

Comprehensive Policy Solutions to Address the Infant Formula Shortage

Millions of families are struggling to feed their babies.

The United States is facing a serious shortage of infant formula. No baby should ever go hungry. As the nation grapples with this emergency, we need to do everything we can to support infant nutrition, including ensuring access to lactation support, supplies, and accommodations, donor milk, and infant formula. **We must take decisive, comprehensive action to ensure nutrition security for our nation's infants by addressing gaps through policy, systems, and environmental change solutions, including building an infrastructure for infant and young child feeding in emergencies.**

Breastfeeding support is a critical part of infant food security.

Children from birth up to two years are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition, illness, and death. The active support and coordination between federal, state, and local governments, lactation support providers, commercial milk formula industry, and all other relevant actors involved in response to emergencies and everyday are critical to ensure optimal infant and young child feeding practices. All involved in maternal and child health and emergency care and response must work to equitably protect, promote, and support infant and young child nutrition safety and security, including breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding is a proven primary prevention strategy, building a foundation for life-long health and wellness, and adapting over time to meet the changing needs of the growing child. Every major medical authority urges breastfeeding for at least the first year of life. While 84% of babies are breastfed at birth, only 25% of U.S. infants are still exclusively breastfed at six months of age.

The infant formula shortage has shown the folly of depending on one company to provide 42% of the nation's products. We need to: 1) pass policies that make breastfeeding easier; 2) regulate the predatory marketing practices of infant formula companies; and 3) expand the national network of nonprofit milk banks to provide abundant and affordable alternative when mother's own milk is not an option.

Policy solutions to comprehensively address the infant nutrition crisis.

Due to major policy gaps, families face obstacles that make it difficult or impossible to start or continue breastfeeding. Actions to support breastfeeding are essential for ensuring infant nutrition security.

Critically needed policy solutions are waiting for Congressional action:

- **Establish a national paid family and medical leave program.** The FAMILY Act (S. 248/H.R. 804) would ensure that families have time to recover from childbirth and establish a strong breastfeeding relationship before returning to work.
- **Ensure all breastfeeding workers have time and space to pump during the workday.** The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections (PUMP) Act (S. 1658/H.R. 3110) would close gaps in the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Law, giving 9 million more workers time and space to pump.
- **Invest in the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program by increasing funding to \$20M in FY2023.** This funding helps families start and continue breastfeeding through maternity care practice improvements and community and workplace support programs.
- **Create a formal plan for infant and young child feeding in emergencies.** The DEMAND Act (S. 3601/H.R. 6555) would ensure the Federal Emergency Management Agency can better support access to lactation support and supplies during disasters.