

**Testimony: HB: 49 (Smith)
FY 2018-19 Biennial Budget
Judy Mobley, Interim CEO
Children's Hunger Alliance
March 22, 2017**

Background

Good Afternoon Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking member Sykes, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. My name is Judy Mobley, and I am the Interim CEO of Children's Hunger Alliance, a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to the alleviation of childhood hunger in Ohio. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today regarding our funding request for the FY 2018-19 budget.

According to the USDA, Ohio has the sixth highest rate of food insecurity in the United States. Currently, 1 in 4 or more than 600,000 of Ohio's children are hungry. This is a staggering figure. As recently as 10 years ago this figure was 1 in 6. Studies show that lack of proper nutrition negatively impacts a child's overall mental and physical development which can lead to performance problems in school and greater occurrences of childhood obesity. If we cannot provide our children with enough food to eat we cannot expect them to succeed in school, overcome poverty and become productive members of society as adults.

Children's Hunger Alliance is a non-profit organization founded in 1970. Our mission is to ensure children without access receive healthy food, nutrition education and physical activity. We are a statewide organization with a \$16 million operating budget that has done work in all 88 Ohio counties to combat childhood hunger. We are currently one of the largest sponsors of the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program in Ohio administered by the Ohio Department of Education. This program enables us to provide healthy meals and snacks for children who are at-risk of food insecurity through afterschool programs, in-home child care providers, and daycare centers.

Children's Hunger Alliance provides approximately 5 million meals and snacks a year to Ohio's children through our direct sponsorship of over 260 afterschool meal sites, 12 daycare centers, and nearly 900 in-home child care providers. In your packets, you will find information that shows the locations of these programs county by county, so that you can see geographically the reach of our work currently.

In Southeastern Ohio, nearly 1 in 3 children face food insecurity. Given the widespread geography of Appalachia, kids too often cannot walk to a local recreation center or library afterschool like they can in urban areas. That's why we are currently working on an asset mapping project in six counties – Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton – to determine the most efficient routes and partners to get food to these kids who urgently need it.

Our statewide work with school breakfast and afterschool programs allows us to meet children where they are and ensure they receive healthy meals *before* and *after* school each day - and during the summer months. We want to be sure we are reaching children who need our help regardless of whether they live in a metropolitan area or rural Appalachia.

As mentioned, Children's Hunger Alliance works with schools to increase participation in school breakfast programs since only 56% of children eligible for a free or reduced lunch currently participate in school breakfast. We partner with school districts to evaluate their existing programs and implement best practices that increase breakfast participation in a cost effective manner.

We also know that only 10 percent of children who rely on school breakfasts and lunches, have access to free meals during the summer. We work to increase access to summer meal programs offered at locations such as community centers and day camps. We have helped organizations develop mobile feeding programs that transport meals to different locations so kids have a better chance of receiving the meals they need close to home. We have also applied to become a summer meal sponsor ourselves. Additionally, we are advocating for legislation sponsored by Representatives LaTourette and Smith that was recently passed in the House (HB 80), and sponsored by Senators Lehner and Brown in the Senate (SB 54) which would allow for alternate summer meal sponsors to access school buildings to serve as feeding sites if they meet the required criteria.

Finally, Children's Hunger Alliance educates and engages children and families in healthy food choices and physical activity. Our Nutrition Education Team helps in-home child care providers learn how to plan meals and offer healthy food options to the children in their care. Children's Hunger Alliance also certifies providers in the Department of Health's Ohio Healthy Programs, which ensures providers offer children in their care fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and more. We also offer nutrition education and physical activity programming at afterschool and summer nutrition programs to help children make healthy food choices and stay active and just this Fiscal Year have begun nutrition education work in daycare centers.

