



MASW
Since 1901

Missouri Association for Social Welfare

606 East Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO 65101
Telephone: (573) 634-2901
Fax: (573) 635-1648
Email: citizenvoice@masw.org
Web Page: <http://www.masw.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 10, 2013

Contact: Christine Woody
christinemasw@hotmail.com; 573-690-7662 cell
or Jeanette Mott Oxford, 314-775-3261 cell

Participation in Summer Meals in Missouri Continues to Fall Short

(JEFFERSON CITY, Mo) June 10, 2013 – Participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs continues to fall short in Missouri, with only 28,425 low-income children receiving summer meals on an average day in July 2012, according to a new national report released today. Jeanette Mott Oxford, executive director of the Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW), noted “This decrease compounds problems from the previous July when Missouri had a very low participation rate. Summer meals only reached 7.9 children for every 100 low-income children who got regular school year school meals in the 2011-2012 school year.”

Missouri’s performance of less than one in ten was worse than the national rate, which reached only one in seven low-income children, according to *Hunger Doesn’t Take a Vacation*, an annual analysis by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). The report measures participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs by comparing the number of children receiving summer meals to the number of low-income children receiving school lunch during the regular school year.

“Missouri is failing to close the summer hunger gap, and children are paying the price,” said Oxford. “It is in everyone’s best interest to ensure that children have adequate nutrition during the summer so they stay healthy and are ready to learn.”

Low participation means missed meals for children and missed dollars for the state. If Missouri were to reach 40 children with summer food for every 100 children from households with low incomes who get school lunch during the regular school year, an attainable goal, Missouri would have fed 115,227 more children every day in July 2012 and brought in \$8,045,752 more federal dollars to do so.

Designed to fill the food gap when school is out, the Summer Nutrition Programs fight hunger and contribute to better nutrition for children during the summer. MASW noted that several states managed to increase participation and make significant improvements to the quality of the meals offered. Such improvements can be a model for Missouri and local agencies to replicate.

-MORE-

Missouri Continues to Fall Short in Summer Nutrition ADD ONE

State and community leaders also can follow the lead of U.S. Department of Agriculture, which continues to prioritize participation in summer meals – USDA strategies include its annual Summer Food Awareness Week (June 10 to 15, 2013) to raise awareness of the program and its efforts to reduce administrative barriers to make it easier for sites and sponsors to participate. Such actions will move the programs in the right direction and should be continued.

“USDA is providing strong leadership with its emphasis on improving summer meals, but Congress will need to fix some of the underlying problems in the programs in the 2015 Child Nutrition Reauthorization to truly repair the Summer Nutrition Programs,” said FRAC President Jim Weill. “Congress must take a fresh look at the Summer Nutrition Programs and consider ways to improve this faltering program so it more effectively addresses hunger and obesity.”

The Summer Nutrition Programs, which include the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program, should be filling the food gap for the thousands of low-income children who rely on school breakfast and lunch during the school year to help keep hunger at bay. Through these programs, children, aged 18 and under, can receive free meals at participating summer sites at schools, parks, other public agencies, and nonprofits. In Missouri, families can find nearby summer meal sites by going to the following website:

http://gis.dhss.mo.gov/Website/AGS_summerFood/summerFood.html

X X X X

About the report:

Data for Missouri came from an annual report released by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), a national anti-hunger advocacy and research group. The FRAC report, ***Hunger Doesn't Take A Vacation***, gives data for all states and looks at national trends. FRAC measures national summer participation during the month of July, when typically all children are out of school throughout the month and lose access to school meals. The report is available online at www.frac.org.

About the Food Research and Action Center:

The Food Research and Action Center is the lead advocacy organization working to end hunger in America through stronger public policies. For more information, visit www.frac.org. Find FRAC on Facebook at [facebook.com/foodresearchandactioncenter](https://www.facebook.com/foodresearchandactioncenter) or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/fractweets. FRAC's Campaign to End Childhood Hunger aims to provide all children in this country with the good nutrition they need to be healthy, to learn, and to grow into productive adults who fulfill their potential. It is working both to raise low-income families' incomes and to expand the reach of federal nutrition supports.

About MASW:

MASW (www.masw.org), founded in 1901, provides leadership, research, education, and advocacy to improve public policy and programs impacting the health and welfare of all Missourians. MASW played major roles in the initiation of the Missouri Commission on Human Rights, the reduction of sales tax on food by three cents, development of the Missouri Housing Trust Fund, and lawsuits leading to the creation of the Missouri Foundation for Health and provision of non-emergency transportation to Medicaid clients, plus many other social justice victories.