

## Testimony HB 49

Ohio House of Representatives Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee

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Good afternoon Chairman Romanchuk, Vice Chair LaTourette, Ranking Member Sykes, and distinguished members of the House Finance Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your previous support in the last budget for our state-funded food programs. My name is Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, and I serve as the executive director of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks (the association), Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger. We represent Ohio's 12 foodbanks, providing critical programs, food, funding, training, and technical assistance to 3,300 food pantries, soup



kitchens, and homeless shelters across the state. Over 71 percent are faith-based, and 59 percent rely entirely operating on budgets of less than \$25,000 a year. Together, we served more than 2 million different Ohioans, or 1 in 6 of our hungry friends and neighbors, across all 88 counties last year.

**The Ohio Benefit Bank™**

The Ohio Benefit Bank™ is an innovative online service was implemented in 2006, by the Ohio Association of Foodbanks in partnership with the State of Ohio, four federal agencies, eight state agencies, and more than 1,000 faith-based and community organizations and 3,400 trained staff and volunteer counselors. Its purpose is to connect Ohio's families with work support programs and tax credits through one streamlined platform. To date, the OBB has helped more than 885,000 Ohioans gain access to tax credits and potential work supports worth more than \$1.68 billion!

The association also serves as the home of the Ohio Benefit Bank™, leads the statewide Affordable Care Act (ACA) Navigator Grant, manages Ohio's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach Grant, and operates the largest SNAP Work Experience Program (WEP) serving SNAP work mandated recipients in Franklin County.

Our association has been honored to partner with the State of Ohio for over two decades now – working collaboratively to develop innovative programs and joint efforts that reduce hunger and food insecurity in our state.

Characterized as one of the most effective public-private partnerships operating today, the

Ohio Food Program and the Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP) has been supported by four governors, 10 General Assemblies, four administrations, and funded through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) budget.

These programs prevent waste, reduce loss for farmers and growers, increase and sustain employment in Ohio, represent the most nutritious food in foodbank warehouses, and, most importantly, provide the most wholesome food we purchase for pennies on the pound.

In FY16, the state's investment of \$19.5 million in funding for the Agricultural Clearance Program, Ohio Food Program, and the \$2.3 million in funding of the Governor's Summer Meals Programs added **\$45.3 million in economic output** across Ohio, generated **\$14.2 million in income**, and led to the creation of **487 jobs**, in addition to the direct benefits of providing **55.2 million pounds** of wholesome food, representing over **46.1 million meals** to needy Ohioans.

### Overview of Ohio Association of Foodbanks Food Programs

In state fiscal year 2016, funding was provided for a series of programs to enhance the availability of fresh fruits, vegetables, protein items and shelf staple items to Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks. The two largest programs are the Ohio Food Program, which focuses on protein and shelf staple items, and the Agricultural Clearance Program, which directs agricultural surplus items from Ohio farmers and growers to the foodbanks. Each of these programs was funded at \$9.5 million in FY16 for a combined total of \$19 million. In an additional \$2 million in state funding was provided to supplement the availability of food supplies to Ohio families over the summer. The Summer Weekend Meals program provides shelf-stable, kid-friendly weekend meals for children attending summer food sites. The Summer Rural Delivery Meals Program provides kids in underserved, rural counties where no federally funded summer meal programs are available with a week's worth of shelf-stable, kid-friendly meals. Finally, the Mobile Farmers Market Program provides fresh fruits and vegetables and popular protein items such as peanut butter to families in the Summer Weekend and Rural Delivery Meals programs.

Despite these outcomes, hunger continues to increase in Ohio – more people are needing more food more frequently. Over the last two years, we have experienced new demands, including food to support site based food pantries in school and on campuses (K-12 and Higher Education) and in health care clinics. We have received over 500 new partner requests to supply produce distributions, known as free farmers' markets.

Hunger is a complex problem in Ohio, affecting 1 in 4 children, 1 in 8 seniors, and 1 in 3 working poor Ohioans, and it requires a comprehensive solution –including government funding, private and corporate donations, community and faith-based partnerships, and access to federal nutrition programs and other programs for low-income individuals and families. [A Comprehensive Approach is critical to this solution.](#)

This approach will allow Ohio to set the standard for addressing food insecurity in the most extensive and focused manner possible. We humbly request your support for the LaTourette amendment, which aligns Ohio's funded hunger relief efforts within one request, sourced from existing federal and state dollars.

The amendment allocates \$5 million per year, to partially support a range of proven initiatives, bringing these programs under one funding umbrella. It is a fiscally responsible solution that will provide flexibility in delivering real hunger relief across Ohio and will fund proven initiatives, including:

- The **Ohio Food Program**, providing shelf-stable foods;
- The **Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program**, providing surplus fresh produce, meats, and eggs and supporting Ohio's farmers;
- Governor's Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives innovative **programs for Ohio's hungry children**, such as the summer weekend meals program and the summer rural delivery meals program, that fill nutritional gaps during breaks from school;
- Summer **farmers' market programs** targeting families with children;
- **The Ohio Benefit Bank**, a proven, effective collaboration with more than 1,000 Ohio non-profits to lift people out of poverty, working in conjunction with the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP, formerly food stamps) outreach program; and
- **Capacity building** for foodbanks and non-profit charities fighting hunger locally.

