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AUTHOR Martin, Shara E.
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ABSTRACT

This biannual report examines hunger in Ohio, providing current data about hunger programs and direct information from those who use these programs. An introductory section defines hunger and food insecurity and discusses how they are measured. The second section highlights national trends (by household composition, by household income, and low-income households). The third section describes food security trends in Ohio. The fourth section discusses what causes hunger. The fifth section presents federal nutrition programs working to feed Ohio's children, families, and older people, including: the Child and Adult Care Food Program; National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Summer Food Service Program; Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program; Food Stamp Program; Emergency Food Assistance Program; senior meal programs; and Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The sixth section discusses state nutrition programs (Adult Emergency Assistance Program, Ohio Agricultural Surplus Production Alliance, and Ohio Food Program). Two major recommendations to Ohio's policymakers include taking immediate steps to increase Food Stamp Program participation and fully utilizing available federal funds to expand child nutrition programs by investing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Maintenance of Effort dollars. An appendix presents federal poverty guidelines and acronyms. (SM)

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Hunger in Ohio

The State of the State

2001

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Recommendations to Ohio's Policymakers

RECOMMENDATION I – Ohio should take immediate steps to increase participation in the Food Stamp Program by:

1. Promptly adopting the new USDA regulations that allow semi-annual reporting. This option:

- Reduces paperwork and reporting burdens on the state and low-income working families.
- Assures longer-term food stamp benefits to working families.
- Has the potential to decrease state and county error rates.

2. Utilizing currently available federal food stamp outreach funds to educate and enroll eligible families.

RECOMMENDATION II – Ohio should fully utilize available federal funds to expand child nutrition programs by investing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Maintenance of Effort dollars to:

1. Reduce the financial risk to child nutrition program providers by:

- Supplementing USDA meal reimbursements.
- Assisting with program start-up costs.
- Offsetting administrative costs.

2. Increase awareness of child nutrition programs serving low-income families by:

- Investing in outreach to promote child nutrition programs.
- Including information on child nutrition programs in state correspondence with low-income families.
- Utilizing state web sites to educate the public about child nutrition programs, their benefits, and how to participate.
- Working through school districts to inform children and families about available programs.

Why should Ohio adopt these recommendations?...

I. FOOD STAMPS:

- Healthy families have a greater chance of succeeding on the job and in school.
- Currently, a significant number of eligible Ohio families are not taking advantage of these benefits.
- More than half of all food stamp recipients are children.
- Reducing barriers to food stamp participation helps working families maintain good nutrition.

II. CHILD NUTRITION:

- Ohio is lagging behind the nation in most child nutrition programming.
- Ohio can draw down millions of additional federal dollars each year to feed hungry children by expanding child nutrition programs.

School Breakfast:

- School lunch and school breakfast provide 1/3 to 1/2 of a child's daily nutrition needs. For some of Ohio's lowest-income children, this is the only food they will eat in a given day.
- School breakfast increases academic performance, improves attendance, and reduces health-related complaints among children.
- Currently, 47% of Ohio schools offer the School Breakfast Program to eligible children, yet 98% of Ohio schools have the infrastructure to provide breakfast.
- If Ohio reached the national average for serving low-income children, it would draw down an additional \$3.6 million of federal money per year.

Summer Food:

- Only 1 in 10 children who receives free or reduced-price school meals participates in the Summer Food Service Program.
- Many children do not have a summer program to attend due to transportation barriers and limited program availability.
- If Ohio reached the national average for serving low-income children, it would draw down an additional \$4 million of federal money per year.

After-School Programming:

- One in five 6 to 12-year-olds is regularly left without adult supervision.
- Federal dollars are available to purchase snacks or meals at after-school program sites that offer safe, enriching programs for low-income children.

Family Child Care:

- Ohio's participation in Family Child Care meal programs fell by 22% between federal fiscal year 1996 and 1998. This program ensures that children attending in-home child cares are offered nutritious meals in a safe environment.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ohio Hunger Task Force is proud to publish its second biannual report, *Hunger In Ohio: The State of the State 2001*.

Our purpose is to bring attention to the issue of hunger in the state. In Ohio we have a rich agricultural economy, yet 1 in 6 children goes to bed hungry or at risk of hunger each night.

How can this be?

It is a result of many complex factors, but there *are* solutions. Hunger is one of the few continuing human need issues for which practical remedies exist, and resources are available to reduce hunger and improve nutrition among our citizens.

This report gives you current data about hunger programs and quotes from real people who are using these programs to improve their nutritional status. The recommendations found in the front of this report will take a minimal investment of time and resources, and the payback will be quick and real.

- More children will be well nourished and ready to achieve in school.
- More working families will have access to nutritious food, which will help them stay healthy and focused on the job.
- More older adults will achieve a high quality of life and enjoy fewer health problems.

Ohio will be stronger and healthier.

With strong public/private partnerships and a willingness to find solutions to hunger, we can succeed in meeting the nutrition needs of Ohio's children and families. We look forward to a time when Ohio's citizens will no longer face hunger and everyone will enjoy the abundance of our state.

William J. Dolan
Executive Director
January 2001



INTRODUCTION

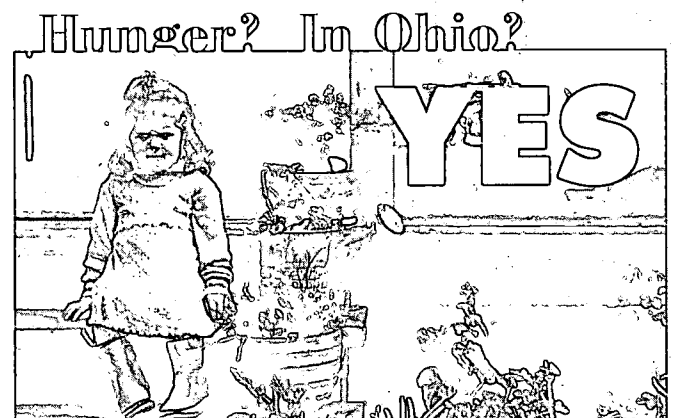
Ohio has children at risk of hunger in every county. In the wake of welfare reform, families are moving off of cash assistance and into the workforce, but many of these families are not finding a path out of poverty. The median annual income of Ohio households is \$51,900 per year¹ (more than three times the federal poverty level for a family of four), yet 1.3 million Ohioans are still living in poverty.² Children and adults are still going to bed hungry every night in Ohio.

Although people are at risk of hunger in every Ohio county, they do not have to be; *hunger is preventable*. There is enough federal money to feed every hungry child and adult in our state. But millions of federal dollars are going unused each year while Ohio's low-income children and adults are suffering from—some short-term and some irreversible—effects of hunger.

Working families need federal nutrition programs to help them live healthy and active lives. This is especially true for people leaving cash assistance and making the transition to self-sufficiency. Nutrition programs alleviate much of the concern these families face about whether they can pay rent or buy food in a given month. No child should have to go without food so that she can live in safety. Likewise, no child should be deprived of safe housing so he can eat.

While our economy is booming for some, it has yet to catch up with others. Proof of this is in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 1999 Food Security study. Households with incomes between 50 and 130 percent of the poverty line are the only household type among the 30 subgroups studied by the USDA to show a higher rate of hunger risk in 1999 than in 1995.³

Consider these questions: Will you eat dinner tonight? Will your children and other loved ones eat dinner tonight? To most Americans, the answer to this question is so trivial that it's not even worth contemplating. The parents of one in six children, however, cannot guarantee their child dinner tonight. And *that* is the basis for this report. There are many simple actions Ohio can take to ameliorate this hidden problem and to strengthen Ohio's children and families.



Hunger: "a circumstance in which an individual unwillingly goes without food for an intermittent or extended period of time."⁴

What is Hunger and Food Insecurity?

Hunger is "a circumstance in which an individual unwillingly goes without food for an intermittent or extended period of time."⁴ Hunger is often talked about in the context of *food security*. Food security is defined by the USDA as "assured access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life."⁵ Food *insecurity*, then, describes households that are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, adequate food to meet basic needs at all times. Not all food insecure homes experience hunger, but they all experience concerns about their food supply and many food insecure homes face trade-offs every month such as whether to pay rent, buy food, or pay utility bills.

1 in 6 children is hungry or at risk of hunger in the U.S.⁶

Why Care?

