



Feeding Ohio's Hungry

CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE OF OHIO FY 2010-11 BUDGET REQUEST

The Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF) has requested \$34 million over the 2010-2011 biennium to support continuation and expansion of a grant agreement for the purchase of food and grocery products, capacity building grants, and distribution of these products through the 12 foodbanks to agencies participating in the emergency food distribution program. This is a modest and humble request representing one dollar per person, per month, served by the emergency assistance network.

The partnership between OASHF and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has lasted more than a decade—working collaboratively and tirelessly to support the Ohio Food Purchase and Agricultural Clearance Programs (OFPACP), unique, statewide purchasing programs that allow for the purchasing of wholesome shelf-stable food and surplus agricultural commodities for pennies on the pound.

What we do

OASHF represents 12 foodbanks, which distribute food to nearly 3,000 member charities, including food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other food assistance organizations, located across Ohio in all 88 counties.

In State Fiscal Year 2008, OASHF distributed **more than 97.9 million pounds** of food and grocery items through the network, with more than 25.3 million pounds of this food being provided through OFPACP programs.

Who funding serves

More than 1.8 million Ohioans were served through food pantries from October 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008. Of those clients served, more than 232,000 were seniors, and nearly 705,000 were children. Many are employed but cannot make ends meet; one out of three households surveyed have at least one adult who is working. Additionally, more than half of those served are white, with just over four in 10 who are African Americans, and only three percent who are Hispanic.

How funding benefits poverty-stricken Ohio families

Under this proposal, we estimate that more than 2 million low-income Ohioans will receive nutritious food as a result of this funding; 94 percent of whom have incomes below the poverty level. In addition, more than 38 percent of the individuals served with this food will be children, and almost one-third will be low-income elderly or disabled persons.

The Need For Stable, Ongoing Funding

Now is not the time to reduce or eliminate funding that provides food assistance to Ohio families. Challenging economic times have led to increases in demand for emergency food assistance and decreases in funding and contributions from a range of sources. Food is a basic necessity that must be ensured for all Ohioans.

If Ohio does not address this critical need for food, evidence of the economic realities that face the hunger relief network will be clear. Some foodbanks and charities will reduce their hours and days of operation. Others will try to cut staff or salaries to make ends meet. Still others will close their doors altogether because they cannot survive.

But the most appalling evidence of all will be found in the households of Ohio's most vulnerable populations. Hunger, already on the rise in the state, will increase exponentially. There will be no means of feeding those who need it most. Those already in desperate situations will be faced with dire outcomes.

Expanding the state's investment in programs that have proven results, benefit hungry Ohioans of all ages and provide indirect benefits to farmers, local communities and taxpayers makes good sense and is a fiscally responsible choice to be included in the 2010-11 budget.

The Ohio Food Purchase Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP) is the example of how state funding benefits Ohioans. This statewide effort directs shelf stable and protein items, and Ohio's surplus agricultural products through the network of foodbanks to ensure that Ohio's families have a source of highly nutritious food. During State Fiscal Year 2008, the \$8.5 million provided by the Ohio General Assembly allowed the OASHF to purchase and distribute more than 25.3 million pounds, which provided 19.7 million meals to families and individuals across the Buckeye State.

What will be accomplished from funding

OASHF will be positioned to acquire more than **75 million pounds** of highly nutritious protein items, shelf-stable foods, fruits, and vegetables, representing more than 60 million meals for hungry Ohioans. In addition, we will purchase at least 4 million pounds of personal care, hygiene and household cleaning products that low-income Ohioans need and can't purchase with Food Stamps.

OASHF will designate a portion of funds to be used for administrative purposes, including partial compensation to foodbanks. The highly effective Capacity Building Grants Program will be re-established, which will allow foodbanks to purchase more than 500 pieces of food service equipment for their member charities and to provide small incentive grants for innovative programs that help address the changing needs of hungry Ohioans, such as Food Stamp Program outreach or nutrition education.

How funding benefits ODJFS and the State

By increasing the overall nutritional intake of hungry Ohioans and providing some stability to these families, the State of Ohio could experience a reduction in expenditures for related programs, such as health care, child care and other welfare programs. The investment also has the potential to improve educational outcomes for the state's children and reduce malnutrition among our elderly populations.



For more information, please contact Lisa Hamler-Fugitt,
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks
614.221.4336 or 614.271.4803 (mobile)