

**Congressional Hunger Center/The UPS Foundation National Hunger Forum
March 31, 2004
The Keck Center of the National Academies
500 Fifth Street, NW · Washington, DC 20001
Agenda**

Continental Breakfast (8:00am to 8:45am)

Welcome, Group Introduction, and Opening Remarks (8:45am to 9:15am)

- The Honorable Jo Ann Emerson, Co-Chair, CHC Board of Directors
- The Honorable James P. McGovern, Co-Chair, CHC Board of Directors
- Evern Cooper, President, The UPS Foundation

Presentation: Hunger in America, A Solvable Problem: What Can Be Done? (9:15am to 10:00am)

- The Honorable Elizabeth Dole, US Senate (NC)
- Dan Glickman, Director, Institute of Politics, JFK School of Government, Harvard University
- Bill Purcell, Co-Chair, US Conference of Mayor's Task Force on Hunger and Homelessness

Open Discussion (10:00am to 10:30am)

Moderator: Robert Egger, CEO, DC Central Kitchen

Break (10:30am to 10:45am)

Panel: Hunger, Obesity and Health (10:45am to 11:30 am) *(see note)

Moderator: Linda Meyers, Staff Director, Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine, National Academies

Panelists: Lynn Parker, Director of Child Nutrition Programs and Nutrition Policy, Food Research and Action Center
Shiriki Kumanyika, Director, Graduate Program in Public Health, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Reactor: Deborah Frank, Director, The Grow Clinic, Boston Medical Center

Presentation: US Department of Agriculture and Other Administration Initiatives Addressing Hunger (11:30am to Noon)

Kate Coler, Deputy Under Secretary, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, USDA
Jeremy White, Associate Director for Outreach, White Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Lunch (12:00pm to 1:00pm) Keck Center Atrium

Review of Discussion Papers (1:00pm to 5:30pm)

- **Ending Hunger in America, the Advocacy Community Perspective (1:00pm to 2:00pm)**
Moderator, Doug O'Brien, Vice President of Public Policy, America's Second Harvest

Presenters: Jim Weill, Executive Director, Food Research and Action Center
Cecilia Munoz, Vice President for Research, Advocacy & Legislation, National Council of La Raza
Bob Forney, CEO, America's Second Harvest

Reactors: Eric Schockman, President, MAZON A Jewish Response to Hunger
Stacy Dean, Senior Policy Analyst, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

- **Ending Hunger in America, the Faith-Based/Religious Community Perspective (2:00pm to 2:45pm)**

Moderator, Keith Stern, Senior Legislative Assistant, Office of Representative James P. McGovern

Presenters: Kay Bengston, Chair, Food Policy Working Group, Lutheran Office Government Affairs, ELCA
Jean Fairfax, Author, **their daily bread**

Reactors: Gary Cook, Coordinator, Presbyterian Hunger Program
Bill Bolling, Executive Director, Atlanta Food Bank

- **Ending Hunger in America, the Role of State and Local Government (2:45pm to 3:30pm)**

Moderator, Ellen Vollinger, Legal/Food Stamp Director, Food Research and Action Center

Presenters: Sheri Steisel, Senior Committee Director Human Services, National Conference of State Legislatures
Felix Ortiz, Representative, New York General Assembly, Vice Chair, National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators

Reactors: Jerry Friedman, Executive Director, American Public Human Service Association
Joel Berg, Executive Director, NYC Coalition Against Hunger

Break (3:30 to 3:45)

- **Ending Hunger in America, Community Food Security and Regional Coalition Models (3:45pm to 4:30pm)**

Moderator, Theresa Connor-McMahan, Vice President Corporate Affairs, The Welfare to Work Partnership

Presenters: Mark Winne, Food and Society Fellow, Co-Founder, Community Food Security Coalition
Linda Stone, Executive Director, Children's Alliance

Reactors: Carlos Rodriquez, Senior Field Organizer, Children's Defense Fund
Bill Dolan, CEO, Children's Hunger Alliance

Open Discussion: Strategies to End Hunger (4:30pm to 5:15pm)

Facilitators: Ed Cooney, Executive Director, Congressional Hunger Center
Julie Paradis, Senior Washington Counsel, America's Second Harvest
Robert Egger, CEO, DC Central Kitchen

Closing Remarks (5:15pm to 5:30pm)

Evern Cooper, President, The UPS Foundation

*Note: Each panel and paper review will include a brief Q & A period.

Hunger Forum Discussion Papers:

Executive Summary

- **Hunger in America:** The Definitions, Scope, Causes, History and Status of the Problem of Hunger in the United States

Doug O'Brien, Halley Torres Aldeen, Stephanie Uchima, Eleanor Thompson, and Erinn Staley
America's Second Harvest—Public Policy & Research Department

Understanding and addressing hunger in the United States is complicated by the "hidden" nature of the problem and, until the food security scale was introduced recently, the absence of a way to quantify the problem. Hunger has probably always existed in America, but has emerged as a major social and public health problem only in the 20th Century. Thirty-four million Americans today may personally feel the pain of hunger, but there is a profound and long lasting impact on children—and on the future of our nation.

