

# D.C. Hunger Solutions

*fighting hunger in the nation's capital*



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### **While Federal Nutrition Programs Reach Many, Thousands More People And Federal Dollars Are Left Behind**

April 21, 2004

(Washington, D.C.) April 21, 2004– D.C. Hunger Solutions called on the District of Columbia agencies and community-based organizations today to better maximize the use of federal nutrition programs like school breakfast, child care food programs, and summer food programs. This call comes in connection with a new report released today by the Food Research and Action Center.



The divide between affluent Americans and those low-income adults and children worrying about where their next meal will come from is serious and worsening. This trend should spur federal and state policymakers to take aggressive steps to assure greater use of key federal nutrition investments, according to the Food Research and Action Center's new report, *State of the States: A Profile of Food and Nutrition Programs Across the Nation*.

"If we take better advantage of these nutrition programs, most of which are 100% federally funded, we could reverse the high rates of hunger and food insecurity in the District, as well as fight childhood obesity and assure that D.C.'s children enter school each day prepared to learn," said Kimberly Perry, Director of D.C. Hunger Solutions, a project of the Food Research and Action Center.

Updated with the latest data derived from official government sources for federal Fiscal Year 2003 and school year 2002-2003, *State of the States* provides a comprehensive state-by-state snapshot of the extent of hunger, and of each state's and the District of Columbia's use of federal nutrition resources to address needs. The federal nutrition programs covered are: Food Stamps, School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Food, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), WIC, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

Even though the District's geographic compactness should make these programs easier to operate than in the 50 states, and thus the District's use of them should be way above average, the District's reach still leaves many behind. Findings include:

Only 42 students eat school breakfast for every 100 students who eat school lunch, slightly below the national average. If the District performed as well as the best performing states, Oregon, Mississippi, and West Virginia - where 55 students eat breakfast for every 100 who eat lunch - an additional 5,415 children would eat a healthy morning meal and an additional \$1,114,987 in federal reimbursement would flow back into the District's economy.

There have been dramatic decreases in the District's Child and Adult Care Food Program, which experienced a 19.3% drop in participation over the last 10 years. Nationally participation is up 9%.

After feeding 24,000 children in the summer of 2001, the District only fed 14,000 children in the summer of 2002, and then tried to pick up the pieces in 2003 but, only fed 19,000. Although participation has dropped significantly in the summer food program within the District and there remains much public scrutiny for the way the City administers the program, participation across the country is also very low, therefore the District held the number 5 spot, naturally.

68-86% of the eligible population for the Food Stamp Program is participating and numbers increased considerably over the last year, but growth should continue due to the legal immigrant benefit restorations as a result of the 2002 Farm Bill, in which many legal immigrant children and adults may now be eligible.

This report should serve as a wake-up call to District leaders in both the public and private sectors. There has to be collaborative work to maximize the use of these important federal anti-hunger programs. We need to accelerate initiatives like the Universal School Breakfast Program, implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Child Nutrition, and outreach activities to expand the food program in child care settings," said Perry.

[Click here to download the State of the States 2004 report.](#)



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