



Ohio Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee

Testimony: Am. Sub. HB: 166

May 15, 2019

Judy Mobley, President & CEO
Children's Hunger Alliance

Background

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Minority Member Thomas and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Health and Medicaid Subcommittee, my name is Judy Mobley, and I am the President and CEO of Children's Hunger Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to the alleviation of childhood hunger in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to you in support of our FY 2020-21 budget request.

One in five children, approximately 529,000, in Ohio live in food-insecure homes meaning they have limited or uncertain access to enough food to support a healthy life. Many food insecure children simply don't know when they'll eat next and are experiencing hunger daily. Studies show that lack of proper nutrition affects a child's overall mental and physical development which can lead to performance problems in school, chronic health issues and greater occurrences of childhood obesity.

In your packet you have a document titled *Ohio: Program Performance*. This document was provided by one of our National Anti-Hunger Partners, Share Our Strength, and highlights Ohio's national rankings relative to the USDA nutrition programs.....27th in the school breakfast program, 37th in the summer meals program and 48th in the afterschool nutrition program. Just for clarification that means 47 states are ranked better than Ohio in the afterschool nutrition program.

This is difficult to hear but regardless of where we rank nationally too many of our children are hungry and being negatively impacted by the lack of access to healthy meals. We must provide our children with enough food to eat if we 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 whose mission is to provide healthy meals and nutrition education to children in need. We are a statewide organization, currently one of the largest and most geographically diverse sponsors of the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program administered by the Ohio Department of Education. We sponsor approximately 67% of all family childcare providers and 35% of afterschool programs in the state. The federal nutrition programs enable us to provide healthy meals to children struggling with poverty in childcare centers, afterschool programs, and also those being cared for by in-home childcare providers, but the federal funds only pay for a portion of the total costs to operate these programs. Our FY19 annual operating budget is \$11.6 million with federal funding of \$8.5 million from the USDA leaving a gap of approximately \$3.1 million required to sustain our current level of work.

In addition to our federal nutrition program sponsorship we have a team that works across the state with schools to increase breakfast participation and various partners to increase access to summer

meal sites, both which bring additional federal dollars back to our state. In Ohio only 56% of children eligible for a free or reduced priced lunch currently participate in school breakfast and unfortunately only 10 percent of children who rely on school breakfast and lunch, have access to free meals during the summer. We partner with school districts to evaluate their existing breakfast model and implement best practices that increase breakfast participation in a cost-effective manner. We have many examples of the success this type of collaboration can achieve and have included an example of the successful implementation of breakfast in the classroom in Newark City Schools more than doubling the number of children eating breakfast each day. The children are the real beneficiaries of this type of collaboration because more of them can start their school day ready to learn.

We also work to increase access to summer meal programs offered at locations such as community centers, churches, schools and day camps. Additionally, we have helped schools and other organizations develop mobile feeding programs that take meals to multiple locations each day to provide food access to children close to home. Included in your packet are examples from Hillsboro City Schools and Painesville City Schools.

Finally, Children's Hunger Alliance provides nutrition education and physical activity opportunities to children in childcare centers, afterschool programs and summer meal programs all to teach children about healthy food choices and the importance of staying active to reduce the incidence of obesity, chronic disease and promote lifelong healthy habits.

FY 2020-21 Budget request

The work we do at Children's Hunger Alliance to provide our most vulnerable citizens with one of their most basic needs - food - is critical for tens of thousands of Ohio children who depend on our services. Children's Hunger Alliance provided approximately 14 million meals over the last two years to Ohio's children struggling with poverty.

Based on Ohio's national ranking in the federal nutrition programs.....27th in the school breakfast program, 37th in the summer meals program and 48th in the afterschool nutrition program we have a lot of children whose needs aren't being met. These federal nutrition programs are vital to our children but are only successful when you have organizations step up to both operate the program sites and serve as meal sponsors. That is why Children's Hunger Alliance needs your support of our budget request.

In order to sustain our work and be able to continue meeting the needs of food insecure children in our state, Children's Hunger Alliance is requesting \$2.35 million in state funding over the FY 2020-21 biennium. This funding was included in the House passed version of Am. Sub. HB 166 as an earmark in the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services budget at \$470,000 in FY 2020 and FY 2021 from 3V60 TANF Block Grant and \$705,000 each year from GRF, TANF State Maintenance of Effort. Support for this language will allow us to continue our programming in four core program areas – early childhood nutrition in childcare centers and in-home childcare providers, school and summer nutrition, afterschool nutrition, and nutrition education and physical activity. A copy of our budget request is included in your packet. 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 and the FY 2019-20 biennium.

While we recognize that many worthy organizations are requesting funding in this budget cycle, it is important to note that funding Children's Hunger Alliance programs represents an excellent return on investment for Ohio taxpayers. Our direct sponsorship work would leverage approximately \$17 million of federal nutrition funds back to Ohio over the biennium. Additionally, our advocacy work with schools to increase breakfast participation and our support of summer meal sites directly increases the federal child nutrition funds they receive. We estimate this would add another \$4 million of federal child nutrition funds bringing the total dollars leveraged to approximately \$21 million.