FY 2018-19 Budget request

Through a grant of \$1.5 million from the Walmart National Foundation, Children's Hunger Alliance engaged Community Research Partners to complete a comprehensive Statewide Child Nutrition Needs Assessment. An Executive Summary of the assessment is contained in your packets. Through this assessment, we have been able to prioritize counties throughout the state that have high rates of child poverty and food insecurity, yet low participation in federal nutrition programs. These counties, many of which are located in the Southeastern portion of Ohio represent an opportunity for Children's Hunger Alliance to meet a critical need for tens of thousands of Ohio children who need our services.

In order to expand our work and be in a position to meet the needs of additional food insecure children in our state, Children's Hunger Alliance is requesting \$2 million in state funding over the FY 2018-19 biennium. This funding will allow us to expand programming in our four core program areas – early childhood, school and summer nutrition, afterschool and nutrition education and physical activity. A copy of our budget request is included in your packets. Children's Hunger Alliance has a history of state funding, having received approximately \$2 million in General Revenue Funding through the Ohio Department of Education from FY 2004 through FY 2009. We also received TANF funding in the FY 2008-09 biennium.

While we recognize that many worthy programs are requesting funding in this budget cycle, and limited resources are available, it is important to note that

funding of Children's Hunger Alliance programs represents an excellent return on investment for Ohio taxpayers. For every \$1 spent on our programs, the State of Ohio is able to leverage \$3 of federal child nutrition funds.

In conclusion, Children's Hunger Alliance plays a unique role in Ohio's hunger relief system. Receiving state funding would allow us to expand our work and provide vital services to address childhood hunger in high need areas throughout Ohio. Research shows that providing these programs to at-risk children today will contribute to their overall short- and long-term health, will improve academic performance, and will result in fewer medical visits.

Chairman Romanchuk and Committee members, I thank you for your time and consideration of our funding request. I am now available to address any questions that you may have.

Children's Hunger Alliance: Improving the Health and Nutrition of At-Risk Children throughout Ohio

FY 2018-2019 Biennial Budget Funding Request Narrative

Introduction

Children's Hunger Alliance is a statewide non-profit organization founded in 1970 with offices in Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Toledo. Our mission is to purposely ensure children without access receive healthy food, nutrition education and physical activity. Children's Hunger Alliance does this by providing nutritious meals to children through family child care provider homes, childcare centers, and afterschool programs. We also work to increase access to nutritious foods in schools and at summer meal sites. Additionally, our staff works to educate children and adults to make healthy food choices and become more engaged in physical activity to reduce the incidence of obesity and promote lifelong health.

The agency began sponsoring the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in 1978 as a way to ensure children are provided with regular nutritious meals and has since become the largest USDA meal sponsor for low-income children in afterschool and early child care settings in Ohio. Even as the largest CACFP sponsor in the state, geographic areas of need still exist and unacceptably large populations of children continue to remain hungry.

Poverty is a persistent problem in Ohio with nearly a quarter of Ohio's children living below the poverty line. Ohio's child poverty rates have remained consistently higher than the national average for the past seven years. Ohio's cities have some of the highest rates of child poverty in the nation. Youngstown has the highest child poverty rate of any American city, with 64 percent of children living below the federal poverty line. In Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dayton, more than 50 percent of children live below the federal poverty line. In Toledo, Lorain, Canton, and Akron, it is 40 percent.

To further examine hunger rates in the communities we serve, Children's Hunger Alliance hired Community Research Partners to conduct a state-wide child nutrition programs needs assessment. The report findings revealed significant gaps in access existing throughout Ohio. As a result of these findings, Children's Hunger Alliance will be expanding the following meal programs to increase access throughout the state with a major focus on increasing access to food in Southeastern Ohio communities.

Family Child Care Providers/Early Childhood Nutrition & Daycare Centers

Preschool and school aged children need consistent, nutritious food to develop properly and enter school ready to learn. Through the Early Childhood Nutrition and Education (ECNE) program, Children's Hunger Alliance assists daycare centers and home child care providers with serving more nutritious food, and create healthier child care environments.

To accomplish this, we link daycare centers and home child care providers with CACFP, the federal Child Nutrition Program that subsidizes healthy meals and snacks in child care settings.

