

COMBATING CHILDHOOD HUNGER

Supporting the nutritional needs of
America's children



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

We urge members of Congress to renew and strengthen our nation's child nutrition programs by:

- ◆ Increasing funding to these programs, which will ensure access to underserved and low-income children;
- ◆ Securing advances made in child nutrition over the last several decades by maintaining a reliance on science-based standards and recommendations as they relate to fruit, vegetables, and healthy grains;
- ◆ Investing in and expanding access to child nutrition programs in rural and Native American communities;
- ◆ Funding WIC at \$6.684 billion to adequately serve anticipated caseloads; and
- ◆ Addressing the rising cost of nutritious food due to unstable climate conditions.

Why child nutrition programs matter

In a nation of great wealth and resources, no child should ever go hungry. However, [15.8 million children in the United States](#) live in households that struggle with hunger. For too many children, a meal served at school is the only food that can be counted on each day. Lack of access to nutritious food sets children apart at an early age, resulting in issues like lower test scores, decreased attention in the classroom, or sickness. Childhood hunger also has life-long negative impacts on a child's development and growth stretching all the way into adulthood. Access to consistent and nutritious meals gives children the fundamental and necessary elements needed to grow, learn, love and play.

This year, Congress has the opportunity to improve access to quality, nutritious meals for millions of children—many of whom live in rural or marginalized communities. A series of national nutrition programs helps combat childhood hunger by supporting healthy meals and snacks for children of all ages, both in and out of school.

Congress must regularly renew funding for these programs in order to ensure that our nation's children have adequate access to nutritious food where they live, play and learn.

Successful and cost-effective federal programs play a critical role in helping children in nearly every school program and community across the United States. These programs include: the **Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children** (WIC), which provide nutritious foods, education and access to health care for millions of low-income new mothers and infants; the **National School Lunch Program**; and the **Summer Food Service Program**, both of which guarantee that millions of low-income children have access to healthy food throughout the year.

Our Lutheran voice

"If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday" - Isaiah 58:10

As a reconciling and healing presence, [the ELCA] is called to minister to human need with compassion and imagination. God works through the family, education, the economy, the state and other structures necessary for life in the present age. ("The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective").

Our church is committed to ending hunger at home and around the world. A critically important way to work toward this goal is by encouraging our

Take action now! www.ELCA.org/advocacy  ELCA Advocacy  @ELCAadvocacy

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About our nation's child nutrition programs:

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, [15.8 million \(21.6 percent\)](#) of our nation's children live in households that struggle against hunger every day. In 2012, 10.8 million low-income children received free or reduced-price breakfasts and 20.8 million low-income children received free or reduced-price lunches. These programs effectively and efficiently prevent hunger and a host of educational and health-related deficiencies for children in nearly every community throughout the country.

Every five years, Congress reauthorizes (renews) federal child nutrition programs that feed millions of our nation's most vulnerable low-income children. Included in this reauthorization are the following programs:

- ◆ National School Lunch Program
- ◆ School Breakfast Program
- ◆ Child and Adult Care Food Program
- ◆ Summer Food Service Program
- ◆ Afterschool Snack and Meal Program
- ◆ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- ◆ Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Learn more:

USDA "Child Nutrition Programs" webpage:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/child-nutrition-programs>

USDA "Women, Infants, and Children" webpage:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic>

U.S. Census Bureau, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2013" :

<http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p60-249.pdf>

Food Resource Action Center "Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization" webpage:

<http://frac.org/leg-act-center/cnr-priorities/>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities "Child Nutrition and WIC" webpage:

<http://www.cbpp.org/topics/child-nutrition-and-wic>