

# OHIO ASSOCIATION OF SECOND HARVEST FOODBANKS

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## Participation in Summer Meals in Ohio Continues to Fall Short

*Not too late to make a difference this summer, says Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks*

**COLUMBUS – [June 8, 2012]** Participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs, including the Summer Food Service Program, continues to fall short in Ohio, with only 66,038 low-income children receiving summer meals on an average day in July 2011, according to a new national report released today. This decrease from the previous year meant that summer meals only reached 10.6 children for every 100 low-income children who got regular school year meals in the 2010-2011 school year.

Ohio's performance was worse than the national rate, which reached one in seven low-income children, according to *Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation*, an annual analysis by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). The report measures participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs by comparing the number of children receiving summer meals to the number of low-income children receiving school lunch during the regular school year.

The continuing fallout of the recession has not only led to lost jobs and lower wages but also to major cuts in summer schools and youth programs. The number of children participating in the Summer Nutrition Program fell from 70,853 children in July 2010 to 66,038 children in July 2011, ranking Ohio 37<sup>th</sup> in performance.

"The math is simple here. Fewer children are getting summer meals and more will go hungry. Ohio is failing to meet the needs of low-income children," said Lisa Hamler-Fuggitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks. "When summer programs scale back services or shut their doors, children wind up paying the price. But it's not too late to make a difference this summer."

"There is an opportunity for everyone to make a difference in participation and ensure that more children can access summer meals," said Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center. "Children cannot continue to bear the burden of budget cuts. It is in everyone's best interest to ensure that children have adequate nutrition during the summer so they stay healthy and are ready to learn."

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is helping lead the charge with its National Summer Food Service Program Week. This week-long campaign (June 11-15) aims to raise awareness about the risk of hunger low-income children face during the summer months and the benefits of summer food.

The Summer Nutrition Programs, which include the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program, fill the food gap for the thousands of low-income Ohio children who rely on school breakfast and lunch during the school year to help keep hunger at bay. Through these programs, children can receive free meals at participating summer sites at schools, parks, other public agencies, and nonprofits.

In Ohio, families can find nearby summer meal sites by calling 1-855-570-7377 or visiting the Ohio Department of Education's [clickable map](#).

Visit the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks website to view the [full \*Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation\* report](#).

**About the report:**

Data for Ohio came from an annual report released by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), a national anti-hunger advocacy and research group. The FRAC report, *Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation*, gives data for all states and looks at national trends. FRAC measures national summer participation during the month of July, when typically all children are out of school throughout the month and lose access to school meals. The report is available online at [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org).

**About the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF)**

OASHF 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 2011, OASHF and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 150 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow [@OASHF](https://twitter.com/OASHF) on Twitter, stay connected on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/OASHF](https://www.facebook.com/OASHF), and visit OASHF on the web at [www.oashf.org](http://www.oashf.org).

**About the Ohio Department of Education**

The Ohio Department of Education serves as the administrator of the Summer Food Service Program in the State of Ohio. The Summer Food Service Program is just one of many supportive programs administered by the Ohio Department of Education to support Ohio's children. It provides nutritious meals and snacks to sites that meet eligibility requirements. For more information about the Ohio Department of Education and its role in the Summer Food Service Program, visit the ODE [website](#).

**About the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

USDA provides funding for the Summer Food Service Program, which is administered in Ohio by the Ohio Department of Education. The Summer Food Service Program is just one of many supportive programs funded and operated by USDA to promote nutrition and hunger-relief across the nation. For more information about USDA and its role in the Summer Food Service Program, visit the USDA [website](#).

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