

More Hopeful Futures or Children as Collateral Damage? SNAP's Far-Reaching Benefits for Children

June 10, 2025 | 3:00-4:30 pm ET/Noon-12:30 pm PT

Panelist Bios



MODERATOR

Ashanti T. Lewis

**Director of Federal Government Relations
FoodCorps**

Ashanti T. Lewis is a seasoned public policy professional with over 20 years of experience advancing food and nutrition equity at the state and federal levels. She currently leads federal policy and national partnerships at FoodCorps, driving efforts to ensure all children have access to food education and nutritious school meals. Prior to FoodCorps, Ashanti led federal government relations at Share Our Strength, where she focused on protecting SNAP and helped pass legislation expanding free school breakfast access to 70,000 children in Texas. She also previously served as a top lobbyist at Three Square Food Bank in Nevada, successfully passing multiple food security bills.



Salaam Bhatti, Esq.

**SNAP Director
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)**

Salaam Bhatti is the SNAP Director at the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) where he works with his team to protect and strengthen SNAP. He previously worked as the public benefits attorney at the Virginia Poverty Law Center where he secured wins in expanding SNAP, improving TANF, and increase the reach of free school meals. Salaam lives in Richmond, VA with his wife, kids, and a fishing pole he swears he will use one day.



Alexis Bylander

**Interim Director of Child Nutrition Programs and Policy
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)**

Alexis Bylander has extensive experience working in the nonprofit and government sectors on advocacy campaigns and grant management. Bylander holds a B.A. in Political Science from Concordia College, an M.S. in Public Policy and Management from Carnegie Mellon University and served as a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow with the Congressional Hunger Center.



Rocio Perez

**Policy Analyst
UnidosUS**

Born and raised in the Westlake McArthur Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, Rocio has made her way to Washington, DC working as a Policy Analyst at the intersections of health and immigration for UnidosUS. As a first-generation Latina, Rocio's combined lived and work experience has guided her career path in data analysis at local, state and federal level research organizations. She holds a Master's in Public Policy from UCLA and was B.A. in Political Science and Sociology from UC Davis.



Daniela Spoto, MPH
Director of Food Equity
Hawai'i Appleseed

Daniela is Hawai'i Appleseed's Director of Food Equity. In this role, she advocates for access to healthy food through programs like SNAP, child nutrition and senior nutrition programs. For the past 10 years, Daniela has been working on health issues and food system change in Hawai'i. Before joining Appleseed in 2018, she led various large-scale federal and state programs, including the Hawai'i Department of Health's SNAP-Ed program, and a City and County of Honolulu initiative to curb underage drinking. She holds a master's in public health from the University of Hawai'i and a bachelor's in nutrition, kinesiology, and biology from San Diego State University.



Callan Wells, M.S., IMH-E®
Senior Health Policy Manager
GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students

Callan Wells leads health policy initiatives at GEEARS, where she advocates for accessible, high-quality mental and physical healthcare for young children and their families. She believes comprehensive care is key to healthy development in early childhood. Callan is Policy Advisor for the Georgia Association of Infant Mental Health, co-leads Mindworks Georgia's Whole Person Health workgroup, and serves on the board of Motherhood Beyond Bars. A 2022–24 ZERO TO THREE fellow, she has received numerous awards, including honors from Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, ZERO TO THREE, NAMI-Georgia, BCDI-Atlanta, and GA-AIMH. An Atlanta native, Callan lives in Grant Park with her husband and daughter.