The latest USDA study indicates that 1 in 6 of our nation's children is hungry or at risk of hunger because their family cannot afford enough food.⁶ For every child going to bed without dinner, there are others who scrimp by on depleted diets because that is all their family can afford.

Hunger in Ohio is not what we see in third world countries. It does not expose itself as bloated bellies and ill children lying in the streets. Hunger in Ohio is rarely recognizable. Hunger in Ohio causes a nine-year-old boy to look barely five. It causes a 6-year-old girl to be fatigued and withdrawn from her peers. Hunger prevents a teenager from concentrating in school. Hunger is often invisible in Ohio, but the detrimental effects of hunger work in recognizable ways that can last a lifetime.

Hungry children suffer from two to four times as many health problems as their non-hungry peers.⁷

Seven Reasons To Care About Hunger:

1. Hunger **decreases brain development** in children, thereby hindering student performance and behavior.
2. Hunger **decreases productivity** in adults, creating more absences from work and insufficient performance.
3. Hunger **slows physical development** in children, thereby increasing health problems and decreasing school attendance.
4. **Costs** associated with treating hunger-related illnesses are higher than prevention costs.
5. **Lost knowledge, brainpower, and productivity** is a loss for the entire state and nation.
6. Hunger can have **irreversible consequences**.
7. **HUNGER IS PREVENTABLE.**





Measuring Hunger and Food Insecurity

The U.S. Department of Agriculture conducts annual food security surveys that measure hunger and hunger risk in the United States. The USDA first reported national measures of food security in 1995. It has since released data for each year up through 1999. Estimates are based on answers provided through interviews with a nationally representative sample of U.S. households.

Respondents answer questions about food supply, concerns about running out of food, and food intake habits. The most severe food insecurity results in hunger. *There are four categories of food security:*⁸

Food Secure – Households show little to no evidence of food insecurity.

Food Insecure without Hunger – Households show food insecurity by concern over food supply and decreased diet quality. Little to no food intake reduction is reported in these households.

Food Insecure with Moderate Hunger – Adults in the household have reduced food intake to the extent that they have repeatedly experienced physical hunger. Little to no food intake reduction is observed for children in the household.

Food Insecure with Severe Hunger – Children in the household have reduced food intake to the extent that they have experienced physical hunger. Adults in the household have reduced food intake even farther.

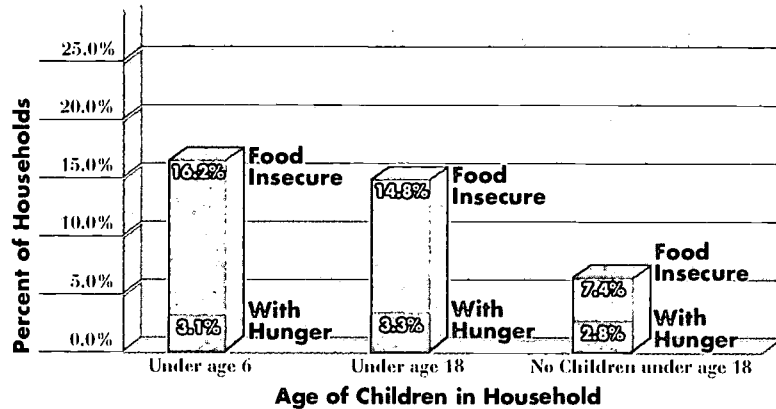
[Note: "Food Insecure" in this report refers to all households designated as food insecure, with or without hunger. "Hunger" refers to all households with moderate or severe hunger.]



NATIONAL TRENDS

By Household Composition

Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger by Ages of Children in the Household



Source: USDA, Household Food Security in the United States, 1999.

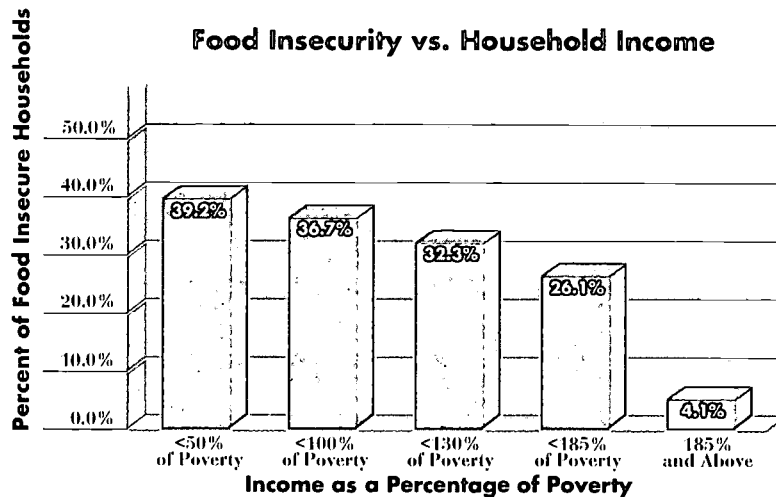
Children are nearly twice as likely to live in a food insecure home as adults.

- 10.1% of all U.S. households are food insecure.
- 16.9% of children live in food insecure households.
- Children are one-and-one-half times as likely as adults to live in a household with hunger.

Children from households earning less than 185% of the poverty level meet the income criteria to receive WIC and free or reduced-price meals from the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program.

By Household Income

Food Insecurity vs. Household Income



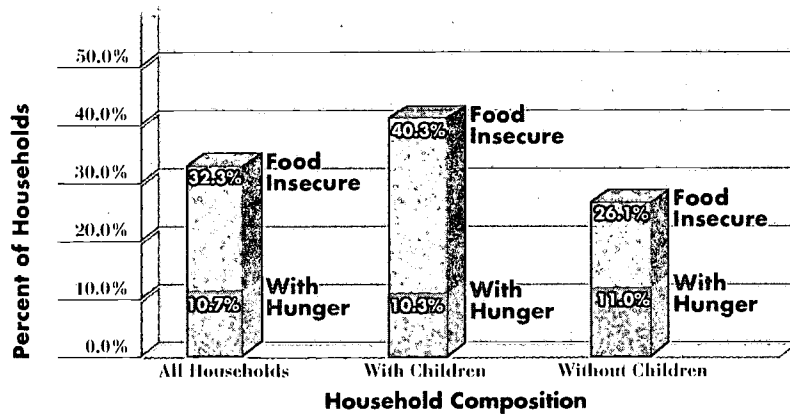
Source: USDA, Household Food Security in the United States, 1999.

- Households earning less than 185% of the poverty level are over 6 times as likely to be food insecure as households with earnings above this level.
- These same households are more than 8 times as likely to be hungry as higher income households.



Low-Income Households

Food Insecurity and Hunger in Households with Incomes Below 130% of the Poverty Line



Source: USDA, *Household Food Security in the United States, 1999.*

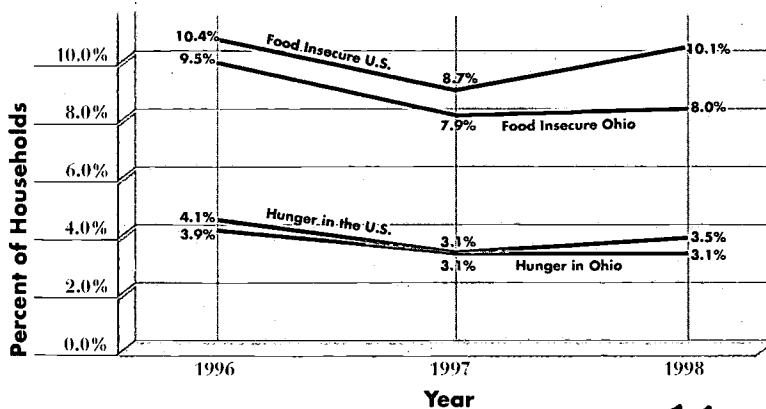
- Single mothers earning less than 130% of the poverty level are the most likely household type to be food insecure. Almost half of these households are food insecure and 12.9% experience hunger.
- Men living alone earning less than 130% of the poverty level are the most likely household type to experience hunger. One-third of these households are food insecure and 13.7% experience hunger.
- 1 in 6 low-income older adults living alone are food insecure and 6.4% experience hunger.

A household that earns 130% of the poverty level or less satisfies the gross income requirement for food stamp eligibility. Children in these families may qualify for free meals at school.

