



Child nutrition reauthorization: seizing a critical opportunity for children

Child nutrition programs are vital public structures in Oregon

Five primary programs constitute the vital public structures that help provide hundreds of thousands of children in Oregon the nutritious foods they need:

- The **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** serves more than 114,000 low-income pregnant women, new moms and kids up to age five, by providing growth and health assessments, nutrition education, referrals, breastfeeding support and nutritious foods.
- The **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)** supports schools for lunches served during lunch periods and for snacks served in after-school care programs. NSLP helps provide nutritious meals to more than 300,000 students in Oregon.
- The **School Breakfast Program (SBP)** provides funding for breakfasts served in schools at or close to the beginning of the school day. SBP serves almost 140,000 students.
- The **Summer Food Service Programs (SFSP)** provides funds for snacks and meals served to more than 36,000 low-income children during their summer break from school, helping to fill the gap when school meals are unavailable.
- The **Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)** provides reimbursement for meals served in child care settings, homeless shelters, and after-school programs. CACFP provides meals to more than 38,000 Oregon children.

Federal child nutrition programs brought more than **\$222 million of federal funds into the Oregon economy** in federal fiscal year 2009.

¹ Oregon participation data from US Department of Agriculture, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/cnpmain.htm>, viewed 1/13/10.



Feed Oregon Kids Today,
Grow Leaders for Tomorrow

Congress can help end childhood hunger

Each day in Oregon, hundreds of thousands of children—nearly one in five—live in poverty and go hungry. In fact, 36 percent of those who rely on emergency food from the Oregon Food Bank Network are children. Hunger stifles their health, intellect, creativity and capacity to learn and be at their best.

President Obama has made a commitment to end childhood hunger in the United States by 2015. We can and must achieve this objective. We must uphold our responsibility to protect children from hunger and food insecurity because all children deserve an equal opportunity to succeed in school and life.

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Federal child nutrition programs—including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), school lunch and breakfast, summer food, child care snacks and meals and other programs—provide invaluable support, feeding hundreds of thousands of children in Oregon and millions of children nationwide.

The upcoming Congressional reauthorization of these programs provides a critical opportunity to make significant progress toward President Obama's goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015. These programs are only reauthorized every five years, making now an urgent time to act on behalf of children.

Congress can make positive changes in child nutrition programs so that they provide more nutritious foods, to more children, more efficiently ... *because no one should be hungry.*



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Childhood hunger takes a tragic toll

Though in many ways invisible, hunger has a dramatic impact on our country's present and future. "Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact On Our Nation,"¹ a recent report commissioned by Feeding America, a national hunger-relief organization, documents the stark, far-reaching toll childhood hunger takes. The report, which summarizes results of research completed by the Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program and many other researchers, found the following consequences of child hunger.

Hungry children cannot learn as much, as fast or as well.



Child hunger is a health problem.

Hungry children are sick more often and more likely to be hospitalized. They also suffer growth and developmental impairments that limit their physical, intellectual and emotional development.

Child hunger is an educational problem.

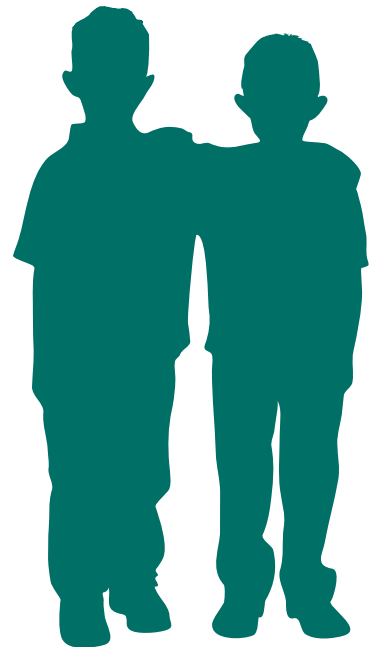
Hungry children cannot learn as much, as fast, or as well. They are less able to concentrate in class, leading to lower academic achievement. Hunger and its effects also result in social and behavioral problems.

Child hunger is a work force and job-readiness problem.

Workers who suffered hunger as children and struggled in school are not well prepared to perform effectively in the contemporary work force because of lower educational levels and technical skills. Parents also miss more work days due to child sick days.

