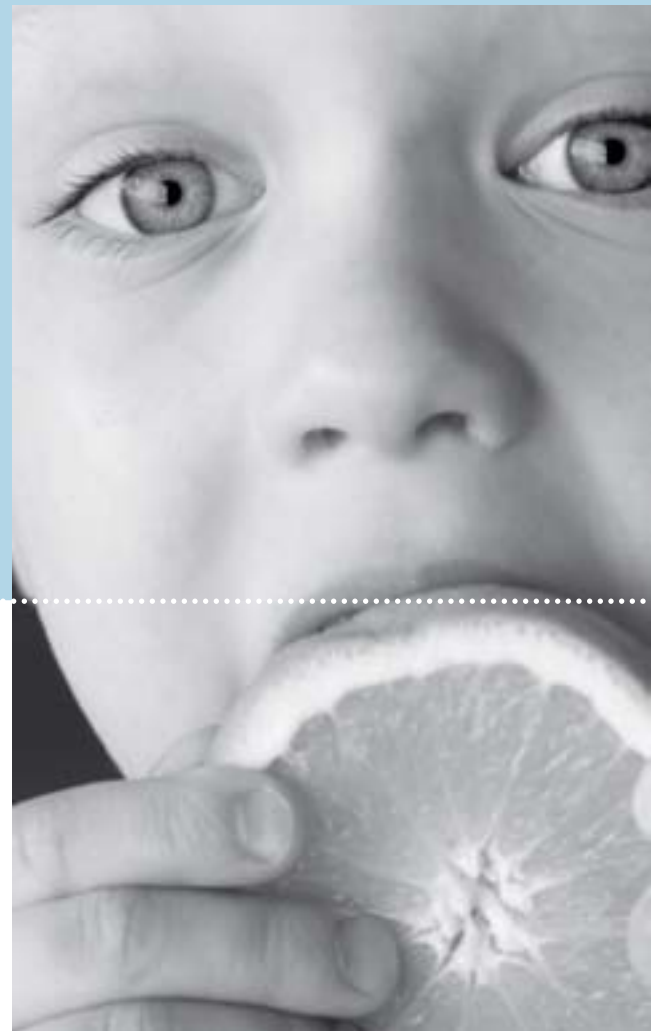
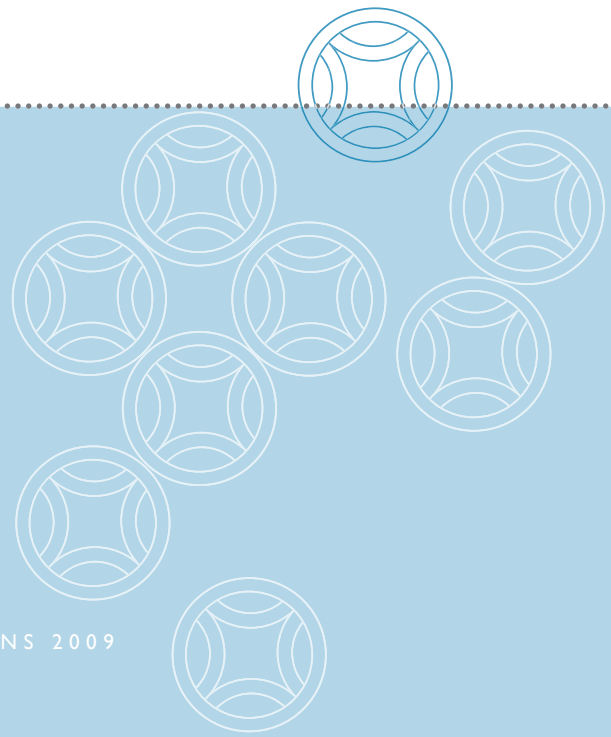


NAHO Roadmap to End Childhood Hunger in America by 2015

PRESENTED BY
NATIONAL ANTI-HUNGER ORGANIZATIONS 2009





OUR VISION: No Childhood Hunger in America by the Year 2015

16.7 million American children—nearly one in four—live in households that do not have access to enough nutritious food to lead active, healthy lives.¹

The NAHO vision is that *by the end of 2015, every child in the United States will be food secure, and every family with children will have access to the nutritious food they need to thrive.*

This will be the generation that breaks the hunger cycle in America.