FOOD SECURITY TRENDS IN OHIO

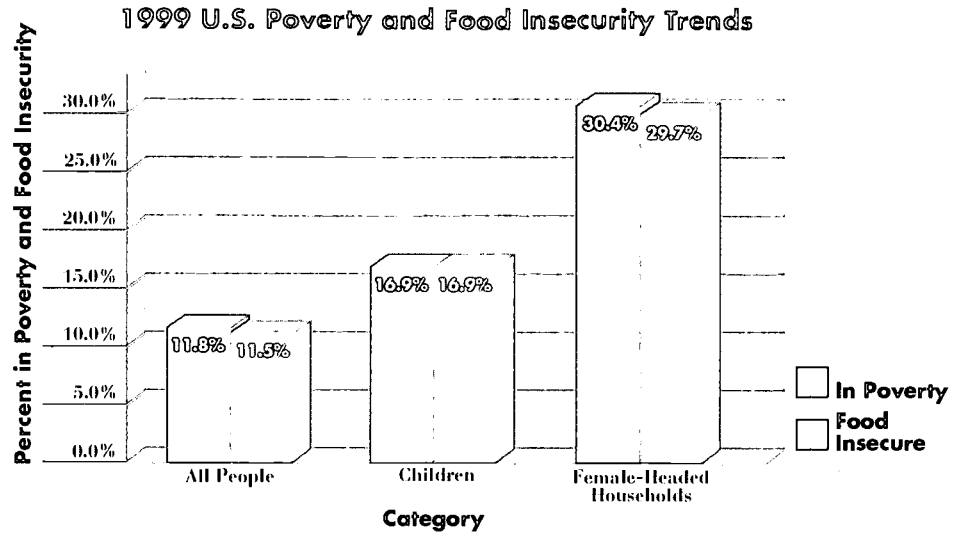
Ohio's average food insecurity and poverty rates were below the national average for 1996 through 1998.⁹ However, the prevalence of hunger in Ohio for this same time period was not significantly different from the national average.

Food Insecurity and Hunger in the U.S. and Ohio 1996-1998



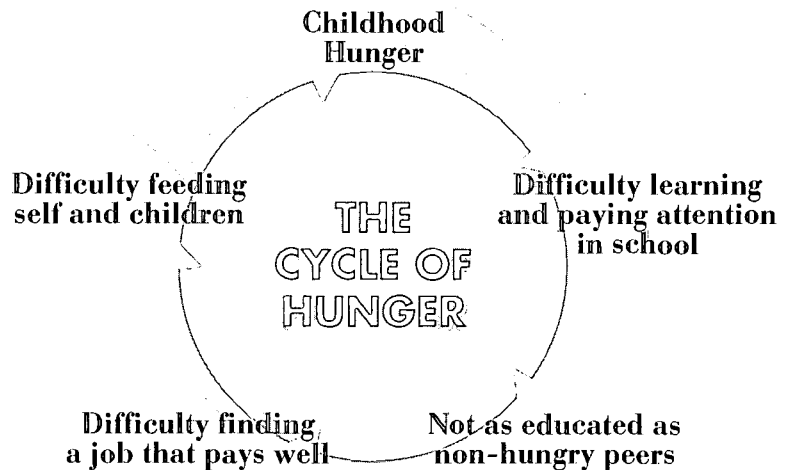
Source: *USDA Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger, by State, 1996-1998.*

WHAT CAUSES HUNGER?



One in six children lives in poverty in the United States. Likewise, one in six children is hungry or at risk of hunger in the U.S. These numbers are not identical by pure coincidence. Hunger increases with poverty. A healthy economy helps people move out of poverty and into food security but the booming economy alone does not eradicate hunger. Studies indicate that moving off cash assistance and into the workforce, for example, does not necessarily lead to a path out of poverty. The average Ohioan who leaves welfare, stays off welfare for one year, *and* finds a job earns \$8.65 per hour with a gross income of \$1,410 per month.¹⁰ This amounts to \$16,920 per year, which is still below the federal poverty level for a family of four.

"A hungry child does not learn. An uneducated adult does not earn."





While the nation and our state are booming economically, there are many pockets of poverty just a few miles from where we live and work. Poverty and low incomes contribute to hunger in Ohio. Hunger is sustained when this is compounded with lack of knowledge about federal nutrition programs and lack of access to these programs.

FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS FIGHT HUNGER

Ohioans have access to several federally-funded nutrition programs administered by our state agencies. Unfortunately, a large percentage of eligible people are not participating in these programs. Sometimes non-participation is due to lack of availability—although qualified individuals are entitled to the benefits of almost all of these programs, not all programs are offered in every community. Other programs have barriers to access that make it difficult for working families with competing priorities to make it through the process. Some people do not even know that the programs exist or that they might be eligible.

Federal nutrition programs can be very proactive if they are utilized efficiently and effectively. These programs feed children so they can live healthy lives, concentrate in school, and become productive adults in our society, thereby being able to feed their own children. Nutrition programs that benefit working adults aim to reduce medical costs and help keep them in their jobs. Programs that support older adults work to promote independence and fewer health problems for those over age 60.

Programs Working to Feed Ohio's Hungry Children

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	
The CACFP provides meals or snacks to children and adults in care centers, child care homes and after-school programs. Non-residential child or adult care establishments such as group or family child care, child or adult care centers, homeless shelters, Head Start, recreation centers, settlement houses, after-school programs and selected for-profit child care centers may participate.	
<i>Funded by:</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
<i>Administered in Ohio by:</i>	Ohio Department of Education Office of Child Nutrition Services
<i>Population Served:</i>	<u>Meals:</u> Children to age 12 and children with disabilities to age 21; adults age 60 and over in adult day care settings. <u>Snacks:</u> Children between 13 and 18 and children of migrant families to age 16.
<i>History:</i> The Child and Adult Food Program was created as an extension of the National School Lunch Program in 1968 to provide federal funds for meals and snacks to licensed or approved child care centers. Family and group child care homes for preschool children were added in 1975 and adult care center in 1987.	

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides meals or snacks to children and adults in care centers, child care homes and after-school programs. The USDA reimburses care center sponsors for meals served. The level of reimbursement depends on the family income of each enrolled child, with sponsors receiving the largest reimbursement for the lowest-income children served. Ohio had 647 CACFP sponsors in Federal Fiscal Year 1998-1999, and this program brought over **\$40 million of federal funds** into Ohio during that year.

[Note: Although the CACFP serves adults, the vast majority of meals served under this program are served to children, so we discuss it in this context.]

If Ohio increased its number of CACFP sites or sponsors:¹¹

- **One more site per sponsor = 10,267 more Ohio children fed per day = 4.7 million more federal dollars per year.**
- **One more sponsor in each county, operating two sites each = 2,793 more Ohio children fed per day = 1.3 million more federal dollars per year.**

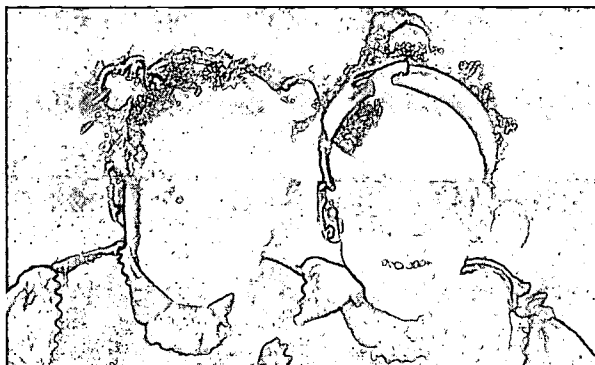
After-School Programs

After-school programs provide a safe, supervised place for children to convene after school. Here, they participate in educational, recreational, and other supervised activities and receive a nutritious snack or meal. Federal reimbursements provide money for meals or snacks to children under age 13 and snacks for youth between 13 and 18 years of age. After-school programs remove children from dangerous or isolated home settings where they might be at risk of injury, loneliness, or engaging in negative behavior.

These programs are especially helpful for working parents needing a safe care setting for their children between the time that school ends and the time the workday ends. The Urban Institute found that one in five children between the ages of 6 and 12 with employed mothers regularly spends time without adult supervision during the school year.¹² Older children are more likely to be left in self-care than younger children and are less likely to utilize before and after-school programs.¹³ These after-school programs make our children and communities stronger by providing a supervised environment for Ohio's children during the hours after school.

"If you are at home, you will watch TV, sleep, get bored. Here you will do stuff like dress up and art and you will swim, swim, swim. It's real fun here."

