

Hunger Advocacy Priorities 2016

Mid-Ohio Foodbank - working with its 650 partner agency network across 20 central and eastern Ohio counties, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, the Food Research and Action Center and Feeding America – is working hard to protect federal and state nutrition programs that provide a critical safety net to help the 1 in 6 Ohioans and 1 in 4 children in Ohio who are hungry.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is targeted at the most vulnerable.

- 76% of SNAP households (HH) include a **child, a senior or a disabled person**
- Average SNAP HH has a gross monthly income of \$744; net income of \$338.

SNAP responds to changes in need.

- Provides food assistance to families in economic hardship; as their financial situation stabilizes, they can transition off SNAP.
- Average length of time a new participant stays on SNAP is 8 – 10 months
- Participation follows unemployment with a slight lag.

SNAP alone is not meeting demand. Benefits don't last most participants the entire month. 90% of SNAP benefits are redeemed by the third week of the month

- In FY 2014 State agencies issued approximately \$70 billion in SNAP benefits, a nearly 8 percent decrease from \$76 billion in FY 2013. These benefits were issued to a monthly average 22.7 million households or 46.7 million people participating in the Program
- In FY 2014 the average monthly SNAP benefit was \$125.01 per person or \$256.47 per household, less than \$1.40 PER MEAL.
- Only 55% of those who are hungry are income-eligible for SNAP

SNAP has a strong record of integrity.

- Error rates are at a record low of 3.8%; nearly one fifth of the errors are UNDER payments
- Food stamp trafficking is less than \$0.01/per \$1.00; for every one instance of fraud, there are hundreds of heart-breaking stories of need.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

TEFAP has not kept pace with the growing demand.

- Provides food at no cost to low-income Ohioans in need of short-term hunger relief; done in partnership with local pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters.
- TEFAP commodities account for more than 8% of all food moving through Mid-Ohio Foodbank.
- Unlike SNAP, TEFAP does not automatically grow when need grows, making it difficult to keep up with growing demand

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

CSFP is targeted to our elderly.

- Mid-Ohio Foodbank provides 5,965 food boxes per month w/ 30 pounds each of supplemental food that goes to hungry **seniors**.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC is targeted to those who can care for themselves the least.

- Provides nutritious food, nutrition education and access to health care for millions of low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk.



Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR)

CNR is targeted to those who can care for themselves the least.

- Provides nutritious food, nutrition education and access to health care for millions of children
- Urge Congress to make new investments in child nutrition programs, particularly during out of school times – after school, holidays, weekends, and summer – when our network steps up to fill the gaps
- Up for reauthorization every five years, expired this past September (2015)
- Currently advocating for a comprehensive CNR that builds on improvements made five years ago.

Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP)

OFPACP is recognized as one of the state's most successful public-private partnerships.

- Makes fresh fruits and vegetables, protein items, and shelf-stable foods available to Ohio's 12 food banks.
- Directs surplus agricultural products from Ohio farmers/growers/producers to hungry people & keeps food bank shelves stocked.
- In 2014, Ohio food banks received \$14.5 million from the state of Ohio to support OFPACP. Mid-Ohio Foodbank alone received 9,233,750 pounds of food from OFPACP. The recently passed state budget for FY16 and 17 provides a much needed increase in funding to \$19.75 million per fiscal year.

SO WHAT?

Mid-Ohio Foodbank is on the front lines in the fight against hunger. We see every day **how important federal nutrition programs are in our community & how effectively they're working** to ensure that struggling families can put food on the table.

We are **deeply concerned by the cuts and harmful policy changes that the 112th Congress did to SNAP** in the budget & in the Farm Bill. Further cuts to SNAP would make it harder for struggling families to access food, placing them at greater risk of hunger. And, cuts to federal nutrition programs would only increase the overwhelming demand that organizations like ours are already seeing; unfortunately, we cannot fill that gap alone.

SNAP **responded to the recession & prolonged economic downturn exactly as it is designed to do**, growing as unemployment grew to provide families that have fallen on hard times with much needed help. As the economy slowly recovers, SNAP continues to provide benefits targeted at our most vulnerable citizens.

But while SNAP has responded as intended to meet increased need, TEFAP **has not kept pace with growing demand**. With constrained resources and demand remaining high, food banks rely on robust federal tax incentives to encourage much needed food/fund donations and urge you to protect those incentives. Since 1976, federal tax incentives encourage companies to donate excess food to food banks instead of landfilling the food. As the # of small businesses in the food & agricultural industry grows, we can take steps to improve the food donation tax deduction to encourage more of the 78 billion pounds of nutritious food dumped every year to be donated to food banks.

Investing in Federal nutrition programs not only provides immediate relief for struggling families, children, and seniors, it also yields **significant dividends for America's farmers and the agricultural industry**. Food insecurity and poor nutrition reduce health and educational outcomes, decrease workforce productivity, and increase education and health care costs. In short, by investing in nutrition programs, we are investing in our nation's future.

While we recognize the challenges of addressing our nation's deficit, we are confident that even in a time of limited resources, our nation & state can make decisions that reflect our shared value of helping our neighbors in need.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED!

On behalf of all those struggling w/hunger in our community, we strongly urge you to protect & strengthen programs/policies that help shield vulnerable low-income Ohioans from hunger as Congress makes decisions about Child Nutrition Reauthorization. We call upon you to adhere to Congress' historical, bipartisan commitment to protecting programs/policies that serve vulnerable low-income families, children & seniors, including nutrition assistance programs and charitable tax policy.

At the state level, we thank the administration and legislators for their support of the Ohio Food Program and the Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program. We ask that legislators continue to support programs and public policy aimed at helping their hungry neighbors.

Become a FAN! [Sign up today for our Advocacy Alerts and Calls2Action!](#)

Mid-Ohio Foodbank's vision is a hunger-free and healthier community. To get there, we need your help! As the largest source of food for hunger relief organizations in central and eastern Ohio, the Foodbank is working hard to engage public policy decision-makers and constituents alike in the hunger conversation. The **F**oodbank **A**dvocacy **N**etwork (**FAN**) is essential in helping us to advance our mission to **end hunger one nourishing meal at a time and to co-create a sustainable community where everyone thrives.**

As a FAN stakeholder, we will inform you about issues and actions that deserve our urgent attention. Please accept our invitation to write a letter, send an email, make a phone call, attend an event, tweet a comment or donate your Facebook status to influence legislation that aims to alleviate hunger. To find the name of your representatives and senators, click [here](#).

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