President Obama has set the ambitious goal of ending child hunger by 2015.ⁱⁱ With 22.5 percent of U.S. children in households experiencing food insecurityⁱⁱⁱ and the repercussions echoing across our society, this goal is critically important. For a nation as wealthy as ours, it is also achievable.

In essence, the promise of the President's goal is that every child in the United States will grow up with access to nutritious food, but the promise is bigger than that. By ensuring that America's children have the nutrition they need to thrive and become healthy, productive citizens, we are fulfilling a promise to all citizens, that of a stronger America.

With an investment of leadership and resources, we can lift all of America's children into food security and eliminate child hunger in the United States once and for all.



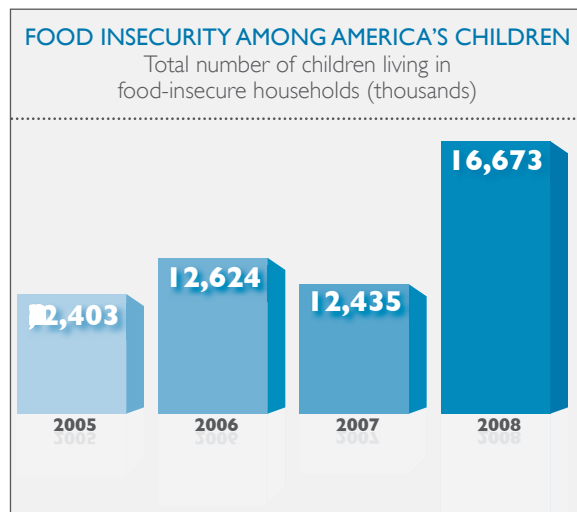
INTRODUCTION

A PROBLEM WE CAN NO LONGER IGNORE

In the world's wealthiest nation, 16.7 million children are at risk of hunger. They live in households that lack the resources to provide the nutritious foods children need to thrive. These children can be found all across America, and according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's report, "Household Food Security in the United States 2008," many do not fit the image that many Americans have of hunger:

- Over half—**55.1 percent**—of those reporting incomes live in households with limited incomes but above the poverty line.
- Nearly half—**48.6 percent**—live in families headed by a married couple.
- Nearly one in six—**16.3 percent**—live outside major metropolitan areas.

Child hunger is unacceptable. We have enough food. We need to ensure that all kids have access to the family and program resources that provide them adequate nutritious food.



Source: Household Food Security in the United States, 2008. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. November 2009.

While child hunger was a significant problem before the recession, the most recent food security data released November 2009 strongly indicates that the recession is making the problem worse. The percentage of children living in food-insecure households rose by 34 percent from 2007 to 2008.^{iv} More households reported food insecurity in 2008 than in any year since USDA began the national food security survey in 1995. Separately, a five-city sample in a Children's HealthWatch survey saw a more than 22 percent increase in food insecurity among low-income families with young children in 2008, the largest year-to-year change since 2001.^v

Other indicators support the concern about growing food insecurity. Increases in unemployment and poverty, and growing demand for food assistance in the last year strongly suggest that child food insecurity rates will continue to rise in 2009:

- Unemployment has risen into the double digits since the recession began in December 2007.^{vi}
- Poverty among children has also risen. In 2008, the poverty rate among children reached 19 percent—the highest of any age group—and represented more than 14 million children, 744,000 more than in 2007.^{vii}
- Demand for emergency food assistance has increased: Food banks reported, on average, a 30 percent increase in service demand between the summers of 2008 and 2009.^{viii}

ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER STRENGTHENS AMERICA

Over the past ten years, researchers have confirmed what educators, child caregivers and healthcare professionals know through observation: When children don't get enough nutritious food, they fall behind physically, cognitively,



academically, emotionally and socially. They, their families, communities and country suffer the life-long consequences of these reduced outcomes. Adults who experienced hunger as children have lower levels of educational and technical skills. Ill-prepared to perform effectively in today's jobs, they create a workforce that is less competitive.^{ix, x, xi, xii, xiii}

