



A Strategy To End Childhood Hunger

2017 Playbook



The Solution

Hunger affects children in every community in the United States. Ending hunger means ensuring every child has reliable access to the healthy food they need.

Federal and state nutrition programs work together to close the gap between kids who have enough to eat and those who don't. These programs can make sure kids have access to food when they need it, regardless of zip code, age, time of year or time of day.

Too often, however, these programs aren't efficiently reaching many of the kids who need them. It doesn't have to be this way.

The No Kid Hungry strategy focuses on problem-solving, working with local partners – lawmakers, educators, corporate partners and community leaders - to identify and eliminate the barriers that may prevent children from accessing existing food and nutrition education resources.

Together, we can end childhood hunger across the United States.

Learn More

To learn more about childhood hunger and specific action steps for your state, contact:

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School Breakfast



Fact: Research shows that low-income students who eat school breakfast achieve 17.5% higher scores on standardized tests.¹

Fact: Hunger can “literally damage the architecture of a child’s developing brain...reducing a child’s learning capacity, hampering its school readiness, reducing academic achievement and lowering educational attainment.”²

Ask any teacher: Hungry kids can't learn.

When kids aren't getting the consistent nutrition they need, it's harder to focus in class. Test scores drop, and students more likely to miss class time because they're in the nurse's office with headaches or stomach aches. Discipline problems rise, while attendance levels fall.

For these kids, school breakfast is critical. The traditional method of serving the meal before the school day starts, however, is ineffective. As a result, only a fraction of the students who may need this meal are unable to access it.

There are more efficient ways to make sure kids from low-income families are able to get the food they need. Making breakfast a part of the regular school day, just like lunch, has a powerful effect on kids.

Summer Meals

Summer can be the hungriest time of year for many children from low-income families. When schools close, students no longer get school meals, and families struggle to put food on the table.

The national Summer Food Service Program was created to connect children from low-income families to the critical nutrition they need during the summer. A majority of kids, however, are missing out due to barriers like transportation challenges, extreme weather patterns and bureaucratic hurdles.

This has a devastating impact on kids and their ability to thrive. In the short-term, food insecurity leads to cognitive decline and summer learning loss for kids in need. In the longer term, it has an impact on academic achievement, graduation rates, and future earning potential.



Fact: Summer hunger is linked to cognitive decline and summer learning loss. Studies show low-income students return to school in September an average of two months behind in reading. Re-teaching costs average \$1,540 per student per year.³

Fact: The "summer slide" effect is cumulative. Recent studies show that, by the third grade, "children who had been food insecure in kindergarten had a 13% drop in their reading and math test scores compared to their food-secure peers."⁴

After School Meals



Fact: In a survey of American public school teachers, **3 out of 4** say they taught students who regularly came to school hungry.⁵

Fact: Children struggling with hunger are 31% more likely to be hospitalized at some point during their childhood.⁶

A quarter of all low-income parents worry their kids don't have enough to eat between lunch and breakfast the next day.

The At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program provides nutritious meals and snacks in a safe, supervised location. For many kids, this is their only chance to get a healthy meal after the school day ends.

Many afterschool programs already feed students using their own funds because they recognize that children need healthy food to stay focused and active through the afternoon and into the evening. By participating in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program and having the cost of these meals reimbursed, schools and community organizations can use the money saved for additional programming or staff, conducting outreach, or improving meal quality.

SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is a powerful tool for ending childhood hunger in the United States today. States play a critical role in making sure the program reaches kids in need.

SNAP helps to end hunger, making sure kids in low-income families get the healthy food they need.

SNAP helps to end poverty. SNAP benefits make the difference between living in poverty or not for an estimated 2.1 kids each year. ¹⁴

SNAP promotes better education. Low-income kids who received SNAP benefits were 18% more likely to graduate from high school than low-income kids who didn't. ¹¹

SNAP promotes better physical health. SNAP benefits are also linked to a lower risk of anemia, lower levels of obesity, fewer doctor visits and fewer hospitalizations. ¹²

SNAP promotes better social and emotional health. SNAP benefits are also linked to a decrease in behavior problems, depression, poor self control and anxiety among kids. ¹³



Fact: SNAP helps feed nearly 20 million kids from low-income homes in the United States.

Fact: An estimated 900,000 veterans and 5,000 active duty members of the military rely on SNAP. ¹⁰

Fact: 78% of all SNAP households either are working or have worked in the past year.

Fact: Most families spend an average of just 10 months on SNAP.

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) is a federal nutrition program that assists pregnant women, new mothers, infants and young children up to age five with obtaining the food they need

To give kids a healthy start to life, states can protect and promote WIC to ensure all eligible children are able to get the nutrition they need for their developing minds and bodies.

Fact: More than half of all newborns in the United States participate in WIC. ¹⁵

Fact: WIC has been credited with a 68% reduction in hunger among families with young children. ¹⁶

Fact: WIC reduces fetal deaths and infant mortality. It also decreases the risk of low birth weight by 20%; low birth weight is associated with developmental delays, chronic disease, an impaired immune system and cognitive development. ¹⁷



Learn More

Together, we can end childhood hunger.

In every community, there are children without enough to eat. That takes a profound toll on their health, their happiness, and their future success – in school and in life.

You have power to help end childhood hunger in your community using proven, practical strategies.

Visit NoKidHungry.org or contact Christy Felling at cfelling@strength.org to learn more. And thank you for your time and hard work.

Hunger Statistics

- i. Hunger: Feeding America, "[Child Food Insecurity](#)," 2016.
- ii. Breakfast: FRAC, "[School Breakfast Scorecard](#)," 2016.
- iii. Summer: FRAC, "[Summer Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation](#)," 2016.
- iv. After School: No Kid Hungry, "[Afterschool Meals History and Trends](#)," 2016.
- v. SNAP: USDA, "[Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2013](#)," 2014.
- vi. WIC: USDA, "[WIC Monthly Data](#)," 2017

Other Resources:

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2. RTI International, "[Current and Prospective Scope of Hunger and Food Security in America: A Review of Current Research](#)," July 2014.
3. Deloitte Consulting, "[Summer Nutrition Program Social Impact Analysis](#)," July 2015.
4. Journal of Nutrition, "[Food Insecurity Is Associated with Adverse Health Outcomes among Human Infants and Toddlers](#)," March 2004.
5. Share Our Strength, "[Hunger In Our Schools](#)," March 2015.
6. Journal of Nutrition, "[Food Insecurity Is Associated with Adverse Health Outcomes among Human Infants and Toddlers](#)," March 2004.
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8. No Kid Hungry, "[Supper In The Classroom](#)," 2017.
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17. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "[WIC Works: Addressing the Nutrition and Health Needs of Low-Income Families for 40 Years](#)," 2015