- **How Extensive is Childhood Obesity and What is Its Relationship to Hunger?**

Lynn Parker, **Food Research and Action Center**

Childhood obesity, increasing in the US among all groups, is of great concern because of its impact on current and future health. Factors include encouragement of sedentary habits and presence of very high calorie foods. While poor children (except non-Hispanic white adolescents) are not more likely to be obese than non-poor children, low-income families face added risks for obesity and other negative health and educational outcomes of food insecurity.

Hunger and obesity can coexist in the same household or individual. When food is scarce, families consume lower cost foods that provide more calories per dollar. Cyclical changes in food habits can contribute to obesity over time. The prevention of both obesity and food insecurity requires regular access to nutritionally adequate food that low-income families can afford. The federal nutrition programs play a dual role of fighting hunger and food insecurity and providing nutritious foods on a regular basis.

- **Ending Hunger in the United States:** The Role of the Federal Nutrition Programs, National Advocacy Groups and their Networks

Crystal Weedall FitzSimons, James D. Weill, and Lynn Parker, **Food Research and Action Center**

The federal nutrition programs--Food Stamp (FSP), National School Lunch, School Breakfast (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and WIC--in the aggregate provide over \$40 billion dollars to combat hunger each year. These programs substantially lessen the depth and breadth of hunger, but they could do much more since most reach only a fraction of those eligible. The FSP reaches three in five eligible people; SBP reaches two in five children who receive free or reduced-price school meals; and summer nutrition programs reach only one in five.

National anti-hunger advocacy groups and their networks play a crucial role in increasing the reach of the federal nutrition programs. They raise public awareness about hunger; conduct outreach and engage in social marketing; provide technical assistance, share best practices and develop partnerships; conduct administrative advocacy at the federal and state level; reduce local barriers; conduct research; and seek legislative improvements. In recent decades, anti-hunger groups have used these strategies, which have contributed greatly to doubling school breakfast participation in 15 years, quadrupling afterschool food participation over the last six years, doubling WIC over eight years, and increasing by one-third food stamp participation since July 2000. However, there is still more work to do.

➤ **Equality for Hungry Kids: The Importance Of Maintaining National, Uniform, Minimum Standards Of Eligibility And Nutrition For Child Nutrition Programs**

Ed Cooney, Executive Director, **Congressional Hunger Center**

Maintaining national, uniform, minimum standards of eligibility and nutrition in child nutrition programs is important to ensure that all children have access to healthy meals in schools, child care centers and family child care homes and WIC clinics. Parents, educators, elected officials and the general public that provides the funds for federal nutrition programs must have an assurance that children are receiving nutritionally adequate meals through these programs. Nutrition program advocates and all of the groups just mentioned must have “focused vigilance” on the protections and retention of such standards during times of “federal budget crises” and “government reform initiatives.”

Broad-based nutrition advocacy groups like the steering committee of the Child Nutrition Forum provide an essential watchdog and safety net mechanism for the protection of eligibility and nutrition standards and should be properly staffed and funded to continue their important work. Funding leadership development at the local, state, regional and national level in anti-hunger organizations is a necessary and important component of a strategy to combat childhood hunger and improve the nutrition and health status of the nation’s children.

➤ **Barriers That Prevent Low-Income People from Gaining Access to Food and Nutrition Programs**

Crystal Weedall FitzSimons, James. D. Weill, and Lynn Parker, **Food Research and Action Center**

The structure and scope of federal nutrition programs are not static. Congress occasionally changes eligibility criteria, benefit amounts, and ease of access; non-legislative changes often impact the programs as well. Common barriers limiting nutrition program participation include: lack of awareness that the programs exist or who is eligible; a perception of stigma applied to participation; benefit inadequacy that lessens the attractiveness of participation; and unnecessary administrative burdens and red tape that are onerous for program providers and recipients. In addition, the lack of sufficient numbers of intermediary sponsoring organizations substantially limits children’s access to summer food, school breakfast, and CACFP.

➤ **History of Commitment and Involvement of the Religious Community in Ending Hunger**

Kay A. Bengston, **Lutheran Office for Government Affairs**, ELCA, and Food Policy Working Group

The religious community has long both provided emergency food services and worked through education and policy to end hunger. Congregations and their social service agencies operate food pantries and soup kitchens, develop urban community gardens, distribute food during disasters, provide volunteers to food banks and Meals on Wheels, and join in "Souper Bowl Sunday" activities to gather food /funds for anti-hunger work.

Partnership with the government is essential for the faith community's anti-hunger work. Faith institutions access the federal child nutrition programs (CACFP, summer food, WIC, school meals), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. Some congregations conduct food stamp outreach.