Ending childhood hunger will contribute significantly to solving many of America's most pressing and long-lasting problems—healthcare, education, workforce competitiveness, and ultimately economic weakness. Ending childhood hunger in America will improve the health of its people while reducing short- and long-term healthcare costs, elevate the educational status of its people, and help the nation regain its workforce competitiveness and economic strength. By reversing consequences like those listed below, the benefits of ending child hunger will go far beyond individual children.

Health

- Food-insecure children are sick more often, recover more slowly, and are more likely to be hospitalized, at an average cost of \$12,000 per pediatric stay.^{xiv, xv}
- Food-insecure children are more likely to experience headaches, stomachaches, colds, ear infections and fatigue.^{xvi}
- Children who are food insecure are more susceptible to obesity and its harmful health consequences as children and as adults.^{xvii}

Cognition and Academics

- Undernourished children 0-3 years of age cannot learn as much, as fast or as well because their condition changes the fundamental architecture of the brain and central nervous system.^{xviii, xix}
- Lack of enough nutritious food impairs a child's ability to concentrate and perform well in school.^{xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii}

- Nutritionally at-risk children are more susceptible to the negative effects of skipping breakfast on their ability to think and learn.^{xxiv} Conversely, children who eat breakfast score better on tests, show improved learning skills and memory retention, and have lower rates of tardiness and absenteeism.^{xxv}

Emotional and Social Well-Being

- Children who regularly do not get enough nutritious food to eat have significantly higher levels of behavioral, emotional and academic problems^{xxvi} and show increased aggression and anxiety.^{xxvii}
- Teens who regularly do not get enough food to eat are more likely to see a psychologist, be suspended from school and have difficulty getting along with other children.^{xxviii}
- Teachers report higher levels of hyperactivity, absenteeism and tardiness among children who don't get enough nutritious food to eat.^{xxix}
- Hungry children lack the energy to handle complex social interactions or adapt effectively to environmental stresses.^{xxx, xxxi, xxxii}

Ending childhood hunger will make America stronger, now and for generations to come.



RECOMMENDATIONS

NINE ESSENTIAL STEPS TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER BY 2015

NAHO recommends nine steps that will, collectively, eliminate child hunger in America. Because the solution to child hunger requires economic opportunity, income supports, and a nutritional safety net, we propose an approach that involves multiple federal, state and local agencies, nonprofits, private and individual efforts.

NAHO has many reasons to believe that the United States can be free of childhood hunger by 2015. We are a wealthy enough country to do so even in bad times. We have programs already in place that are strong enough to build upon, and the wisdom to put new initiatives in place strategically. Financing some of these proposals will require tough choices. That is why the Administration's leadership will be critical to our success, both to effect the policy changes necessary to achieve the goal and to lead the way for federal agencies, state and local governments, nonprofits and the private sector.

- 1) **Create economic growth that provides opportunity for all.**
A thriving economy with many well-paying jobs has been and will continue to be the most effective long-term weapon against hunger. Jobs that offer economic security and financial independence enable families to provide for themselves. Even before the recession, millions of working families faced a daily struggle against hunger, in part due to stagnating wages for lower-paid workers. As we work to lift the country out of recession, it is essential that the strategy include equitable growth so that all Americans can meet their basic needs and build a strong future for their children.

NAHO recommends pursuing economic and fiscal policies to support a strong and sustainable economic recovery that creates jobs and equitable economic growth.

- 2) **Increase the minimum wage.**
What families need from a job is straightforward: wages and benefits that provide a decent standard of living. We must maintain a minimum wage that keeps pace with the rising cost of living and reflects the value of work in our society. Without sufficient income to cover basic needs—housing, healthcare, child care, and transportation as well as nutrition—families often have to shift their food budget to cover other necessities, and their children suffer.

