

# OHIO ASSOCIATION OF SECOND HARVEST FOODBANKS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 2, 2012

## NEW REPORT ON IMPACT OF PROPOSED BUDGET DETAILS GRIM PORTRAIT FOR STRUGGLING OHIOANS

*Cuts to hunger programs would leave 1.9 million state residents with diminished resources for food and less to spend in Ohio communities*

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF) along with the Coalition on Human Needs today released a report on the impact of the proposed federal budget on Ohio’s children, families and workers. Automatic cuts proposed by the Budget Control Act last summer would be harmful, but the additional cuts in the House passed budget will amplify the negative effect on Ohioans who rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called food stamps.

“Making the necessary investments to ensure that all Ohio families have the resources they need to thrive and contribute to the state’s economy requires thoughtful choices about our long-term fiscal health,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, OASHF executive director. “Unfortunately, many of the options before Congress threaten serious cuts in vital human needs programs that would undermine both our fragile recovery and our future growth.”

Choices that have emerged so far include:

- *Reducing the deficit solely by cutting spending.* This means abiding by the budget deal established under the Budget Control Act of 2011.
- *Reducing the deficit solely by cutting spending, but protecting wasteful military spending.* This modifies the Budget Control Act to protect the military budget at the expense of human needs programs and other domestic spending.
- *Making drastic reductions in spending and shredding the safety net while giving the wealthy new tax cuts.* This is the approach taken in the House Republican leadership’s budget proposal.
- *Adopting a balanced approach that includes new revenues and investment in job creation.* This is the approach President Obama’s budget proposal takes.

If automatic cuts mandated by the Budget Control Act go into effect, Ohio’s future prosperity will be damaged because young children and students won’t get the education they need. In 2013 alone, Ohio will receive \$22.4 million less for Head Start, \$6.3 million less for early care and education, \$45.5 million less for K-12 education, \$34.1 million less for special education and \$10.4 million less for vocational rehabilitation. Ohio will also face significant cuts in the programs that help families survive during hard times, including \$14.7 million less for the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program, \$12.2 million less for the Community Development Block Grant program, and \$12.9 million less for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

“Although the automatic cuts will be damaging enough, if the House leadership’s budget proposal goes into effect, the harm will be much worse,” said Fugitt.

Fugitt said that starting in 2014, the cuts to all the programs mentioned above, and many others that support human needs, will be significantly deeper. In addition, programs that are exempt from the automatic cuts under the Budget Control Act would also be reduced. For example, if the House leadership proposal for SNAP goes into effect, Ohio would see a \$5.1 billion reduction in the benefit over the next decade leaving potentially 1.9 million state residents with diminished resources for food and less to spend in our communities.

The report also finds that although the economy is starting to recover, people in Ohio are still struggling:

- More than 1 out of 7 Ohioans and more than 1 out of 4 Ohio children live in poverty (\$23,050 for a family of four in 2012).
- Unemployment in Ohio peaked at 10.6 percent in the summer of 2009 and still remains unacceptably high at 7.7 percent today.
- The number of unemployed or underemployed rises to 15.2 percent when those who have given up looking for work or can't get as much work as they want are included.

“We need to make the right choices this year, to protect our children and our future,” said Fugitt. “Both the cuts stipulated in the Budget Control Act and the House leadership proposals decimate so many programs that the consequences to Ohioan’s health, education and well-being would be immediate and far-reaching. Our economy is struggling, and Ohio families are suffering – lawmakers in Ohio and our state’s members of Congress must take immediate action to address this critical issue.”

To access the full report or for more information about the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, visit [www.oashf.org](http://www.oashf.org).

###

#### ***About the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks***

*OASHF is Ohio’s largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks and their more than 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. In SFY 2011, OASHF and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute more than 150 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow @OASHF on Twitter and stay connected on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/oashf](http://www.facebook.com/oashf).*

#### ***Coalition on Human Needs***

*The Coalition on Human Needs (CHN) is an alliance of national organizations working together to promote public policies that address the needs of low-income and other vulnerable people. The Coalition conducts analyses of federal budget proposals and policies to determine their impact on people in need. The Coalition's members include civil rights, religious, labor and professional organizations and those concerned with the well-being of children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities.*

*CHN is located at 1120 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 312, Washington, D.C. 20036*

*Visit us at [www.chn.org](http://www.chn.org)*

###

**Contact:** Hinda Mitchell or Diane Hurd at 816/556-3142

-OR-

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, 614/221-4336