



ADVOCACY ALERT



SEPTEMBER 2009
VOLUME 15 ISSUE 8

Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Hunger Task Force

Nutrition programs give kids a chance to succeed

Imagine a classroom at your neighborhood school. Children sit in their chairs as the teacher explains a math lesson or tells a story about the Oregon Trail. But nearly half of the students wear blindfolds, unable to see the teacher. They are frustrated, anxious, and unable to learn.

No caring parent or community member would let this happen, yet a similar situation happens every school day. Children sit in classrooms across Oregon unable to learn because they're hungry. Countless studies show

that hungry children are unable to concentrate or behave well in the classroom.

Oregon Food Bank and the Oregon Hunger Task Force fully support President Obama's commitment to end childhood hunger by 2015. A major part of that effort is the reauthorization of federal child nutrition programs like school meals, summer meals, and WIC. These important programs must be strengthened to efficiently provide nutritious foods to all eligible children.

Your voice can make a

difference. Congress is expected to take up child nutrition reauthorization in the next few months and anti-hunger advocates will play an important role in encouraging Oregon members of Congress to support these critical programs. Contact David Osborn at dos-born@oregonfoodbank.org or 503-282-0555 Ext. 267 to become part of the efforts to make sure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potentials. For more information visit <http://oregonhunger.org/panel-3.html>.

School meal applications help students, schools and communities

As families prepare for school this fall many are thinking about how they will pay for school meals. Families can apply for free and reduced-price school meals. These meals help students get the nutrition they need to grow and develop and takes some of the pressure off families' food budgets.

School meal applications also support schools and communities:

- The Summer Food Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program use data from applications to qualify summer food sites, child care providers, and after-school meal programs.
- They also help schools qualify for additional funding for things like better technology, and academic support programs.

Studies show that students participating in the Na-

tional School Lunch Program consume more vegetables and milk than students who do not participate. They also eat fewer snacks and sweetened drinks.

It is important to apply as soon as possible. October is the month that provides qualifying data for many meal programs.

We encourage all families to fill out and return

take five
(actions that take five minutes or less)

Message:
School meals ensure children get the nutrition they need to grow and develop and they help families stretch limited food dollars at home.

Many food and nutrition programs also rely on data gathered from school meal applications to qualify their feeding sites. October is the month that qualifies many programs – so help us get the word out in newsletters, Web sites and through one-on-one contact.

Action:
Take five minutes to contact family, friends, clients and other human service providers to encourage them to support families in applying for free and reduced-price meals at school.

A sample newsletter article is available by contacting Annie Kirschner at the Oregon Hunger Task Force (503) 595-5501 Ext. 304 or annie@oregonhunger.org.

their applications, even if they're not sure they qualify. Reminders in school, neighborhood, or church newsletters are very helpful.

Please see this month's "take five".



More children eligible for free school breakfasts this fall

Children from low-wage working families cannot always access school breakfasts because they fall into the reduced-price category that requires a co-payment for meals. These families have incomes falling within 130 percent - 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Currently, only 24 percent of eligible children in Oregon are eating the breakfast they qualify for – mainly because their families cannot afford the co-payment.

In June 2009, Oregon passed legislation eliminating the reduced-price category for school breakfasts (lunches still require a co-payment). State funding

will make up the difference. This means more children will be fed, helping to reduce childhood hunger, and low-income families will not have to struggle so hard to feed their children.

Washington state eliminated its reduced-price co-pay and saw an immediate 45 percent increase in the number of reduced-price students eating breakfast. This tells us these children needed a school breakfast but their families could not afford it. A similar increase in Oregon's participation rate could result in 16,478 low-income students eating a healthy breakfast every day.

Studies have shown the importance of children eating breakfast in the morning. School breakfast programs increase student attendance and students are better able to concentrate on what they are learning, enhancing overall student achievement.

For more information about Oregon's School Breakfast Program, contact Heidi Dupuis at the Oregon Department of Education at 503-947-5893 or go to [http://www.ode.state.or.us/news/announcements/announcement.aspx? =5053](http://www.ode.state.or.us/news/announcements/announcement.aspx?=5053)



Advocacy Alert is published jointly by Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon Hunger Task Force (OHTF).

OFB Advocacy Staff:
(503) 282-0555 [Portland area]
1-800-777-7427 [outside Portland]

Jon Stubenvoll X206
Jeff Kleen X204
Tammy VanderWoude X230
Stephanie Tama-Sweet X243
David Osborn X267
<http://www.oregonfoodbank.org>
advocacy@oregonfoodbank.org

OHTF Staff:
Patti Whitney-Wise
patti@oregonhunger.org
Nancy Weed
nancy@oregonhunger.org
Jessica Chanay
jessica@oregonhunger.org
Annie Kirschner
annie@oregonhunger.org
Rick Freed
rick@oregonhunger.org
<http://www.oregonhunger.org>
503-595-5501



Healthy Kids expands health coverage

Earlier this year the Oregon Legislature and the governor successfully expanded health care coverage for children in our state. This expansion, the Healthy Kids plan, is being rolled out in three phases through January 2010.

Today children in families with income up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) (\$40,792.50 for a family of four) can enroll.

In October coverage will extend to children in families up to 200 percent FPL (\$44,100 for a family of four).

Beginning January 2010 children in families between 200 and 300 percent FPL (\$44,100 to \$66,150 for a family of four) will be able to enroll in coverage with premium assistance and children in families above 300 percent FPL will be able to buy into the program at full cost.

No matter where your family fits in you can apply today. [Complete and submit an online application](#). Or call 1-877-314-5678 to have an application mailed to you or for information.

Take 5 success

Thank you to all the Advocacy Alert readers who participated in last month's take 5. Your efforts paid off. All four United States senators from Oregon and Washington have now signed on in support of S. 211, the Calling for 2-1-1 Act, which would invest in the 2-1-1 telephone information service.

Last year, more than 100,000 people turned to 211info, Oregon and southwest Washington's 2-1-1 hub, for free and easy access to referrals for food, shelter, health care, foreclosure assistance and much more. S. 211 would help millions across the nation, and right here at home, get connected to the answers they need most.

