

## Missouri Association for Social Welfare

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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

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### **Missouri Association For Social Welfare Issues Call for Action to Improve Missouri's Summer Nutrition Program's Participation**

[Jefferson City, Missouri] – June 7, 2011 – Participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs continues to miss many low-income children in Missouri, with only 40, 509 low-income children receiving summer meals in July 2010, according to a new national report released today. The Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW) noted that participation went down from the previous July, and reached only 17 children for every 100 who got regular school year school meals.

MASW issued a call for action in the state to ensure that more low-income children get nutritious summer meals – both this summer and the next.

Missouri's performance as well as National performance is documented in *Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation*, an annual analysis by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). The FRAC report measures national and state trends in summer nutrition and compares states by determining for each the number of low-income children receiving summer food compared to the number of such children who receive regular school year lunch.

The fallout of the Great Recession not only led to lost jobs and wages but also led to cuts in outreach efforts, summer schools and youth programs. These cuts led to fewer summer meal sites for children; as a result, participation fell by 20 percent in Missouri from the previous July.

“The math is simple here. Fewer sites mean that fewer children will get summer meals and more will go hungry. Missouri is failing to meet the needs of low-income children,” said Bob Quinn, Executive Director of The Missouri Association For Social Welfare “This is a time for action, and we are calling on everyone in the state to play their part to increase summer meal participation.”

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 low-income children who get school lunch during the regular school year, an attainable goal, Missouri would have fed almost 100,000 more children every day in July 2010 and brought in approximately \$6.5 million more federal dollars to do so.

*“THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE SHALL BE THE SUPREME LAW”*

“There is an opportunity for all stakeholders to make a difference in participation and ensure that more children can access summer meals,” said Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center. “The Summer Nutrition Programs are a vital part of our nation’s nutrition safety net. There is a foundation on which we can build and which we cannot afford to weaken further. From the federal level to the state and local levels, we must make access to Summer Nutrition a top priority.”

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is helping lead the charge with the first-ever *National Summer Food Service Program Week: “Food That’s In, When School Is Out.”* This week-long campaign (June 6-10) aims to raise awareness about the risk of hunger low-income children face during the summer months and the benefits of summer food.

The Summer Nutrition Programs, which include the Summer Food Service Program and the National School Lunch Program, fill the food gap for the thousands of low-income Missouri’s 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 using this interactive map:

[http://gis.dhss.mo.gov/Website/AGS\\_summerFood/summerFood.html#](http://gis.dhss.mo.gov/Website/AGS_summerFood/summerFood.html#)

**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. The report measures participation in the Summer Nutrition Programs by comparing the number of low-income children receiving summer meals to the number of low-income children receiving school lunch during the regular school year. 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](http://www.frac.org).

For more information about the Missouri Association for Social Welfare visit [www.masw.org](http://www.masw.org)

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