FY 18-19 Budget Request:

In order to expand these services state-wide, we are requesting a total of \$520,000 over the course of the biennium, or \$260,000 per year.

Impact:

Family Child Care Providers

- Additional 100 providers
- Reach an additional 800 children (100 providers with an average of 8 children)
- Serve an additional 1,209,600 meals/snacks (1,120 children/3 meals-snacks per day/21 days in the month)
- Leveraged federal dollars – approximately \$2,460,000

Centers

- Additional 40 centers
- Reach an additional 1,600 children (40 centers with an average of 40 children)
- Serve an additional 2,419,000 meals/snacks (1,600 children/3 meals-snacks per day/21 days in the month)
- Leveraged federal dollars – approximately \$2,700,000

Afterschool Nutrition Programs

Through CACFP, Children's Hunger Alliance serves as a sponsor for afterschool programs across the state. Afterschool program locations include schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, recreation centers, libraries, churches, and other youth-serving community organizations. Participation has been shown to improve children's nutritional intake, develop healthy eating habits, and improve school attendance and academic performance.

As a sponsor, our staff assumes the responsibilities of operating a meal program on behalf of sites that lack the resources to provide meals on their own.

Children's Hunger Alliance sponsors afterschool locations; provides trainings to site staff in record keeping and federal regulations; ensures delivery of nutritious meals and snacks; and provides ongoing assistance to program locations.

FY 18-19 Budget Request:

In order to expand these services throughout the state, we are requesting a total of \$600,000 over the course of the biennium or \$300,000 per year.

Impact:

- Additional 40 sites
- Reach an additional 4,000 children
- Serve an additional 150,000 additional meals/snacks
- Leveraged federal dollars – approximately \$500,000

School & Summer Nutrition

The School Breakfast Program is one of several Child Nutrition Programs sponsored by the USDA and administered by The Ohio Department of Education (ODE). USDA and ODE reimburse schools and other youth-serving organizations for providing nutritious meals to children. The School Breakfast Program in Ohio is grossly underutilized.

Scientific research on the link between children's nutrition and academic performance proves that children need nutritious food to perform well in school. Studies show that eating breakfast gives children the nutritional boost they need to jump start the learning process, as well as many other health and social benefits. CHA works directly with schools to restructure breakfast programs by sharing best practice models such as breakfast in the classroom, grab and go breakfast, or breakfast after first period to ensure children have easy access to this under-utilized, school-based meal program.

Children's Hunger Alliance also works with Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors to assist with finding and linking them with meal sites. On average, only one in ten low-income children in Ohio who participate in the National School Lunch Program participates in a summer lunch nutrition program. The lack of awareness among families with regard to summer meal site locations is a problem, so we conduct public awareness campaigns to reach out to impoverished families with information about summer meal site locations. We are currently seeking SFSP sponsorship approval from ODE to increase the number of children fed through summer meal programs.

FY 18-19 Budget Request:

In order to expand school breakfast and summer lunch program services throughout the state, we are requesting a total of \$480,000 over the course of the biennium or \$240,000 per year.

Impact:

- Expand school breakfast programs at 80 schools through various methods to increase participation.
- Support summer sites in areas lacking adequate sponsorship as identified in our child nutrition programs statewide needs assessment.

Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Engagement

Children's Hunger Alliance works to educate children to make healthy food choices and engage in physical activity to reduce the instance of obesity and promote lifelong health. CHA currently utilizes the Coordinated Approach to Childhood Health (CATCH) physical education curriculum, which is designed to promote healthful behaviors in school-aged children and reduce their subsequent risk of developing cardiovascular disease. The program consists of 20 lessons focusing on non-competitive physical activity for elementary and middle school-aged children.