NAHO recommends increasing the minimum wage so families do not have to sacrifice one basic need for another. When the minimum wage is at an adequate level, it should be indexed to inflation to ensure that it never again falls below what is needed.

- 3) **Establish a tax system that helps families thrive.**
When jobs don't pay enough to allow workers to provide for themselves, there must be other ways to put resources in the hands of working families. Tax credits for low-income workers are designed so that people who work have adequate financial resources to meet their basic needs, including food. Expanding tax credits to provide additional income and to serve more people will help working families make ends meet and keep their children fed.

NAHO recommends retaining or making permanent current temporary expansions to the U.S. tax system and continuing to improve refundable tax credit supports. Key among these are the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

- 4) **Improve key supports to help families with children meet their basic needs.**
It will take time to ensure that wages are sufficient to cover all of life's basics. And history teaches that there will be times in the future when the economy weakens or jobs become scarce. We also know that parents with a disability or those caring for a disabled child or spouse face special challenges to income security which, in turn, affect the family's food security. Until all American families can attain economic self-sufficiency, we must help them meet their most basic needs and maintain employment.

NAHO recommends strengthening programs that support working families with children:

- Make housing affordable to more needy families, particularly through the housing voucher program.
- Strengthen the ability of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and child care programs to serve low-wage workers.
- Implement reforms to unemployment insurance that open up the program to more people who work at low wages or part-time.
- Protect families that include individuals with disabilities.

5) **Ensure access to affordable, quality healthcare.**

Escalating healthcare costs place a heavy burden on working families. Families all too often must choose between medical treatments and other household needs. Frequently, more immediate needs win out over healthcare. This can compound the harmful effects of food insecurity among children. Unexpected illness or medical expenses can send families spiraling out of control as they struggle to afford necessary care.

NAHO recommends ensuring that all Americans have access to affordable, quality healthcare.

6) **Increase access to and participation in the federal nutrition programs.**

When a family cannot put three nutritious meals on the table every day without sacrificing other basic needs, they must be offered assistance. Federal nutrition programs must weave a nutritional safety net that enables all children to get enough to eat. Unfortunately, many eligible children do not receive needed benefits because they lack access to programs or face other barriers to participation. Nutrition programs could do far more to reduce child hunger simply by reaching more kids and their families.

NAHO recommends supporting policies that increase access to and participation in federal nutrition programs, such as:

- Simplifying enrollment and administration.
- Expanding outreach.
- Supporting program flexibility, innovations, and alternatives.
- Increasing availability of the programs in areas where their operations are limited or they are not offered at all.

7) **Expand federal nutrition program eligibility to reach all food-insecure children.**

Many food-insecure children do not qualify for federal nutrition programs under existing eligibility rules. We must expand eligibility for nutrition programs to reach all children who need food assistance, especially among the most underserved low-income families with children.

NAHO recommends restoring Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility to all immigrants lawfully residing in the U.S., encouraging states to use options that raise gross income eligibility and eliminate asset tests, and improving area eligibility thresholds for child nutrition programs.

8) **Ensure that children have not only enough food but enough nutritious food.**

SNAP benefits are not adequate to help families provide a nutritious diet throughout the month. Far too many children are fed foods that are affordable but not nutritious. We must ensure that the benefit that children receive from federal nutrition programs is sufficient to provide a nutritious diet that includes wholesome selections from each food group. We must also increase access to nutritious foods, especially fruits and vegetables, at home, school, and other places that children congregate.

NAHO recommends basing SNAP benefits on a more realistic food budget than the current Thrifty Food Plan; adjusting reimbursement structures for school lunch and breakfast, afterschool, summer, and child care programs; increasing access to adequate grocery stores or produce markets; and supporting farm-to-school and other programs that connect children with healthy foods.