Savannah - 8





"The after-school program that my sons attend provides good programs and a meal. That means I don't have to worry as much about them. Since I take the bus, walk to get them, and then walk home, it is good that they aren't hungry. Then I don't have to hurry up and cook as soon as I get home." *Angela - Single mother of two sons ages five and eight, working full-time as an Americorps*VISTA to earn 36% below the poverty level*

Family Child Care (FCC)

The Family Child Care (FCC) program reimburses in-home child care providers for meals served to the children enrolled in their care. Family Child Care offers working parents an alternative to enrolling their child in a care center, and it serves as a business opportunity for parents or other adults wishing to stay home while still earning money.

In-home care can be especially helpful for parents working second or third shifts or weekends and for parents who do not live or work near a care center. Family child care providers set their own rates and are generally more affordable and flexible than child care centers. Providers must be approved through the state, the county, a foster care agency, or a sponsoring agency to participate in the meal reimbursement program. All homes are required to pass health and fire inspections and all adults living in the home must pass a criminal background check.

"The money from the program helps me buy healthy food for the children. I try to teach the children about eating healthy." *G. - In-home child care provider participating in the meal reimbursement program*

Ohio experienced some of the worst drops in the nation in program participation by providers, children, and sponsors between federal fiscal years 1996 and 1998. This reduced the amount of federal funds brought into our state for this program by 25%, from \$20.9 million in 1996 to \$15.6 million in 1998.¹⁴ Part of this drop could be due to a means test developed in 1997 that created two meal reimbursement rates related to income, thereby reducing some benefits. However, during this same time period, several other states increased FCC meal participation and increased federal fund receipts by up to 27%.

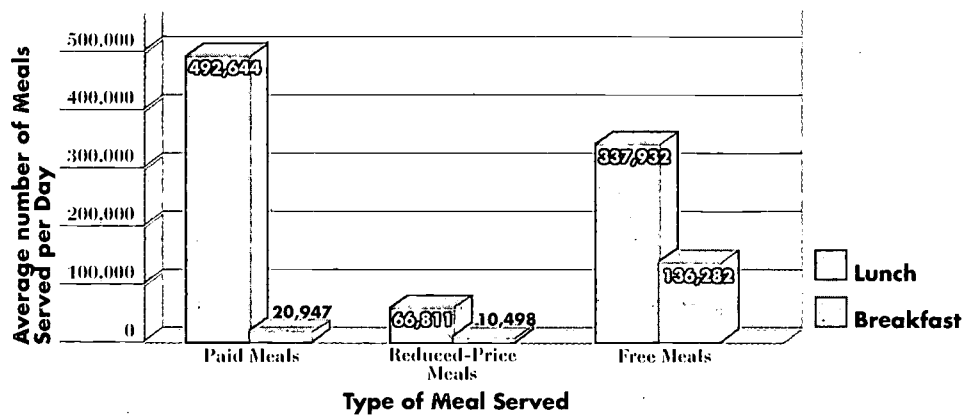


Ohio experienced the second largest drop among all 50 states and the District of Columbia in FCC meal program participation between FY1996 and 1998.¹⁵

School Meal Programs

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and The School Breakfast Program (SBP)	
The NSLP and SBP provide cash reimbursements as an entitlement to schools that provide nutritious meals to children. Public and private schools and residential child care agencies can participate in these programs. School districts apply to the Ohio Department of Education to be reimbursed for meals, and students file an income eligibility form with their schools to qualify for free or reduced-price meals	
<i>Funded by:</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture, some state money
<i>Administered in Ohio by:</i>	Ohio Department of Education Office of Child Nutrition Services
<i>Population Served:</i>	Children attending participating schools and agencies
<i>Who Qualifies:</i>	<u>Free Meals:</u> Children with family income at or below 130% of the federal poverty level
	<u>Reduced-Price Meals:</u> Children with family income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level
	<u>Full-Price Meals:</u> All children
<i>History of the NSLP:</i> The NSLP was created in 1946 as a congressional response to the serious nutritional deficiencies discovered in World War II draftees. Congress called the school lunch a "measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children."	
<i>History of the SBP:</i> The SBP was established by Congress in 1966 to be offered in areas where children had long bus rides to school or in areas where many children had working mothers. In 1975, Congress gave the SBP permanent authorization to assist schools with providing a nutritious meal to all children in the morning.	

**Ohio's NSLP and SBP Participation
for School Year 1998-1999**



*Source:
Ohio Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Services*



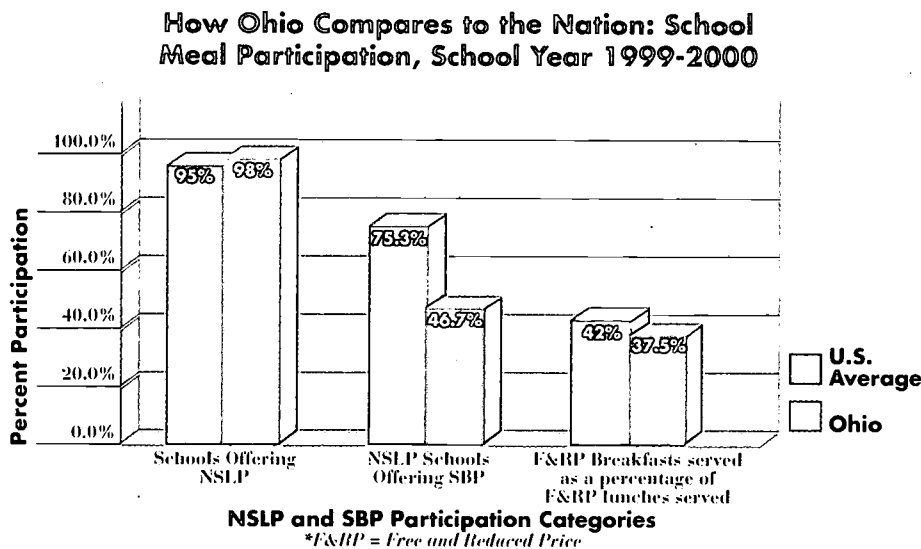
Together, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) provide over half of a child's recommended daily allowance of nutrients. For some of our state's poorest children, this is the only food they will eat in a given day. The NSLP is offered in almost every Ohio school, placing Ohio above the national average in NSLP participation; however, the SBP is offered in less than half of our schools, ranking Ohio 47th among states and the District of Columbia in SBP offerings.¹⁶

School breakfast ensures that all students have access to a nutritious meal before classes start, and starting the day on a full stomach is essential to high performance. School breakfast has been linked to:¹⁷

- Higher attendance rates and less tardiness;
- Increases in student attentiveness and academic performance;
- Fewer nurse visits and health-related complaints;
- Improved teacher and parent perceptions of the learning environment; and
- Decreases in behavioral problems, hyperactivity, and childhood depression.

Ohio requires schools to provide the School Breakfast Program if 50% or more of the students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches or if one-third of the students qualify for free lunch. Some states require all schools that offer the National School Lunch Program to also offer the School Breakfast Program. Other high-performing states require school breakfast to be offered in schools where 10%, 20%, or 25% (depending on the state) of the students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches.

Without school lunch and school breakfast, some Ohio children would not eat in a given day. Students in more than half of Ohio's school districts are not offered the School Breakfast Program—lunch may be their only meal.



Source:
Food Research and Action Center, *School Breakfast Scorecard: 2000*



One aim of establishing the School Breakfast Program in 1966 was to provide breakfast for children in areas with a large number of working mothers. Today, more mothers and fathers are in the labor force than ever before. In June 1998, for example, 59% of mothers with infants and 73% of mothers with children over one year old were in the work force.¹⁵ This is up dramatically from 20 years ago, and with the welfare to work movement in our nation, this trend is prevalent among families of all income levels. The School Breakfast Program assures children access to a nutritious meal before their day of learning begins.

The National School Lunch Program brought in nearly **\$150 million of federal funds** during the 1998-1999 federal fiscal year. The School Breakfast Program brought in nearly **\$30.6 million of federal funds** during the same year.

If Ohio boosted the number of children receiving free and reduced-price breakfasts to 55 out of every 100 students receiving free and reduced-price lunch (instead of the current 37.5 per 100), we would serve **79,279 more children** and we would draw down an **additional 13 million federal dollars**, which would increase the federal investment in Ohio's SBP by over 40%.

