



Wisconsin Food Security Consortium



www.EndHungerWI.org

Steering Committee

Jane Voichick, chair
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Senator Mark Miller
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

Representative Mark Pocan
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Patti Hauser, vice-chair
Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Dear Senator Miller and Representative Pocan:

Kadi Row, vice-chair
University of Wisconsin-Extension

On behalf of the Wisconsin Food Security Consortium, I write to ask for your support to provide critically-needed state funding for nutrition and economic security programs in the FY 2009-2011 Budget.

Jonathan Bader
Wisconsin Community Action Coalition Program Association

Each month, thousands of Wisconsin families and seniors are turning to emergency food sources and enrolling in the FoodShare program for the first time. Our schools are witnessing a dramatic increase in the number of homeless students, and more and more students are eligible to receive free and reduced-price school meals. Wisconsin employers are routinely announcing layoffs and the prospects for good paying jobs are scarce. Those who struggled in times of economic prosperity will be the last to benefit from economic recovery. We believe that the state budget should reflect and prioritize the needs of these children, adults and seniors.

Peter Bakken
Wisconsin Council of Churches

Judi Bartfeld
University of Wisconsin-Extension

Members of the Wisconsin Food Security Consortium work in food pantries and food banks; statewide agencies; statewide food and nutrition programs; nutrition education programs; education and awareness task forces; and faith-based groups. Collectively, the Consortium is deeply committed to the work of eliminating hunger in Wisconsin. As anti-hunger advocates, we believe that addressing hunger requires that we address the contributing components of poverty.

Nick Heckman
University of Wisconsin-Extension

Specifically we ask for your support of the following:

Amy Johnson
Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin

1. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will provide much-needed financial assistance to state programs and communities. If used wisely, ARRA will generate jobs for those unemployed and underemployed. Furthermore, investment in public transportation will facilitate both job growth and job retention for employees. Government initiatives that create and maintain employment are our state's first line of defense against hunger and poverty. As households gain greater economic self-sufficiency, the demand on federal nutrition programs and emergency food providers declines.

Toni Rogers
University of Wisconsin-Extension

Claire Smith
Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Robin Soileau
Wisconsin Department of Health Services



2. The Governor's budget recommends ending state-funded FoodShare benefits for 800 low-income refugees and legal immigrants who are ineligible for the federal FS benefit due their immigrant status. Refugees and immigrants in our state were facing unique economic challenges prior to the significant downturn in our economy. We do not support this cut in badly needed nutrition to 800 low-income residents and ask for a reversal of this proposal and its subsequent impact on this vulnerable population.
3. The School Breakfast Program and the School Lunch Program are slated to receive a cut of 1% in the Governor's budget. While we understand the economic strain on our state budget, we must remember that school districts around the state are witnessing a spike in demand for these important nutrition programs. To school districts around the state, a cut of a few thousand dollars will impact the quality of food served and their ability to routinely provide meals to students in need.
4. Finally, we ask for your continued support for the work of the Department of Health in administering the FoodShare program and TEFAP. It is essential that DHS be allowed to strengthen its outreach and access for these critical food programs.

We ask for your favorable consideration of these critical priorities for anti-hunger advocates. Your work on the Joint Finance Committee to ensure a safety net for families in Wisconsin will make a significant impact on those living with the growing reality of poverty. Thank you for your public service to the State of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,