In conclusion, Children's Hunger Alliance plays a unique role in Ohio's hunger relief system. Receiving state funding would allow us to sustain our work and provide vital services to address childhood hunger in high need areas throughout Ohio.

Chairman Hackett and Subcommittee members, I sincerely thank you for your consideration of our funding request.

Ohio: Program Performance

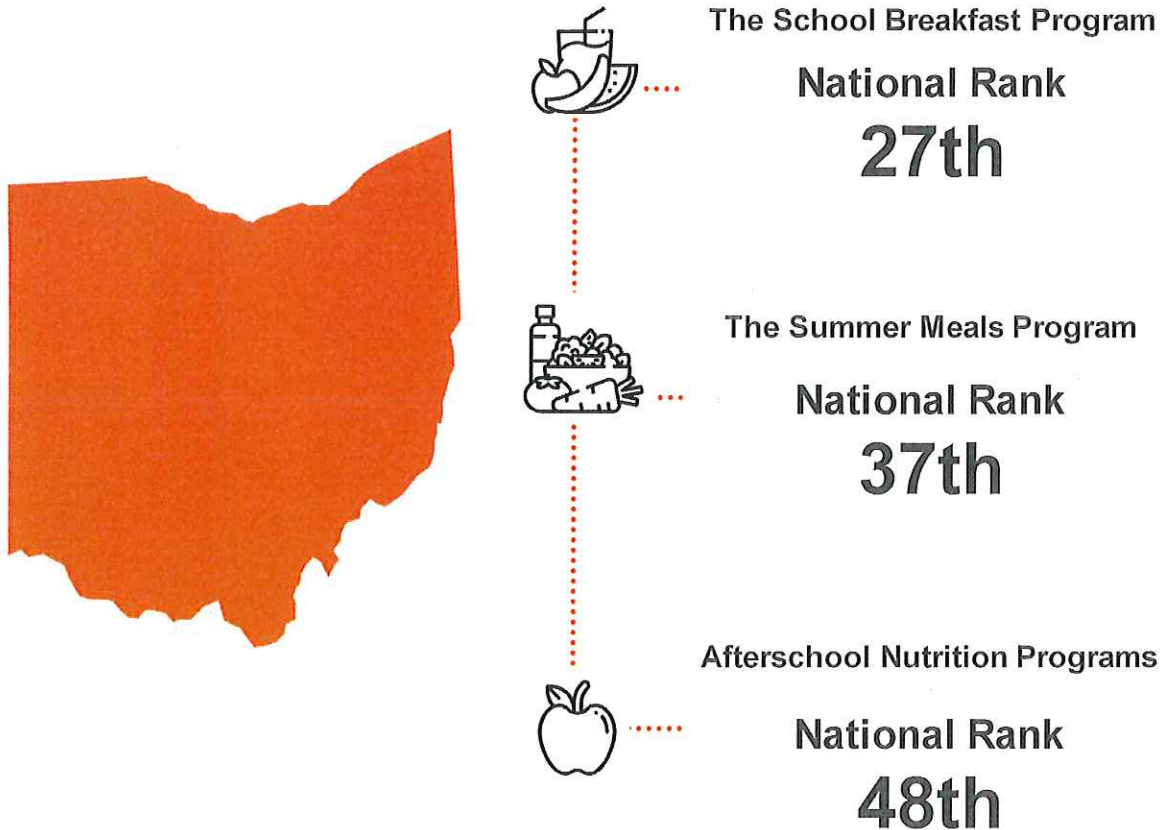


20.3%

of all children in Ohio live in food-insecure homes.

One out of every five kids in Ohio is growing up in a family that struggles with hunger. State and federal nutrition programs can help kids get the nutrition they need, but these programs are severely underutilized. Closing the participation gap in these programs can help end childhood hunger and bring new resources into the state.

Participation in National Nutrition Programs*



*Ranked among 50 states and Washington, D.C., with #1 with highest participation rates. Sources listed on final page.



**Breakfast & Summer Success Story:
Newark City Schools Leverages Federal Funds
to Offer Breakfast for All and to Launch
Summer Feeding**

In the 2014-2015 school year, the average daily participation in school breakfast at Newark City Schools was 817 students, just 33% of the total eligible kids. Doug Ute, Superintendent of Newark City Schools, knew this had to change: “We know that learning requires a healthy and attentive student, and that becomes difficult if a child is sitting in the classroom with an empty stomach.”

With consultation from Children’s Hunger Alliance, the school realized many of the children were unable to get to the cafeteria and receive a meal before classes began, resulting in low breakfast participation. In response, we awarded the district a \$25,000 mini grant to help the school district implement Breakfast in the Classroom. After the success of a pilot in a single elementary school in 2016, the district opted to offer free breakfast for all students and brought breakfast into the classroom at all seven elementary schools. As a result, average daily participation increased, jumping from 33% to 70%.