Ohio does score highly in one area of School Breakfast—state effort. Ohio invests \$2.5 million per year to help rural schools start up School Breakfast Programs and to supplement federal reimbursements for meals served in low-income districts. Ohio also established the SBP mandate discussed earlier to ensure that students in the lowest-income schools have access to school breakfast. Schools under this mandate may apply for a waiver. Ohio also has a number of schools implementing a USDA provision that allows all students to eat at no charge.

Provision 2

There is a stigma associated with free and reduced-price school meals, especially among middle and high-school students. The USDA allows schools to offer the national school lunch and breakfast programs at no charge to every student under a provision numbered 2. This provision has the potential to greatly reduce the stigma associated with free and reduced-price school meals, and it encourages more students to eat. Although any school can implement this program, due to federal reimbursement standards, it particularly benefits schools that have a large percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Ohio ranks 47th in offering the School Breakfast Program, nationally.¹⁶



The Benefits of Provision 2:

- Reduced paperwork and administrative cost savings – collecting eligibility forms and counting meals served is simplified under this provision.
- All children eat for free, which reduces stigma and increases participation.
- Schools can still make profits, sometimes higher than under the current method by increasing participation and increasing federal reimbursements.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	
The SFSP provides meal reimbursements to sponsors serving nutritious meals to children when school is out and they don't have access to school meals.	
<i>Funded by:</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
<i>Administered in Ohio by:</i>	Ohio Department of Education Office of Child Nutrition Services
<i>Who can sponsor SFSP:</i>	Schools, public or private non-profit agencies, residential camps, government agencies, public or private non-profit colleges or universities with National Youth Sports Program activities.
<i>How to qualify as a site:</i>	<p><u>Enrolled Site:</u> A site where 50% or more of the enrolled children can be documented as eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.</p> <p><u>Open Site:</u> A site located in an area where 50% or more of the children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals or area household income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty level.</p>
<i>History:</i> The SFSP began in 1968 when legislation established the Special Food Service Program in response to growing year-round child nutrition needs for low-income families. Later, the Special Food Service Program split to become the Child and Adult Care Food Program, serving children in child care and after-school settings, and the Summer Food Service Program.	

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides meals to children in qualifying areas during the months when school is not in session. SFSP sites can be located at schools, parks, playgrounds, churches, community centers, or other places children congregate during summer months.

"The best thing about this program is it keeps me out of trouble. My mama was worried that I would get in trouble in the summer like my older brother did when he was 14. She got me in this program and I did not want to come here, but now I do like to be here—I'm glad I'm here and safe. Around my house, people shoot people and stuff. Here you can talk about that stuff and people understand why you worry." *John - 14*





The SFSP is effectively targeted to low-income children—in 1999, it served more low-income children per sponsor than any other child nutrition program discussed in this report. However, it only reached 4.3% of Ohio's eligible children during this same year. Thousands more Ohio children could be served by expanding the Summer Food Service Program.

Ohio had 110 Summer Food Service Program sponsors in 1999 that operated 902 sites and served an average of 46 children per site per day. This program brought more than **4 million dollars of federal funds** into Ohio during the summer of 1999. Ohio would have to double its program participation in order to meet the national average for the percentage of eligible children served under SFSP.

If Ohio increased its number of Summer Food Service Program sites or sponsors:¹¹

- One more site per sponsor = 5,022 more Ohio children fed per day = **489 thousand more federal dollars** per year.
- One more sponsor in each county, operating two sites each = 8,035 more Ohio children fed per day = **782 thousand more federal dollars** per year.

Programs Working to Feed Ohio's Families

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	
WIC is a preventive nutrition program that provides nutritious food, nutrition education and access to health care.	
<i>Funded by:</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
<i>Administered in Ohio by:</i>	Ohio Department of Health
<i>Population Served:</i>	Pregnant and breast-feeding women, new mothers, infants, and children through age four.
<i>Qualification Conditions:</i>	Participants must earn less than 185% of the poverty level and be at medical or nutritional risk as certified by a health professional.
<i>History:</i> WIC was established as a pilot program by Congress in 1972 and authorized as a national program in 1974. WIC is not an entitlement program.	

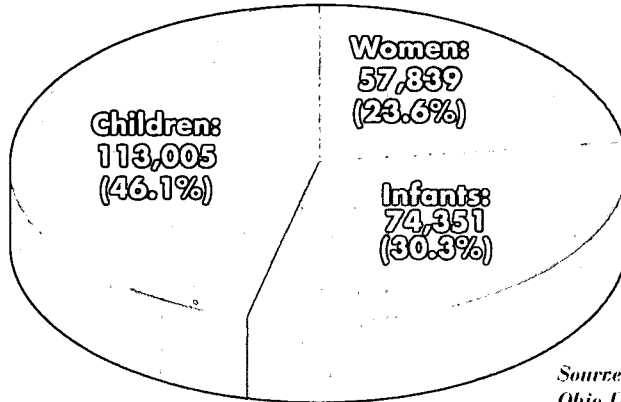
"Sometimes what I like best is breakfast and lunch all you can eat, especially when we don't have any more food at home."

Ariella - 11





**Monthly Average of Ohio's WIC Program
Breakdown for Federal Fiscal Year 2000**



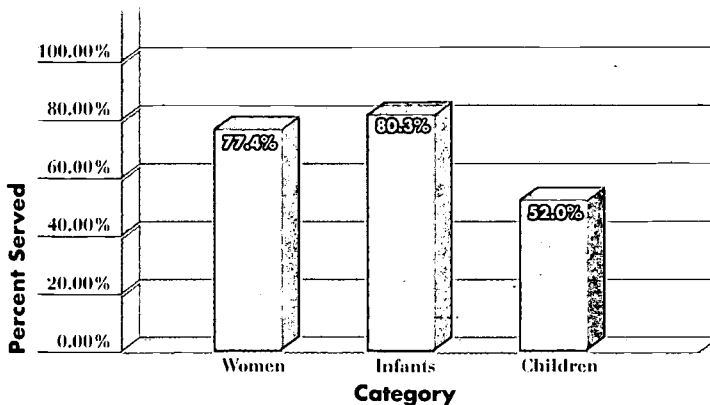
Source:
Ohio Department of Health

The infant mortality rate is closely linked to the quality and quantity of the mother's food intake. Pregnant women who are undernourished are also more likely to have low-birthweight babies, which are more likely to suffer developmental delays and have behavioral and learning problems later in life.¹⁹ WIC helps improve the diet of pregnant women, new mothers, and children through age four. This program is proven to be effective:²⁰

- WIC children are **better immunized** and more likely to have a **regular source of health care** than their non-WIC peers.
- Children in WIC have **higher vocabulary scores**.
- WIC participation **improves the length of pregnancy and birth weight** among newborns.
- Infants whose mothers receive WIC during pregnancy have **increased brain growth**.
- WIC produces **large Medicaid savings**.

Ohio's WIC program serves 79% of all potentially eligible women and infants but only about half of potentially eligible children.

Percentage of Potentially Eligible Women, Infants, and Children Served by Ohio's WIC Program in Federal Fiscal Year 2000

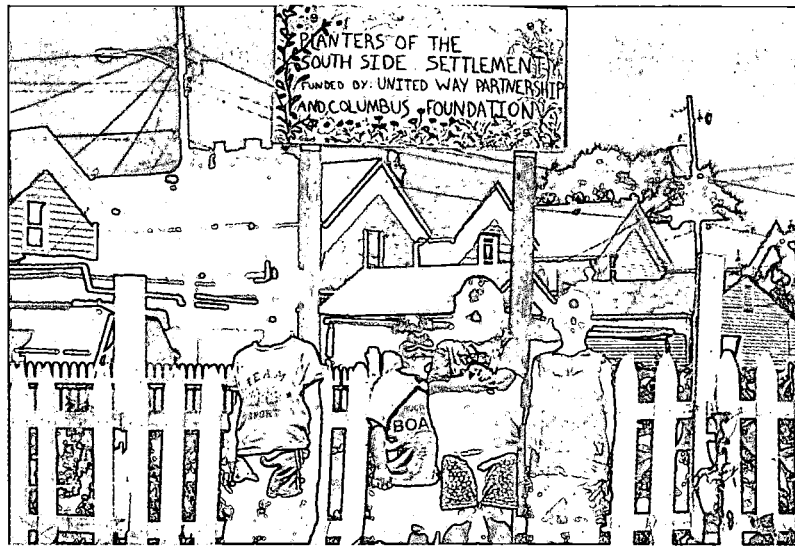


Source:
Ohio Department of Health



WIC is different from other nutrition programs in two ways. One is that it is promoted as a health program in medical offices and hospitals around the state, making its availability known to nearly every pregnant woman and newborn. The second difference is that WIC is not an entitlement program. There is a set level of funding for WIC so not everyone who meets the eligibility requirements is guaranteed benefits. This has not been a problem in Ohio — currently, the Ohio Department of Health is serving every eligible person who has asked to receive WIC services. WIC brought over **\$170 million of federal funds** into Ohio in FY2000, which includes \$46 million in infant formula rebates.

