kenya, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Somalia, Malawi, and Mozambique. Today, all RFSAs have been closed or will close once remaining partner funds are exhausted. The few remaining in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Haiti have received final funding allotments for an “orderly closedown of activities” and their period of performance was shortened. Once they close, no RFSAs will remain.

² WFP 2026 Global Outlook: Hunger and Hope: Innovative Solutions to Address Food Insecurity, Nov 2025, UN World Food Program.

³ Note for clarity that while the USDA bought American food aid on USAID's behalf, USAID selected which commodities to purchase to best suit each humanitarian context and deliver strong food security and nutrition gains.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some examples where RFSAs work as intended?

Mozambique: A recent CNN investigation found that the sudden withdrawal of USAID investments in northern Mozambique led to a resurgence of ISIS.⁴ USAID RFSAs and FTF projects were central investments by USAID to support young people, farmers, and agricultural businesses, creating jobs and building incomes to stabilize this fragile region and reduce recruitment by terrorists. In addition, stabilization paved the way for development financing through DFC and Export-Import Bank investments in massive liquefied natural gas projects under development by Exxon Mobil and Total.

Bangladesh: In Bangladesh, the Nobo Jatra (New Beginnings) RFSAs graduated 91.5 percent of 21,000 women participants from extreme poverty. Their households became more food secure, had increased assets, used safe drinking water, and had sanitary latrines using the proven graduation approach that has been used in several RFSAs.⁵

Niger: Multi-year resilience investments in Niger reached more than 1 million highly food insecure people and led to the restoration of 113,000 acres of land by 2022. The adoption of water-saving farming techniques increased millet and sorghum yields by 50-500%. Targeted communities required less food assistance, seasonal migration declined, and communities had sustained income and savings even after the phase out of assistance.⁶

Uganda: In Uganda, a randomized control trial assessing impacts of the Graduating to Resilience program from 2017-2024 found participating households fared significantly better than the control group across a wide range of economic outcomes. Monthly income and expenditures rose and participants had more consistent food access and better-quality diets than non participants.⁷

⁴ Walsh, Nick Paton. In Mozambique, an ISIS insurgency is newly energized as US cuts impact aid programs, Nov 21, 2025, CNN.

⁵ Considerations for Integrating the Graduation Approach within Resilience Food Security Activities, 2022, Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis and Learning (IDEAL) Activity. p. 24.

⁶ World Food Program Resilience Review Report, 2023, U.S. Agency for International Development. pp. 1 & 6.

⁷ Endline Report of the Resilience Food Security Activity Graduating to Resilience in Uganda, Cohort 1, 2022, The TOPS Program. p.ix.



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