9) **Provide the leadership required to reach the 2015 goal.**

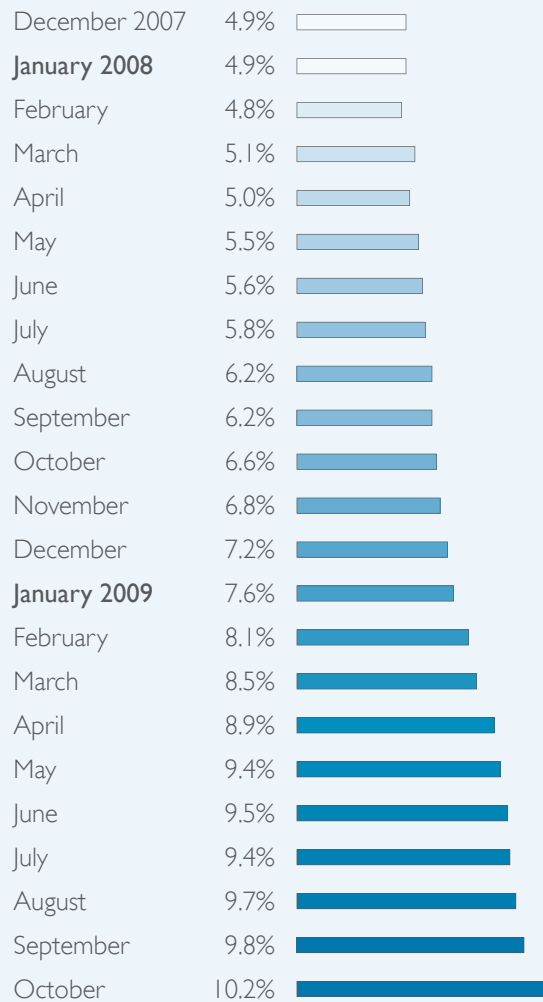
The President and his Administration must provide strong leadership in order to implement the necessary policies outlined here. The U.S. Congress must also enact legislation that changes the economic outlook of the working poor: While the federal government must take the first and biggest steps, ending childhood hunger is not solely its responsibility. Much of the implementation is done at the state and local levels and through schools, community groups, child care, nonprofits and faith-based organizations. To be successful, the Administration must encourage strategic implementation of programs at all levels to connect low-income families and their children with the nutritious food they need.

NAHO recommends collaborating across government departments to leverage federal resources toward meeting the 2015 goal; supporting state and local efforts to end childhood hunger; and encouraging nonprofits, businesses, and individuals to engage in anti-hunger efforts that benefit America's children.



KEY FACTS

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES DECEMBER 2007—CURRENT



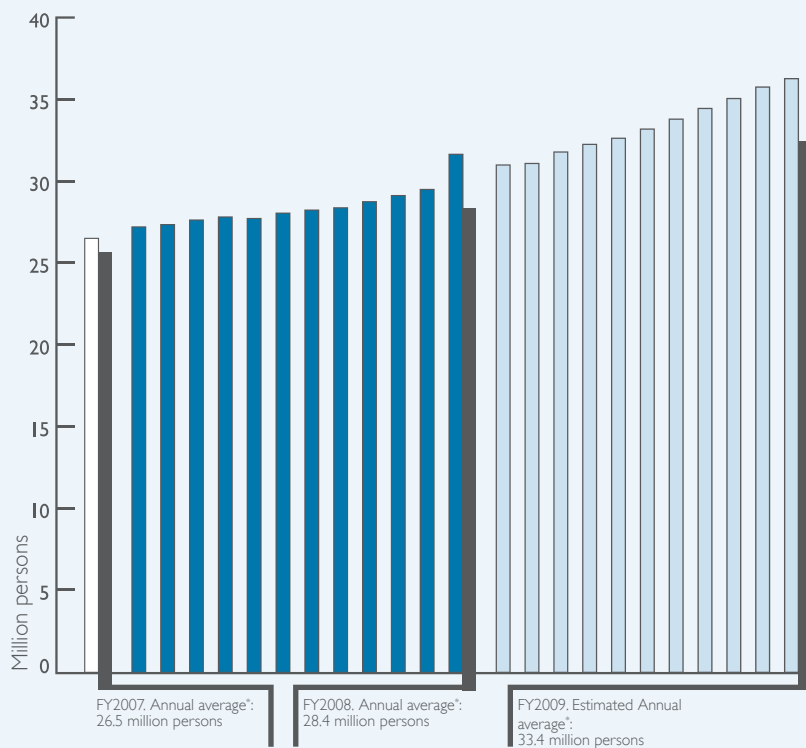
Source: Labor Statistics from the Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 2009.