WIC reaches those who need it most: Nationally, two-thirds of WIC participants live at or below the poverty line.²¹



WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP)

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is a joint state and federal nutrition program that increases fruit and vegetable consumption among WIC participants and also helps small Ohio farmers by increasing awareness of farmers' markets. This program provides WIC participants with six \$3 coupons redeemable at local, authorized farmers' markets during farmers' market season (June 1 – October 31).

In Federal Fiscal Year 2000, 306 farmers, 58 markets, and 108 farmstands located in 32 counties participated in the program. These participants served 26,910 WIC recipients. The Ohio WIC FMNP brought in **329,446 federal dollars** in FY2000, which was supplemented with 234,942 state dollars.²² Nearly 86 percent of all funds was spent on food benefits, which is money that ultimately ends up in the local communities through the purchases made at farmers' markets.



The Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp Program (FSP)	
The FSP provides monthly electronic benefits to low-income families. These benefits can only be used to buy approved food products at USDA authorized stores. The FSP is an income support program.	
<i>Funded by:</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture pays 100% of benefits and 50% of administrative costs; Ohio pays 50% of the administrative costs
<i>Administered in Ohio by:</i>	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
<i>Who Qualifies:</i>	Households with net income at or below the federal poverty level and gross income at or below 130% of the federal poverty level. Certain resource requirements and other restrictions apply unless the person is categorically eligible or a recipient of SSI or TANF.
<i>History:</i> The FSP began as a limited program in 1939, was cancelled in 1943, revived as a pilot program in 1961 and extended nationwide in 1974. The current program structure was implemented in 1977 with a goal of alleviating hunger and malnutrition by permitting low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet through socially-acceptable channels of trade. The Welfare Reform Act of 1996 eliminated benefits for some legal immigrants and imposed strict time limits on benefits for unemployed, able-bodied adults without dependents. Recent legislation has restored benefits to some legal immigrants and has given states options to make the program more accessible to working families.	

The Food Stamp Program has the largest potential benefit of any federal nutrition program, but it is also the most difficult to apply for and maintain. Households must have net²³ incomes below the poverty level to qualify for food stamps. In addition, they generally cannot have countable resources exceeding \$2,000 unless one member of the household is age 60 or over, in which case they can have up to \$3,000 in countable resources. Categorically eligible households are not subject to the net or gross income test, and the resources of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients are not counted.

By USDA standards, a low-income household is expected to spend 30% of its net income on food. Therefore, food stamp benefits only amount to the difference between the maximum benefit available and 30% of the household's net income. A four-person household with net income at the poverty level, for example, would qualify for about \$7.70 in food stamps per month, which would be rounded up to the \$10 minimum allotment. The household would be expected to spend \$424 of their earned income on food each month.



Food Stamp Caseload Trends State Fiscal Year 1996-2000					
	SFY 1996	SFY 1997	SFY 1998	SFY 1999	SFY 2000
Households Receiving Food Stamp Benefits	470,538	07,899	342,185	300,538	280,458
Persons Receiving Food Stamp Benefits	1,072,173	916,199	763,662	656,324	611,615
Total Benefits Issued	\$966,052,806	\$796,184,403	\$648,238,700	\$556,570,918	\$524,016,637
Average Monthly Benefit Per Person	\$75.09	\$72.42	\$70.74	\$70.67	\$71.40

Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Ohio experienced one of the largest drops in food stamp participation in the nation from May 1996 to May 2000, with case-loads declining 40.4%.³¹

Food Stamps and Welfare Reform

Studies estimate that about two-thirds of households leaving welfare are still eligible for food stamps. Of these eligible households, only half continue to receive benefits. The Urban Institute's 1997 National Survey of America's Families found that households who left welfare were more likely to leave food stamps than families who were never on welfare during the study period. For example, 53% of people with no earned income who left welfare also left food stamps, while only 20% of their non-welfare peers left food stamps between 1995 and 1997.²⁴

These dramatic drops in food stamp participation do not necessarily indicate a move towards food security. The Urban Institute's study found that families who left food stamps had concerns about food affordability just as readily as those who remained on food stamps.²⁵ Perhaps children have the most to lose from households leaving the Food Stamp Program prematurely—children represented 65.5% of the decline in the national food stamp caseload from 1998 to 1999.

Former food stamp recipients in households with children reported "**administrative problems or hassles**" as the second-most common reason for leaving food stamps in the 1997 National Survey of America's Families.²⁶

This reason was cited second only to "increased earnings or a new job." Administrative problems was cited even more frequently by households that had never received welfare than by those who had received cash assistance in the survey period.



Characteristics of Food Stamp Households in the U.S.:²⁷

- Over 80% of food stamp benefits go to households with children.
- 90% of food stamp households have incomes below the poverty line.
- 26.5% of FSP households contain a disabled person. 57.2% of these individuals live alone.
- While the percentage of households with children is decreasing, both the percentage of households with elderly and the percentage of households with disabled persons utilizing the Program is increasing. These latter groups typically have easier work and/or resource requirements.

Food Stamps Go to Those Who Need Them Most in Ohio:²⁸

- The average monthly gross income of FSP recipient households is \$619 (below the poverty level for any size household) and the average monthly net income is \$369.
- The average countable assets equals \$148 per household.
- The average FSP household size is 2.2 persons.
- The average monthly benefit is \$132 per household.

Why Don't Eligible People Participate in the Food Stamp Program?

Research suggests that about one-third of eligible households do not participate in the Food Stamp Program. This number is even more severe for working families and the elderly. The USDA studied existing research to understand why eligible households are not participating in the Food Stamp Program. They found five consistent reasons:²⁹

1. **Lack of Information.** People do not think they are eligible, have never heard of the Program, or do not know how to apply.
2. **Perceived lack of need.** People think they can get by without food stamps or that others need them more than they need them. Some people don't understand that food stamps are a family stability support available to everyone who qualifies.
3. **Expected benefits are too low.**
4. **Program administration reasons.** This includes concerns about the process being time-consuming, complicated, and a hassle.
5. **Stigma or other psychological reasons.**

"I am thankful for food stamps, but sometimes they are hard to use. One time I had to leave the store without my groceries because the card showed I didn't have any money, but that was wrong—I did have money in the account. I was later told it was a computer glitch. I then had to go back to the store by bus to get my food." Betty – 64-year-old with diabetes, relies on her cane to get around



In Ohio, working families are required to re-certify their food stamp benefits every three months. Although local departments offer some evening and weekend hours and appointments, this re-certification typically involves a face-to-face interview with a county Department of Job and Family Services worker during regular business hours. This is a particular challenge for people in a low-wage job with no benefits or time off and for people who face transportation barriers.

Challenges for the Ohio Working Family Trying to Receive Food Stamps:

- 3-month, face-to-face, re-certification mandates.
- Lengthy and time-consuming application process. A 1996 USDA survey of food stamp recipients found that the average applicant spends five hours applying for food stamps and two to three hours applying for re-certification.³⁰
- Transportation issues and taking time off work without pay, sometimes endangering employment, are concerns for working families trying to access food stamps.



The USDA allows Ohio to:

- Grant longer certification periods;
- Require fewer office visits, and
- Require fewer reports of income and other circumstances.

FSP Myths

Myth: *The Food Stamp Program is full of fraud and abuse.*

The research says . . . Three-and-one-half cents of each benefit dollar issued is trafficked in the Food Stamp Program.³² This number has decreased since 1993, and might decrease even farther with the full implementation of the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system. Since the EBT card carries a participant's entire month's benefits and receives additional dollars each month, it cannot be bartered as easily as paper coupons. Also, the card knows what items in the grocery store are permissible under the FSP—it does not allow payment for non-FSP items.