Under the proposed Comprehensive Approach, programs that address food insecurity and are overseen by the Ohio Association of Foodbanks will:

- Have reduced administrative costs and overhead;
- Work in an integrated manner that maximizes opportunities for efficiency and cost savings;
- Have increased ability to leverage food purchase and public-private partnerships across programs; and
- Streamline program operations and overall effectiveness.

In closing, your support for this unified initiative, the Comprehensive Approach, will direct the maximum amount of state dollars available to Ohioans who need it most, putting food on the tables of Ohio families, positioning our children to be healthy and ready to learn, protecting the welfare of our senior citizens and other vulnerable populations, and setting the hunger relief standard among states.

Feeding hungry Ohioans, many who are disabled, elderly, sick and suffering from chronic diseases, has the potential to save the State millions in short- and long-term health care expenditures, increasing human capital and our ability to meet the challenge of a global economy.

Thank you for your support and consideration of this modest and humble request. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.

### SNAP Work Experience Program

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks has partnered with the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services since 2012, to provide work mandated SNAP recipients in Franklin County with the opportunity to meet their SNAP work requirement. Over 8,800 Work Experience Program (WEP) participants have been assessed and placed at community and faith-based organizations to fulfill their work requirement while gaining valuable job skills and experience through volunteer service after being placed at one of our many host sites across Franklin County. No matter what type of skill-set participants have, we strive to find a suitable work experience placement.

### Cincinnati COOKS!

Cincinnati COOKS! Is a free culinary job training program operated by the Freestore Foodbank for under- and unemployed individuals. During the 10-week course, students learn the mechanics of a commercial kitchen, as well as professional and life skills to ensure success in the food service industry and in their personal lives.

Since the program began in 2001, over 1,400 people have graduated. Those students have gone on to find employment at more than 200 local culinary institutions including restaurants, school cafeterias, retirement communities, day care centers, corporate dining halls, catering companies, bakeries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, banquet halls, Cincinnati International Airport, Cincinnati Museum Center, and Jack Cincinnati Casino.

- In SFY 2015, Cincinnati Cooks graduated 94 students
- 90% employed after one year
- 143 students graduated in SFY 2016

Following graduation from Cincinnati COOKS! students are eligible to enroll in our Second Course program. The eight-week course provides advanced skills training for management opportunities and employment in fine dining restaurants. Graduates from Cincinnati COOKS! And Second Course can continue their education at Cincinnati State, entering with 33 credits toward earning their Kitchen Management certificate.



<http://ohiofoodbanks.org/docs/publications/10th-anniversary-retrospective-final-web.pdf>

[http://ohiofoodbanks.org/docs/publications/SFY2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](http://ohiofoodbanks.org/docs/publications/SFY2016_annual_report.pdf)

[http://ohiofoodbanks.org/summermeals/summer\\_initiatives\\_2016.pdf](http://ohiofoodbanks.org/summermeals/summer_initiatives_2016.pdf)

<http://ohiofoodbanks.org/docs/publications/OFPACP-analysis-2016.pdf>

# Existing Ohio Association of Foodbanks Funding Sources



## Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP) Section 307.40, Ohio Association of Foodbanks

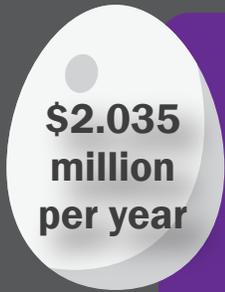
600410/600658/600689 • \$17,050,000 per year (TANF sources)  
600620 • \$2,000,000 per year (Title XX)  
600630 • \$500,000 per year (Food Assistance)



## Governor's Summer Meals Programs - Section 307.70

These programs have operated for the past five years through Executive Orders and grants through the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. They serve to address nutritional gaps during the summer break for many of Ohio's most vulnerable children.

600689 • \$2,380,000 per year (TANF)



## The Ohio Benefit Bank™ - ODJFS Grant Agreement

A proven, effective public-private partnership that has operated for over a decade with more than 1,000 nonprofit and faith-based organizations that work to lift people out of poverty. These funds are matched dollar-for-dollar by the USDA to support statewide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach.

600689 • \$535,000 per year (TANF)  
600416 • \$1,500,000 per year (GRF)



## How Additional Requested Funding Would Be Spent



\$5 million additional GRF per year to direct more fresh produce, meats, eggs, and shelf-stable items to Ohio's foodbanks and hunger relief network through OFPACP.



## Capacity Building

\$1.035 million additional GRF per year to provide capacity building for foodbanks and nonprofit charities to fight hunger locally. The Ohio Association of Foodbanks will use these funds to leverage matching grants from the private and corporate sectors.