Through the interdenominational coalition, the Food Policy Working Group (FPWG), the faith-based community educates policy makers and constituents about the steps necessary to end hunger in the United States. Increased resources are needed for the FPWG to better coordinate the faith-based groups' networks, identify successful community-based programs, conduct public education, and enhance collaboration with other partners.

➤ **Immigrant Access to Food Stamps and Nutrition Services: A Latino Perspective**

Marcella G. Urrutia, **National Council of La Raza**

The 2000 Census documented a significant growth in immigrant populations, in traditionally large immigrant population states as well as in many states in the southeast and west. Latinos, who are now the largest minority group in the US, are largely native born but often have foreign born family members. Immigrants have high labor force participation but disproportionately work in jobs with low wages and few benefits, which helps explain their high levels of poverty, hunger and food insecurity. Immigrant access to nutrition program resources was undercut by the 1996 welfare law ban on food stamp benefits for most non-citizens. A coalition of immigrant, anti-hunger, state government and other groups has helped secure two rounds of bipartisan restorations. Nonetheless, participation barriers include confusion, fear of impact on the individual's or family members' legal status, lack of interpretative services, and state budget cuts to services. Two promising strategies could offset barriers and improve access to food and nutrition services for poor immigrants: 1) community-based organization and lay health educator outreach; and 2) policymaker education.

➤ **The Charitable Food Assistance System: The Sector's Role in Ending Hunger in America**

Doug O'Brien, Errin Staley, Stephanie Uchima, Eleanor Thompson, and Halley Torres Aldeen, **America's Second Harvest**—Public Policy and Research Department

Since the early 1980s, the private charitable food assistance system has emerged as an important complement to the federal nutrition safety net. More than 23 million low-

income people, including nine million children, accessed food assistance from food banks, pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters in their communities in 2001. The growth and stability of the private sector emergency food assistance system has been aided by the expansion of public sector food donations through TEFAP. Utilizing more than one million volunteers in an estimated 50,000 local private charities throughout the nation, the emergency food assistance network has helped to reduce hunger in America. By further strengthening and interconnecting federal food assistance and the charitable sector, hunger and food insecurity in the United States can be eliminated.

➤ **Filling the Gap: Regional Anti-Hunger Advocacy in America**

Linda Stone, **Children's Alliance**

States have assumed a far greater role in fighting hunger since the 1970's "War on Poverty" and 1996 welfare law enactment. State-level efforts to bring hunger to the attention of the public and policy makers and insure best use of public and private resources have also increased in importance. Western and northeastern regional anti-hunger networks have demonstrated effectiveness in strengthening state-level public education and advocacy efforts, developing leadership to fight hunger, and communicating regional priorities to national organizations and policy makers. They have had concrete successes in expanding child nutrition programs, conducting effective program outreach, developing relationships with USDA and state agencies, and communicating through the media about the needs of hungry families. It is time to bring such organizing to additional regions, assist developing groups in defining their priorities, and link efforts through a national forum.

➤ **Community Food Security: Promoting Food Security and Building Healthy Food Systems**

Mark Winne, Food and Society Policy Fellow

Community food security (CFS) is a relatively new strategy that considers all factors within a region or community's food system that influence availability, cost, and quality of food to area households, particularly those in lower income communities. CFS entities have engaged groups, volunteers, government and non-government representatives, and lower income people in projects and activities to improve communities' capacity to meet their food needs: farmers' markets, federal food assistance program outreach, community gardens, youth food and agriculture programs, farmland preservation and farm viability projects, food system planning and food policy councils, nutrition education and health promotion strategies, transportation projects, farm-to-school projects, economic development activities, and awareness campaigns.

➤ **The Role of State Government in Ending Hunger**

Sheri Steisel, Ann Morse, **National Conference of State Legislatures**

State government is a key anti-hunger partner. State policymakers administer a range of nutrition assistance and feeding programs; state lawmakers appropriate funds for some

and often provide discretionary funds for food banks and pantries; and when necessary, states also have funded food stamp replacement programs, especially for legal immigrants who were prevented from accessing these programs under federal law. State elected officials, as community leaders, often engage the public, especially the private sector, to become part of hunger prevention efforts. State legislators offer innovative proposals, including for addressing childhood obesity. Through their national associations, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the American Public Human Services Association, state officials develop and foster good nutrition public policy for federal and state-level programs.

Additional resources are critical to fund national efforts to share state best practices, conduct research at the state-level, and support staff who can work directly with policymakers on the details of policy, funding and program changes. Policy and structural models that can effectively engage state policymakers with the goal of enhancing and improving policy development and leadership for the anti-hunger area: a Building Capacity project, modeled after NCSL's immigrant policy project; a national effort to improve program outreach, modeled after work with state policymaker's on the child health program (SCHIP); and/or funding for state-level pilot projects to improve program access.

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Executive Summary Prepared for Congressional Hunger Center by Ellen Vollinger, Food Research and Action Center, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009; 202-986-2200 x3016; evollinger@frac.org