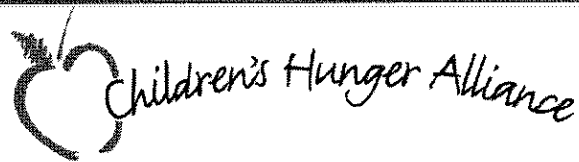
Additionally, recognizing that adult household members shop, select and prepare food for children in the home environment, Children's Hunger Alliance also works to offer nutrition and healthy living classes to adults. Our classes educate adults on healthy foods choices for their families. Stand alone or a series of lessons are offered in churches, child care centers, shelters, as well as schools, community centers and other locations where primarily caregivers of low-income children congregate. Classes are tailored to best meet the needs and requests at each location.

FY 18-19 Budget Request:

In order to expand these services state-wide, we are requesting a total of \$400,000 over the course of the biennium, or \$200,000 per year.

Impact:

Expand statewide CHA programs to educate children in making healthy food choices and promoting physical activity. Also, expand statewide programs to educate adult caregivers on making healthy food choices for their families.



Children's Hunger Alliance:

Improving the Health and Nutrition of At-Risk Children throughout Ohio

FY 2018-2019 Biennial Budget Funding Request Executive Summary

Total Biennial Request: \$2,000,000

Children's Hunger Alliance is a statewide non-profit organization founded in 1970 with offices in Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Toledo. Our mission is to purposely ensure children without access receive healthy food, nutrition education and physical activity. Children's Hunger Alliance (CHA) does this by providing nutritious meals to children through family child care provider homes, childcare centers, and afterschool programs. We also work to increase access to nutritious food in schools and at summer meal sites. Additionally, our staff works to educate children and adults to make healthy food choices and become more engaged in physical activity to reduce the incidence of obesity and promote lifelong health.

As a result of this state funding request CHA will be expanding the following meal programs to increase access to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) throughout the state and to increase the overall number of children receiving nutritious meals and engaging in physical activity and other healthy practices.

1. Family Child Care Providers/Early Childhood Nutrition & Daycare Centers

Purpose: Through the Early Childhood Nutrition and Education (ECNE) program, Children's Hunger Alliance assists daycare centers and home child care providers with serving more nutritious food, and creating healthier child care environments.

Impact: Expand program to an additional 100 providers and 40 childcare centers reaching an additional 2,400 children and serving an additional 3,628,800 meals and snacks.

Leveraged Federal Dollars: Approximately \$5,160,000

Request: \$260,000/year = \$520,000 over biennium

2. Afterschool Nutrition Programs

Purpose: Through CACFP, Children's Hunger Alliance serves as a sponsor for afterschool programs across the state. As a sponsor, our staff assumes the responsibilities of operating a meal program on behalf of sites that lack the resources to provide meals on their own. CHA sponsors afterschool locations; provides trainings to site staff in record keeping and federal regulations; ensures delivery of nutritious meals and snacks; and provides ongoing assistance to program locations.

Impact: Expand to 40 additional sites reaching an additional 4,000 children serving an additional 150,000 meals and snacks.

Leveraged Federal Dollars: Approximately \$500,000

Request: \$300,000/year = \$600,000 over biennium

3. School and Summer Nutrition

Purpose: CHA works directly with schools to restructure breakfast programs by sharing best practice models such as breakfast in the classroom, grab and go breakfast, or breakfast after first period to ensure children have easy access to this under-utilized, school-based meal program. CHA also works with Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors to assist with finding and connecting them with meal sites.

Impact: Expand school breakfast programs at 80 schools impacting 4,000 children and serving 680,000 meals. If approved as an SFSP sponsor, add 10 summer sites reaching 1,000 children and serving 35,000 meals.

Leveraged Federal Dollars: Approximately \$1,215,000

Request: \$240,000/year = \$480,000 over biennium

4. Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Engagement

Purpose: Children's Hunger Alliance works to educate children to make healthy food choices and engage in physical activity to reduce the instance of obesity and promote lifelong health. Additionally, recognizing that adult household members shop, select and prepare food for children in the home environment, CHA also works to offer nutrition and healthy living classes to adults which educate them on making healthy food choices for their families.

Impact: Expand statewide CHA programs to educate children and adult caregivers in making healthy food choices and to increase engagement in physical activity.

Request: \$200,000/year = \$400,000 over biennium