Myth: *People using food stamps make poor nutrition choices.*

The research says . . . Participation in the Food Stamp Program increases the nutritional value of a low-income household's home food supply by 20 to 40 percent.³³



New Legislation

The FY2001 Agriculture Appropriations Conference Report made dollars available for the USDA to fund food stamp outreach activities and it incorporated two provisions from the Hunger Relief Act (HRA). The adopted HRA provisions:

1. *Allow states to increase the vehicle resource limit.* This limit is currently one of the most prevalent FSP barriers for working families requiring reliable transportation.
2. *Increase the maximum shelter expense deduction,* which can increase benefits for families living in areas with high housing costs.

Emergency Food

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	
TEFAP provides low-income Americans with free, healthful foods. TEFAP provides commodity foods to state agencies for distribution through local agencies and emergency food networks, primarily food banks.	
<i>Funded by:</i>	U.S. Department of Agriculture
<i>Administered in Ohio by:</i>	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
<i>Who Qualifies:</i>	Low-income households and local emergency food organizations.
<i>History:</i> TEFAP was first created to distribute surplus commodity foods as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program in 1981. The 1988 Hunger Prevention Act required the USDA to buy additional commodities for low-income households and local emergency food organizations. The program was renamed The Emergency Food Assistance Program in 1990.	

The demand on emergency food providers is rising. America's Second Harvest—a national hunger relief organization networking local food banks and food rescue programs—reported that their food distribution increased nearly 50% last year to 1.4 billion pounds of food nationwide. This additional food was still not enough to meet the ever-increasing demand at their affiliate food banks.³⁴ This increase is at a time when many emergency food providers are experiencing decreases in food donations and volunteer staff.



The Emergency Food Assistance Program Trends			
Federal Fiscal Year	Pounds Received	Value of Product	Annual Participation
1996	9.4 million	\$4.7 million	2.4 million
1997	14.0 m	\$6.8 m	2.6 m
1998	13.6 m	\$8.4 m	2.8 m
1999	15.6 m	\$9.3 m	2.8 m
2000	13.9 m	\$6.9 m	2.2 m

Grandparents

Raising

Grandkids:

"I go to the pantry and they can give me some food that I should eat, but I can't afford too many fruits and vegetables on \$ 47 in food stamps. I take care of my 14-year-old grand-daughter and she likes to eat! But I can't get food stamps for her."

Annie – older adult with diabetes

The Southeastern Ohio Regional Food Center conducted a survey of clients utilizing the emergency food network in nine Southeastern Ohio counties. They found the following to be true of their sample:³⁵

Demographics:

- 55% of households served were families with children
- 17% of households served included a senior citizen
- 66% of all households served included a disabled member

Income:

- More than 79% of households earned less than the federal poverty level for a family of three.

Food Assistance Usage:

- More than half of the emergency food clients were receiving food stamps but were still having problems affording enough food.
- Seniors visited food pantries more often than other groups, but were also less likely to be receiving food stamps than any group.

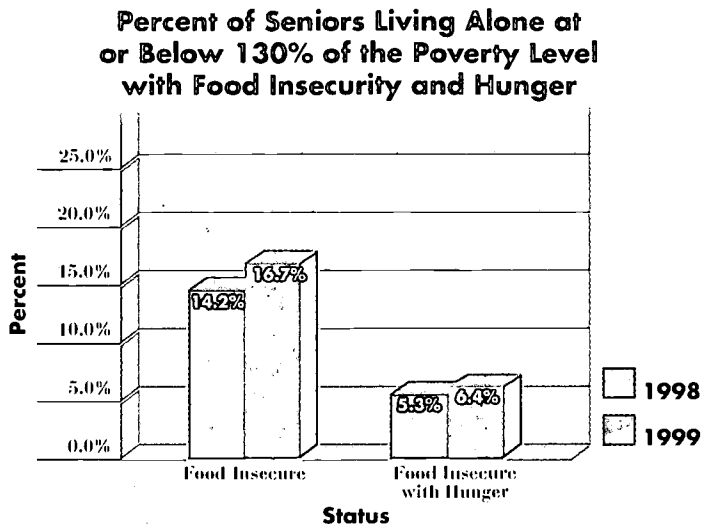


Programs Working to Feed Ohio's Older Adults (age 60+)

Between 1998 and 1999, food security stayed the same or improved for all older adult categories except older adults living alone with earnings below 130% of the poverty line. This low-income group of people over age 60 experienced a 20.8% jump in food insecurity and a 17.6% increase in hunger between 1998 and 1999.³⁶ This is the largest percentage increase of food insecurity or hunger of any low-income household composition category



reported on by the USDA. In July 1998, adults age 65 and over comprised 13.4% of Ohio's population. This population is steadily growing throughout the state and the nation.



Source:
USDA, *Household Food Security in the United States, 1999*

Participation in Food Stamps

Historically, seniors have maintained low participation in the Food Stamp Program. Part of the reason for non-participation is that expected benefits are small, and there is a reluctance to disclose the personal information required to obtain food stamp benefits. While 20% of households participating in food stamps contain an elderly person, these households receive only 7.6% of the total benefits issued, according to the USDA.

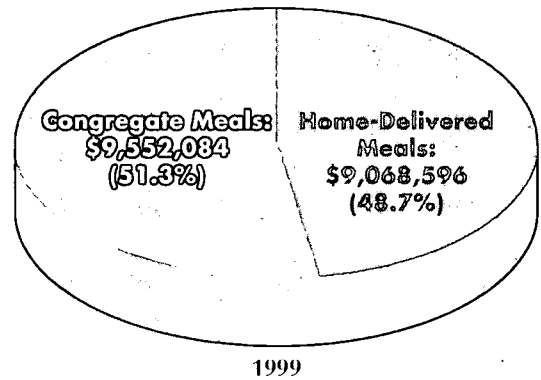
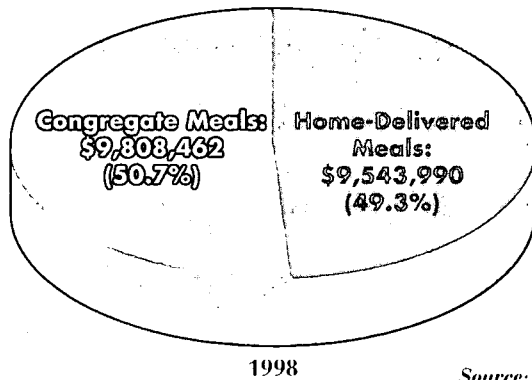
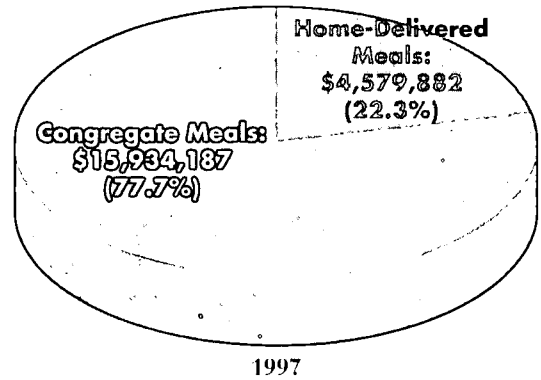
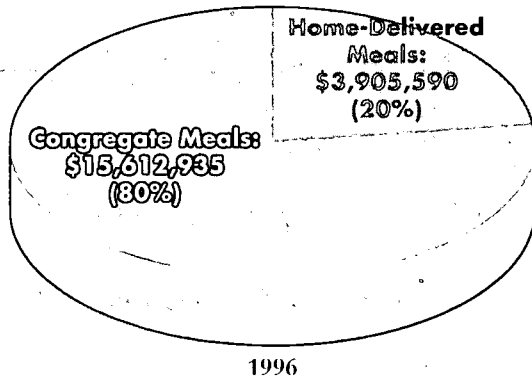
In the Southeastern Ohio Regional Food Center study, only 37% of seniors reported receiving food stamps, while the overall average of food stamp usage among emergency food clients was 52%.

