



Missourians to End Poverty

Bringing the Community Together to End Poverty

Food Health Education Energy & Housing Family & Economic Security

www.communityaction.org

Who are the

*Missourians to
End Poverty?*

AmerenUE

Beyond Housing- St. Louis

Cafe Via Roma

Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of St. Louis

Catholic Charities of Kansas
City - St. Joseph, Inc.

Citizens for Missouri's
Children

Community Action Agency of
St. Louis County

Community Action Partner-
ship of Greater St. Joseph

Community Awareness and
Resource Exchange (CARE)

Social Concerns Office -
Diocese of Jefferson City

Eileen Wallace Consulting

Faith Beyond Walls

Gardner Capital, Inc.

Green Hills Community Action
Agency

Health Care Foundation of
Greater Kansas City

Kansas City Power and Light

Laclede Gas Company

Lutheran Family & Children's
Services of Missouri

Madsen & Wright
Governmental Consultants

Food Policy Statement

To reinforce the policy platform of Missourians to End Poverty, our policy statements center around the intertwined five pillars of poverty: **health care, housing & energy, economic & family security, food, and education.** Our goal is to raise community awareness and understanding of the impact of poverty as well as create concrete ideas with communities about local and state solutions to ending poverty.

Food Insecurity*

Food insecurity and hunger are facts of life for too many Missourians. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, an average of 12.3% of Missourians faced the uncertainties of acquiring sufficient food to lead healthy and active lives over the period of 2004-2006. This average represents a significant increase from that documented for 2001-2003 (10.4%) and 1996-1998 (10.1%). During 2004-2006, an average of 4.4% of our citizens experienced hunger and the physical, psychological, and social harms of simply not having enough food. Regretfully, recent trends in hunger are not positive ones for our state, as current averages for hunger represent more than a 20% increase over the averages for 2001-2003 (3.6%) and 1996-1998 (3%). Missouri hunger statistics for 2008 note that 12.9% of the population is food insecure, the overall poverty rate is 13%, and the child poverty rate is 17.7%. (1) An estimated 728, 400 Missourians received assistance from emergency food programs in 2009, 77% of whom are food insecure. (2)

The best predictor of food insecurity and hunger in Missouri, and throughout the nation, is poverty. Also, research has demonstrated that poverty is positively correlated both with food insecurity and with chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension. Many of Missouri's counties that have the highest food insecurity and hunger also have the highest levels of residents with these poor health conditions. (3)

Moving Toward Food Security*

The problem of food insecurity and hunger in Missouri and in the nation is solvable. It isn't an issue of food production because we produce more than enough to feed everyone already. It is instead an issue of the equitable distribution of food and an issue of societal and political will. The simple and disturbing truth is that the situation of food insecurity and hunger exists because we as Americans, as Missourians, tolerate it.

Every Missourian can do something to end hunger. Involvement begins with being informed. An excellent resource is the *Missouri Hunger Atlas*: www.missourifamilies.org/mo-hungeratlas, a project of the Interdisciplinary Center for Food Security, University of Missouri, Columbia. Missourians can also provide financial and volunteer assistance to local food pantries and social service agencies and become involved in social justice advocacy.

Missourians to End Poverty continued...

Missouri Association for Community Action

Missouri Association for Social Welfare

Missouri Budget Project

Missouri Career Center

Missouri Department of Mental Health

Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division

Missouri Family Health Council

Missouri Food Bank Association

Missouri Gas Energy

Missouri Head Start Association

Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office

Missouri Health Alliance

Missouri IMPACT

Missouri Kidney Program

Missouri National Education Association

Missouri Public Service Commission

Northwest Workforce Investment Board

Ozarks Food Harvest

Partnership for Children

Primaris/CLAIM

Ready Aim Advocate!

Salvation Army

Treasures

United Services Community Action Agency

United Way of Central Missouri

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency

* Food security, as the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program within the United States Department of Agriculture defines it, refers to “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life”. Food insecurity occurs when that quality of life is threatened by malnutrition and hunger.

Public Policy Action Strategies

- Begin full utilization of Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) at farmers markets, and include use with local producers.
- Increase funding and outreach for Food Stamps/SNAP.
- Increase funding and outreach for WIC.
- Increase the number of farmers markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) projects.
- Support funding for development of community gardens, especially in low income neighborhoods.
- Increase the number of local, sustainable, and green processing facilities for meat, poultry, and produce.
- Restructure farm policy to support small and family farms.
- Couple food assistance with health and nutrition assistance.
- Place greater emphasis on the nutritional and health impacts of food choices among staff and clients of all public and private programs.
- Applaud school districts who have instituted healthier and more nutritious school meal programs; grant special recognition to model districts.
- Target resources and new strategies to counties characterized by high need and low performance; see pp. 29-31, *Missouri Hunger Atlas*.
- Increase support of public and private food assistance programs and increase their educational outreach.
- Strengthen linkages between private sector temporary food assistance programs (e.g., food pantries, soup kitchens) and local food systems (e.g., community gardens, farmers markets).
- Provide technical assistance to communities to engage in community food security assessments and the implementation of action plans growing out of the assessments.
- Engage in social justice and public policy advocacy on issues related to food security and hunger.

1. *Missouri Hunger Atlas*, p.32 2. *Hunger in America 2010, Missouri State Report*, a study conducted for Feeding America (formerly America’s Second Harvest) in 2009 by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. 3. *Missouri Hunger Atlas*, p.32,34