EXISTING FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS KEY TO ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (NSLP, SBP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)



PARTICIPATION IN SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, 2007—CURRENT



* Annual figures represent the monthly average participation.
Source: Annual and Monthly SNAP Program Data, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, November 2009.

GAPS IN THE SYSTEM

- 10 million eligible children do not get free or reduced-price school breakfast.
- One in seven schools that offer the school lunch program still do not provide school breakfast.
- Only one in six low-income children who ate a school lunch during the regular school year also participated in the summer nutrition programs.
- Even before the current recession, 13 million people were eligible for SNAP but did not participate.

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, National School Breakfast Program Summary, January 28, 2009; Food Research and Action Center, "School Breakfast Scorecard, School Year 2007-2008," January 2009; Food Research and Action Center, "Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report," July 2009; U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, "Trends in Supplemental Food Assistance Program Participation Rates: 2000-2007," June 2009.



MEASUREMENTS & ROLES

HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE ENDED CHILDHOOD HUNGER

Our goal for 2015 is to eliminate hunger and food insecurity for all children in the United States. There are at least two essential ways to measure the progress towards and achievement of this goal:

- National, annually reported figures for children living in food-insecure households as reported by the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the “Household Food Security in the United States.”

We believe America must reduce the number of children living in food-insecure households from the current level of 16.7 million to essentially zero by the end of 2015. We will use the 2015 “Household Food Security in the United States” as the ultimate measure of success.

- State and national data for public and private programs that serve children at risk of hunger and their families.

Measuring the points of service, and participation and eligibility rates of key public and private income support and food assistance programs—at the state and national levels—will provide critical details about where and how America is ending childhood hunger. Local metrics, where available, will also be utilized.

Additionally, a range of metrics must be used to demonstrate qualitative progress and affordability. These will vary by program and jurisdiction, and may need to be better developed at the national, state or local levels.

Together, these measures will demonstrate whether, by the end of 2015, every child in the United States has the resources to access enough nutritious food every single day.

ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER BY 2015: A NATIONAL SOLUTION IS NEEDED

Child hunger is a national problem that has and will continue to require the Federal Government to lead the response. The Administration and Congress are in the best position to build the necessary policies to expand economic opportunity and to ensure that programmatic solutions are effective.

In addition to supporting and investing in the nine recommendations made in this document, the Administration and Congress can work with state and local governments and the private sector to ensure that the federal programs that respond to hunger are fully leveraged in their states and local communities. Close collaboration among government, schools, nonprofit groups, the faith community, business, and labor can build upon the federal programs and policies and expand access and participation for children and their families. Finally, individuals and organizations can play a role in ending childhood hunger with a focus of their volunteer and community service.



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ABOUT THE NATIONAL ANTI-HUNGER ORGANIZATIONS

(NAHO) is a coalition of the leading secular and faith-based organizations working to end hunger in the United States. We are dedicated to sound public policies that will ensure economic independence and food security for all Americans. For the past eight years, NAHO has worked collaboratively to strengthen federal nutrition programs and raise awareness of hunger in the United States. NAHO published the 2003 "Millennium Declaration to End Hunger in America," and the 2004 and 2008 "Blueprint to End Hunger."

The following people assisted with the development of this document: Bill Ayers (World Hunger Year), George Braley (Feeding America), Ed Cooney (Congressional Hunger Center), Stacy Dean (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities), Tony Hall (The Alliance to End Hunger), Caryn Long (Feeding America), Sophie Milam (Bread for the World), Pat Nicklin (Share Our Strength), Cate Puzo (Share Our Strength), Eric Schockman (MAZON), Ellen Vollinger (Food Research and Action Center), and Jim Weill (Food Research and Action Center).



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