Participation in Senior Meal Programs

Ohio offers nutrition services to older adults through funding from the Older Americans Act, PASSPORT, the USDA, the Senior Community Services Block Grant, local levies, and participant contributions. Older Americans Act services are available to all Americans 60 years of age or older. Service priority is given to frail, homebound, or isolated individuals. PASSPORT services are available to persons 60 years or older who, without in-home and community based services, are at risk for nursing home placement. Older Americans Act meal program participants are not required to declare their income to be eligible for services; however, in 1998, approximately 80% of clients who disclosed their incomes had incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.³⁷



Federal Funding Trends for Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals Provided Through the Older Americans Act in Ohio, 1996 to 1999



Source: Ohio Department of Aging

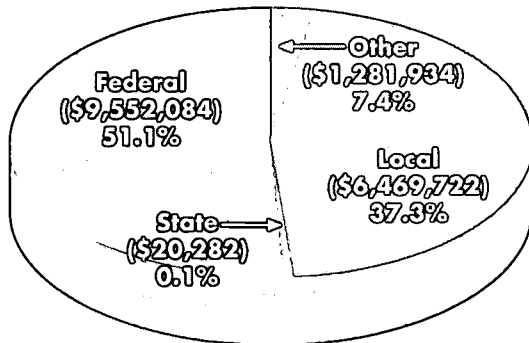
Federal funds supporting the Older Americans Act have remained stagnant over the past six years. The Older Americans Act does, however, allow states to transfer federal funds from the congregate meal program to the home-delivered meal program when necessary. In Ohio, local Area Agencies on Aging submit plans to the Ohio Department of Aging for allocating the federal funds based upon their area's particular needs. The state has responded to the growing need for home-delivered meals by shifting federal funds from congregate meals to home-delivered meals and supplementing those funds with state dollars. In 1998, 168 nutrition providers served meals from 317 sites. One million federal dollars were also spent on nutrition education and screening for older adults in Ohio.





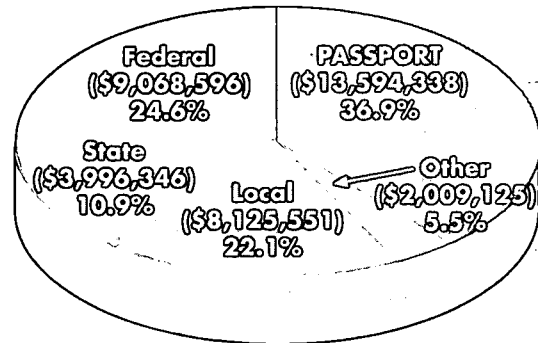
Funding for Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals in 1999

Total Funding: \$17.3 million



1999 Congregate Meals

Total Funding: \$36.8 million



1999 Home-Delivered Meals

Source:
Ohio Department of Aging

* all funding except PASSPORT is under the Older American's Act - Title III

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) works to improve the health of low-income seniors age 60 and over and women, infants, and children similar to those served by the WIC program but who are not receiving WIC. In Ohio, this program is administered through the Department of Job and Family Services and currently serves 1,475 seniors and 25 five-year-old children. CSFP provides nutritious USDA commodity foods to supplement the diets of these older adults and children. Although CSFP food packages do not provide a complete diet to these populations, they are a good source of nutrients typically lacking in the diets of the elderly and young children.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2000 (the CSFP's first year in Ohio), the program distributed **240,000 pounds of food valued at \$160,000** to Ohio's older adults and children. This program also brought in **66,684 federal dollars** to cover administrative costs. There is no state money in the CSFP.



STATE NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Although federal nutrition programs provide the largest benefits to low-income Ohioans in need of food, there are also several state-funded programs providing food to hungry Ohioans.

Adult Emergency Assistance Program

The Adult Emergency Assistance Program provides funding for rent, utilities, food, medical expenses, clothing, and other basic needs to single adults and childless couples with incomes less than 40% of the poverty level. (That's an



income of \$3,340 per year for a single person or \$4,500 per year for a couple.) The program was recently expanded to include adults over age 65 receiving Supplemental Security Income. This new category accounted for 2.8% of participants in State Fiscal Year 2000. Of the \$4 million spent on applicants in FY 2000, 4 percent was spent on food.³⁸

Ohio Agricultural Surplus Production Alliance

The Production Alliance is administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and is operated by the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks. The program works to end waste and reach more hungry Ohioans by distributing agricultural surplus products to Ohio food banks. This program is funded at \$2 million for State Fiscal Year 2000-2001.

Ohio Food Purchase Program

The Ohio Food Purchase Program is a state-funded program that provides money for the purchase, transportation, storage and distribution of food to the emergency food network. The Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks manages this program, which is funded at \$3 million for State Fiscal Year 2000-2001.

SUMMARY

As documented in this report, Ohio is utilizing state and federal funds to help feed Ohio's children, families, and seniors. But we could be feeding significantly more children and adults through nutrition programs. Millions of federal dollars sit in Washington D.C. unused every year while, at this same time, nearly one million Ohio children and adults face hunger or the risk of hunger.

As we enter a new decade and bid farewell to old welfare laws, we shift our focus to working families and how we can help them succeed in their transition to self-sufficiency. Studies show that families leaving welfare want to be self-sufficient and often report being better off after leaving cash assistance.³⁹ These families need to be assured access to nutritious food at all times during this transition. Nutrition programs work to ensure that no child or adult has to skip meals in Ohio because their heating bill has risen or because their rent is coming due.

All of the nutrition programs discussed in this report serve two purposes for Ohio's working families. First, the programs supplement a family's low income. This helps ensure that working families can afford all the necessities required to live safely and to hold a job. Second, since benefits must be used on food, these programs help families live healthier, more active lives. Healthy and complete diets allow adults to maintain high performance and attendance at work and they allow children to perform better in school.

When implemented to their fullest capacity, these programs have the potential to draw down millions of additional federal dollars, to feed thousands more children and adults, and to **break Ohio's cycle of hunger.**

APPENDIX

Federal Poverty Guidelines

Federal Fiscal Year 2000 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and Washington D.C. (amounts are higher in Alaska and Hawaii)

<i>Size of Family Unit</i>	<i>Poverty Line</i>
1	\$ 8,350
2	\$11,250
3	\$14,150
4	\$17,050
5	\$19,950
6	\$22,850
7	\$25,750
8	\$28,650
each additional person	+\$ 2,900

SOURCE: Federal Register, Vol. 65, No. 31, February 15, 2000, pp. 7555-7557

Acronyms	
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CSFP	Commodity Supplemental Food Program
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer
FCC	Family Child Care
FORK	Food Outreach and Research for Kids Act
FSP	Food Stamp Program
FY	Fiscal Year
HRA	Hunger Relief Act
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
ODA	Ohio Department of Aging
ODE	Ohio Department of Education
ODH	Ohio Department of Health
ODJFS	Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
PASSPORT	Pre-Admission Screening System Providing Options and Resources Today
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TEFAP	The Emergency Food Assistance Program
USDA	United State Department of Agriculture
WIC	Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

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National Organizations

America's Second Harvest
<http://www.secondharvest.org>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
<http://www.cbpp.org>

Food Research and Action Center
<http://www.frac.org>

The Urban Institute
<http://www.urbaninstitute.org>

U.S. Census Bureau
<http://www.census.gov>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns>



Ohio Hunger Task Force

RECOMMENDATION II – Ohio should fully utilize available federal funds to expand child nutrition programs by investing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Maintenance of Effort dollars to:

- 1. Reduce the financial risk to child nutrition program providers.**
- 2. Increase awareness of child nutrition programs serving low-income families.**

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State Organizations

Ohio Department of Aging
<http://www.state.oh.us/age>

Ohio Department of
Development
<http://www.odod.state.oh.us>

Ohio Department of Education
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us>

Ohio Department of Health
<http://www.odh.state.oh.us>

Ohio Department of Job and
Family Services
<http://www.state.oh.us/odjfs>

Ohio Hunger Task Force

- RECOMMENDATION 1 - Ohio should take immediate steps to increase participation in the food stamp program by:**
- 1. Promptly adopting the new USDA regulations that allow semi-annual reporting.**
 - 2. Utilizing currently available federal food stamp outreach funds to educate and enroll eligible families.**

Ohio Hunger Task Force

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Written By: Shara E. Martin

Executive Director: William J. Dolan
Associate Director: Dianne A. Radigan, M.S., R.D., L.D.
Public Education Director: Marilyn Sesler
Public Policy Manager: Shara Martin

Ohio Hunger Task Force
181 East Livingston Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-341-7700
1-800-227-OHIO
fax: 614-341-7701
email: 4kids@ohhf.org
www.ohhf.org

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Ray Miller
Ohio House of Representatives

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Barden Foods Corporation

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J.J.B. Hilliard, W.L. Lyons

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The Ohio State University
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Olivia W. Thomas, MD
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Terry P. Weisenstein
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