In 2018, Children’s Hunger Alliance also assisted Newark City Schools in applying for a Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom grant, providing them an additional \$60,000 to help make breakfast more accessible in the middle and high schools.

Based on this success, the district turned its focus to expanding summer feeding options for the under served children in community. In order to evaluate how to best utilize the available funds to increase access to summer meals, Children’s Hunger Alliance assisted the district in piloting a mobile summer feeding program.

Seven school buses traveled to 21 stops two days a week in the month of June 2018. On average 150 children visited the buses to eat. The district is working on plans to purchase a vehicle that will travel throughout Newark beginning the summer of 2019 and provide meals to children five days a week. This work will be funded by reimbursements received as a result of school breakfast improvements.

Newark City Schools Breakfast Program Impact	
School Year	Number of Breakfasts Served
2015-2016	214,236
2016-2017	423,344
2017-2018	565,955



Summer Mobile Feeding Success Stories: Hillsboro City Schools and Painesville City Schools

Hillsboro City Schools in southwest Ohio, faced a geographic challenge preventing students from participating in a school-sponsored summer meal program. Their new schools had been built on the outskirts of town, so they no longer served summer meals because children did not have transportation to get there safely. In 2017, Children's Hunger Alliance provided a \$10,000 mini grant that enabled the school district to lease a food truck that delivered meals to seven sites each week day over summer break. This increased children's access to summer meals, leading to an average of 365 children eating each day – and a total of more than 16,000 meals served by the end of summer.

Painesville City Schools in northeast Ohio faced a similar mobility issue with parents not wanting children to cross railroad tracks to eat at their local school during summer break. With a mini grant and guidance from Children's Hunger Alliance, the Painesville City School District reconditioned a trailer to serve as a mobile meal site that delivered lunch to kids five days a week over the summer. "The Lunch Box" provided 14,000 meals its first summer in operation – a 288% increase from the prior year.



Reducing Food Insecurity for At-Risk Children

FY 2020-2021 Biennial Budget Funding Request

Total Biennial Request: \$2,350,000; Leveraging over \$21,000,000 in Federal Funds

Children's Hunger Alliance (CHA) is a statewide non-profit organization founded in 1970 with offices in Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Toledo. Our mission is to ensure children at-risk for food insecurity receive healthy food, nutrition education and engagement in physical activity. Children's Hunger Alliance does this through our collaboration with numerous individuals and organizations by directly feeding children healthy meals in family child care provider homes, childcare centers, and in afterschool programs. We also work to increase breakfast participation in schools and increase the number of children accessing summer meals throughout our state. Additionally, our staff provide nutrition education and physical activity opportunities to children in an effort for them to learn about healthy food choices and stay active to help reduce the incidence of obesity and chronic disease and to promote lifelong healthy habits.

This funding request will allow CHA to sustain our work as one of the largest and most geographically diverse sponsors of the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) throughout the state currently sponsoring 700 in-home family childcare providers (67%), 30 childcare centers and 275 afterschool programs (35%). It will further allow us to continue our advocacy work to increase both school breakfast participation and access to summer meals for the 1 in 5 children in our state that live in food insecure homes. This number is estimated to be over 529,000 children in 2018.

Our work over the past two years, in collaboration with our partners, has allowed us to provide approximately 14 million meals to children at-risk for food insecurity. While there are many food safety net opportunities for families in need, our work specifically addresses children's food insecurity.

In order to sustain our current level of work annually providing approximately 7,000,000 meals to more than 60,000 children at risk of food insecurity we respectfully request \$2,350,000 in the FY 2020-2021 state budget.

Funds received from the state would supplement, not supplant, fundraising efforts through individual, corporate and foundation monies secured by Children's Hunger Alliance. Funding secured by CHA above what is required for our current work would enable us to expand reaching more food insecure children.



FY 2020-2021 Budget Request \$2,350,000; Leveraging over \$21M in Federal Funds

- 1. Program: In-Home Family Childcare Providers, Childcare Centers and Early Childhood Nutrition**
 - **Impact:** Collaborate with approximately 700 in-home family childcare providers and 30 childcare centers serving approximately 15,000 children and providing over 4,000,000 meals annually.

- 2. Program: Afterschool Nutrition Program**
 - **Impact:** Collaborate with over 275 afterschool sites reaching approximately 30,000 children serving approximately 1,000,000 meals working to improve Ohio's national ranking from 48th.

- 3. Program: School Breakfast and Summer Meals**
 - **Impact:** Annually support more than 80 school districts to implement alternative breakfast models to increase participation in an effort to reach the national goal of 70% and improve Ohio's national ranking from 27th. Support summer sponsors to increase both the number of children accessing summer food and the number of summer meal sites to improve Ohio's national ranking from 37th.

- 4. Program: Nutrition Education and Physical Activity**
 - **Impact:** Expand statewide CHA programs to educate children, parents and other child caregivers in healthy food choices and to increase engagement in physical activity.

Biennium Budget Request: \$2,350,000

Leveraged Federal Dollars: \$21,000,000