



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>

Missouri Association for Social Welfare, Hunger Task Force's hope for the 2007 Farm Bill; Food Stamp Program:

- The Food Stamp Program's basic entitlement structure must be maintained.
- Adequacy of Benefits Must Be Improved:
 - The first step to reducing hunger in the U.S. is to ensure that everyone in the Food Stamp Program has the resources to assist them in purchasing and preparing a nutritionally adequate diet. Neither the average food stamp benefit level of \$1 per person per meal, nor the \$10 per household monthly minimum benefit is sufficient to help families purchase an adequate diet. This dietary shortfall negatively impacts recipients' health and nutrition and impedes the ability of children to learn and adults to work.
- Access to the Program Must Be Expanded:
 - Too many people in our communities are in need of food stamps but cannot get them. Only 33 percent of the people in food bank lines are enrolled in food stamps. Only 84% of eligible Missourians are receiving the benefit (and that is the highest percentage in the country). More people need to be educated about the program. Also the application process needs to be made easier for food stamp recipients.
- Eligibility Guidelines need to be Expanded:
 - More people are in need of food but are excluded from the Food Stamp Program. They include working poor families with savings slightly above decades-old and outdated resource limits, many legal immigrants, and numerous indigent jobless people seeking employment, ex-drug felons.
- Program Simplification and Streamlining for Caseworkers and Clients Must Continue:
 - While food stamp outreach and nutrition education are achieving important advances, these efforts need more resources, and enrollments are hampered by shortfalls in state technology and supports. Too many eligible people—especially working poor and elderly persons—are missing out on benefits.
- Change the Name of the Program:
 - Food Stamps do not adequately describe the program as it exists today. No one uses stamps to buy their food anymore; they use debit like cards that link to their benefits. A new name is needed to better describe the program.