

IMMEDIATE STEPS

NAHO Roadmap to End Childhood Hunger in America by 2015

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This roadmap lays out the steps we must take to eliminate childhood hunger by 2015. Below is a list of actions that public officials must take in the near term to move us toward that goal.

Enact a Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill that takes decisive steps toward the 2015 goal.

The nation's child nutrition programs, including school meals, summer and afterschool food, child care food and WIC, are up for renewal in 2010. The President and the Congress should provide major new investments to fill the gaps in current programs, reduce access barriers, support outreach, boost participation and improve nutrition.

Make permanent the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) SNAP benefit increase and build on it.

Congress should make permanent the critically important temporary SNAP benefit increase that was enacted as a part of the 2009 ARRA as a crucial step toward providing monthly benefits that are adequate to purchase a healthy diet.

Continue, make permanent and enhance the ARRA refundable tax credit improvements.

The ARRA was a great start in meeting the goal to end childhood hunger by 2015. Congress should continue and make permanent its changes in refundable tax credits that benefit low-income families with children, and in particular strengthen the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Provide assistance with state administrative costs for nutrition programs.

Congress should provide substantial temporary federal funds to cover state administrative costs associated with qualifying and enrolling families in SNAP and child nutrition programs. With the current economic crisis resulting in vastly increased demand for these programs, supplementary funds would help end logjams in fiscally-stressed states, improve turn-around times and more quickly connect families with programs they urgently need. Such assistance should be accompanied by greatly enhanced efforts to reduce unnecessary, time-consuming and costly administrative red tape.

Strengthen the unemployment insurance safety net.

Congress should extend unemployment insurance benefits and improve coverage to help the millions of jobless Americans suffering in the recession.

Accelerate state and local action to meet the recession-created crisis and help end childhood hunger.

State and local governments should make it a priority to increase enrollment of low-income families in federal nutrition programs and other critical income supports. They should maximize the support that such programs provide by adequately staffing programs, easing access, and taking advantage of all existing options to expand eligibility, improve benefits, conduct outreach, and increase the number of program site locations.

