No Kid Hungry Case Study:  
The Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland

“Our partnership brings together a diverse group of organizations and individuals, including government, agencies, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, the faith community, and members of the private sector, among others. Each brings to our partnership commitment, skills, and resources that support our work to end childhood hunger, and together we have developed a plan with measurable goals to which we hold ourselves accountable.”

-  Rosemary King Johnson, Executive Director, Governor’s Office for Children

Introduction
The Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland was formed in 2008 under the leadership of Governor O’Malley. The Partnership includes public and private sector organizations working to end childhood hunger and is co-chaired by the Governor’s office for Children and Share Our Strength. This case study provides background on the creation, structure and work of the Partnership and highlights lessons learned during the more than three years of operation.

Getting Started
In November 2008, Governor O’Malley declared his intention to be the first governor in the country to end childhood hunger. To accomplish this goal, he sought out Share Our Strength as a national leader and invited the organization to partner with his Office for Children to craft and implement an action plan.

The Governor secured the participation of the state agencies with responsibility for child nutrition programs, including:

- The Department of Human Resources which oversees the Supplemental Food Program (food stamps),
- The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene which oversees the WIC program, and
- The Maryland State Department of Education which oversees the school food and nutrition, and summer meals programs.

Together, the Governor’s Office for Children and Share Our Strength recruited coalition members from outside of the state government. An early win was engaging Maryland Hunger Solutions, an affiliate of the Food Research and Action Center, as a core partner, bringing their expertise and leadership to the coalition. Nonprofit representatives of the emergency food provider network, child food and nutrition advocates and Earned Income Tax Credit experts, and the regional USDA (FNS) also joined the collaboration, completing the table with the key stakeholders in the state involved with nutrition and hunger issues. Share Our Strength and the Governor’s Office for Children also engaged representatives of the faith community who led further outreach through a series of “faith-based hunger summits”. The Sodexo Foundation provided seed funding while more recently, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, the Walmart Foundation, and the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation have invested in the coalition.

Following its formation, the Partnership spent six months developing a comprehensive, five-year plan to end childhood hunger by improving access to child nutrition programs. The plan set annual goals and put forward specific strategies to meet those goals. To access a copy of the plan, please click here.
Collaborating Table
Partners in the collaboration include organizations from local, state and national government, nonprofit organizations and national corporations and funders. The following schematic shows the Core Advisory Group.

Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland

Major Take-Aways
1. The power of a plan: by creating a comprehensive plan, the coalition was successful in engaging all of the stakeholders they contacted.
2. Through the plan, Partners were able to see a path to end childhood hunger in Maryland.

Keys to the Collaboration’s Success
1. The Governor’s leadership elevates the issue to high importance for the state and ensures the participation of key agencies.
2. The size of the Core Advisory Group is large enough to include the right people (including government agencies, nonprofits, corporations and funders) and small enough to keep things moving.
3. Partners are vested in the plan and feel accountable to it.
4. Having leaders that set the tone of working together in a constructive way.
5. Consistently communicating to partners, and the community at-large.
6. Sharing credit widely and saying thank you often.
7. Planning for the sustainability of the Partnership within any political administration.

For more information on the Maryland Partnership to End Childhood Hunger, please visit www.nokidhungrymd.org.