



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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STATEWIDE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM SUMMIT HELD IN COLUMBUS
More than 250 providers and partners participated in the sixth annual event

COLUMBUS – The beginnings of spring may still be several weeks away, but Ohio’s Summer Food Service Program providers are already busy planning for summer. Today, more than 250 people attended a statewide summit focused on expanding the scope and reach of the Summer Food Service Program in Ohio.

“We want folks to leave today feeling energized and prepared to tackle child hunger in the summer months in their local communities,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, which held the event at the Mid-Ohio Foodbank in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education. “There’s so many opportunities for us to reach more kids through this program, and our kids and communities are counting on us to find them.”

The Summer Food Service Program is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and provides reimbursements to local nonprofits, school districts and government agencies for the meals they serve to kids while school is out during summer vacation. Hamler-Fugitt addressed some of the challenges facing providers when implementing the program. She acknowledged that the failure of Congress to reauthorize a strong bipartisan Child Nutrition Act was disheartening for summer meal providers, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas of the state.

“Many of our most vulnerable kids are going underserved in the summer,” she told the audience. “After a long fight to secure some move toward modernization for the program, those negotiations between the House and the Senate stalled, and we know that’s left a lot of you feeling discouraged. But we’re called to do everything within our power to maximize the options we do have available to make sure kids in low-income families don’t go hungry while school is out.”

The event featured a variety of workshops and panel presentations designed to help everyone from librarians and school food service staff to faith leaders and social workers grow the impact of their summer meals footprint. The Ohio Association of Foodbanks hopes the event leads to new summer meals sites and innovative approaches to serving more hungry kids.

To learn more about the Summer Food Service Program in Ohio, visit <http://education.ohio.gov/>.

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 2016, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 208 million pounds of food and grocery items. The association also serves as the home of The Ohio Benefit Bank and operates the state’s largest navigator program for the Affordable Care Act. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

Contact: Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks
614-271-4803 (cell) – or – lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org

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