

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS

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**During Record Low Temperatures, Anti-Hunger Community Gathers to Plan,
Prepare to Feed More Low-Income Children during Summer Months
*National, state, local stakeholders join for statewide summer food summit***

COLUMBUS – In Ohio, more than 787,000 school-aged children participate in the National School Lunch Program, receiving free or subsidized school meals during the school year. The federal Summer Food Service Program is designed to help those same children access healthy meals during the summer months. Yet only about one in ten eligible children in Ohio participate in the Summer Food Service Program.

“The summer food program can and does work in communities with leaders that have embraced the importance of adequate child nutrition year-round,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. “There are a lot of potential barriers to making the program work. We recognize those barriers and are working with our state and national partners to address them. But we also know that many communities are putting this program to work for their kids, and we want to elevate their success.”

About 150 federal, state and local stakeholders came together Friday for the fourth annual statewide Summer Food Service Summit, held at the Mid-Ohio Foodbank in Grove City. Attendees heard about national best practices from representatives from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and best practices from some of their Ohio peers. Attendees also received updates and information from the Ohio Department of Education’s Office of Child Nutrition.

As federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization approaches in September 2015, the Ohio Association of Foodbanks also called on attendees to remain engaged and make legislators aware of the needs of their programs and the children they serve.

“We need your continued hard work to make the summer food program work for the kids that you serve,” said Hamler-Fugitt. “We also need your voice in the coming months to offer your recommendations to improve the program as Child Nutrition Reauthorization nears. We need you to stay vigilant and work with us to protect all sources of nutrition for children, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is under attack on so many fronts.”

Schools and organizations interested in learning more about the Summer Food Service Program can visit the [Ohio Department of Education website](#) or call 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 2014, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 186 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.

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