Child hunger has both short- and long-term effects on health care costs.

In the immediate, hungry children are more likely to be hospitalized. The average pediatric hospitalization costs approximately \$12,000. Long-term, the results of chronic undernutrition contribute to high health care costs.



¹ <http://feedingamerica.org/SiteFiles/child-economy-study.pdf>

School meals are an integral part of children's education

Faubion Elementary School in Northeast Portland is typical of schools across the country – child nutrition programs play a key role in the school's learning environment. Faubion has 391 students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. About 200 eat a school breakfast and 320



of them eat a school lunch on an average day. Of those, almost 70 percent receive a free or reduced-price meal.

"It's difficult to learn if you're hungry," said Kristin Lasher, Faubion School positive behavior specialist. "And we can tell. There are some kids who are very hungry who need breakfast, and then maybe a snack, and then lunch to be able to focus and learn."

Lasher sees the importance of the School Breakfast Program first-hand. "Quite a few kids come for breakfast and some of them take two. There's one kid who was coming late and missing breakfast. He was a mess the rest of the day. So we made sure to save a breakfast for him and he did much better."

"School lunch is important as well," Lasher said, "I know a lot of kids don't get dinner at home so this is their main source of food."

According to Lasher, school meals are more important than ever due to the current economic recession. "More kids are hungry now with the economy the way it is," she said.

Child nutrition programs are critical to fighting hunger

For more than 60 years, federal child nutrition programs have played a vital role in providing nutritious food for low-income children. Each year, millions of children across the country rely on these programs. Woven together, they provide strong nutrition assistance for children, from crucial fetal development up to age 18. They form a web of support at home and in child care, school, after-school, summer and other out-of-school settings.

2009 OREGON CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

National School Lunch Program:

309,409

School Breakfast Program:

138,420

Child and Adult Care Food Program:

38,760

Summer Food Service Program:

36,567

Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women Infants and Children:

114,641

Congressional action needed now

Child nutrition programs must be strengthened to better serve even more children in need. Every five years, Congress reviews these programs through the reauthorization process. In the House, the Education and Labor Committee has jurisdiction over child nutrition programs, while in the Senate, the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee has jurisdiction. The current law was set to expire at the end of September 2009. Congress extended it through a continuing resolution for 12 months. But **children simply cannot wait another year** for critical improvements and investments to be made.

While child nutrition programs are among our nation's most important and cost-effective public programs, they need to be enhanced and strengthened to reach more children, more efficiently, with more nutritious foods.

President Obama made the commitment to end childhood hunger in the U.S. by 2015 and key opportunities to reach that

goal will be few. Congress can make significant progress during this reauthorization to ensure that more children have access to school breakfasts, that the eligibility process is simplified for families, that more sites can serve summer and after-school snacks and meals and that the nutritional quality of snacks and meals for children can be improved.

Each day that children are hungry in our country, irreparable damage is done to individual lives and to our society and economy as a whole.

Each senator and representative has the opportunity and responsibility to act in support of significant new investments and improvements in child nutrition

programs in order to give every child the opportunity to thrive ... *because no one should be hungry.*



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Feed Oregon Kids Today,
Grow Leaders for Tomorrow



FEED KIDS, GROW LEADERS COALITION IDENTIFIES OREGON CHILD NUTRITION PRIORITIES

Organizations throughout Oregon — including the Oregon Dietetic Association, Oregon Food Bank and the Oregon Hunger Task Force — have come together to form the Feed Oregon Kids Today, Grow Leaders for Tomorrow coalition to advocate for improvements and new investments in federal child nutrition programs. The coalition has established four priorities:

1.

Increase access to child nutrition programs outside of school time by changing the area eligibility threshold from 50 to 40 percent of children who live below the federal poverty level in the local school district.

2.

Increase reimbursement rates for all child nutrition programs, to adequately cover the true cost of providing nutritious meals. Higher reimbursement levels would expand access, improve nutritional quality of food, and allow more programs to break even.

3.

Streamline child nutrition programs to maximize the number of organizations that sponsor meal sites and participating families. Key administrative elements of current programs should be aligned to reduce administrative complexity and barriers to participation.

4.

Improve nutritional quality of meals and support local agriculture by enhancing state farm-to-school programs.