

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS

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Anti-Hunger Community Focused on Looking Ahead at Feeding More Low-Income Children During Summer Months
Increasing participation in summer food programs the focus of statewide summit

COLUMBUS – In Ohio, about 45 percent of all school-aged children receive free or reduced-price school meals through the National School Lunch Program. The Summer Food Service Program is designed to help those same children access healthy meals during the summer months. Yet last year, only a fraction of eligible children in Ohio participated in the Summer Food Service Program.

Determined to provide healthy, adequate meals to more children this summer, a group of more than 200 federal, state and local stakeholders came together Friday to discuss best practices for increasing participation. Kevin Concannon, Under Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, addressed the crowd about the important of summer nutrition programs for Ohio's children.

USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Kevin Concannon said, "The nutrition gap low-income children face when school is out of session underscores the need and importance for USDA's summer meal opportunities. We anticipate bolstering this investment by working to increase the number of sites where disadvantaged Ohio children can receive a meal in a constructive, safe environment."

Representatives from local school districts and faith-based and nonprofit organizations from throughout the state shared their best practices for engaging more children in summer food programs. Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director at the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, stressed how damaging a lack of adequate nutrition can be to a child's ability to succeed during the school year.

"Food insecurity in children leads to more frequent nurses visits at school, higher rates of chronic conditions, lower math scores and a greater likelihood of behavioral problems," said Hamler-Fugitt. "Food insecurity during the summer months also leads to lost educational achievement. One experience with hunger has a negative impact on the health of children 10 and 15 years later. We must commit as a community and as a state to provide for the basic nutritional needs of our children."

Ohio families are encouraged to learn more about the Summer Food Service Program by visiting the [Ohio Department of Education website](#) or by calling 877-644-6338 for more information.

About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2012, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 164 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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