



Fact Sheet

Senator Jay Rockefeller, West Virginia

Fighting Childhood Hunger in West Virginia

What's the need?

According to the Children's Defense Fund, there are nearly 96,000 children living in poverty in West Virginia and nearly 41,000 living in extreme poverty. More than 200,000 West Virginia children receive free or reduced school meals.

In a 2010 study, scientists found that childhood hunger has lasting effects on a child's health. And studies have shown that hunger has a detrimental impact on a child's ability to perform well in school.

For too many children, summer break brings hunger – as food insecurity peaks during summer months for low-income children. 32% of pantries, 42% of kitchens and 18% of shelters in the Feeding America network reported “many more children in the summer” being served by their programs.

What's being done in West Virginia?

Through food banks and their agencies, children and families in need are served year-round through donations and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities. As part of their efforts, food banks organize local “backpack programs” to fight hunger among children who rely on free or reduced meals in school.

In addition, West Virginia administers the Summer Food Service Program, a USDA program designed to fill the nutrition gap for children during the summer. According to the Children's Defense Fund, nearly 17,000 West Virginia children participate in the program. Although not part of the Farm Bill, this program is a critical component of the larger effort to fill the summer nutrition gap.

What will the Farm Bill do?

The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 (Farm Bill) covers the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which provides funding for food banks; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – the program formerly known as food stamps); and other nutrition programs. The legislation increases mandatory funding for TEFAP and provides critical funding for SNAP. In each month of fiscal year 2010, SNAP served nearly 9 million households with children, representing 49 percent of all SNAP households.