

Section One: Introduction

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In Washington State, nearly 300,000 children live in households that struggle to put three nutritious meals on the table each day. Of these children, 35% -105,000 kids - live in households that experience hunger on a regular basis. Childhood hunger in Washington is real despite the lack of public awareness and urgency around the issue. End Childhood Hunger Washington is committed to bringing the issue to the forefront and making sure every child in every corner of the state gets three nutritious meals each and every day.

End Childhood Hunger Washington is a collaborative effort of the Children's Alliance, a statewide children's advocacy organization and the host organization for End Childhood Hunger Washington, and Share Our Strength, a national anti-hunger organization based in Washington DC. Together, the organizations are aligning efforts around ten goals and tailoring implementation strategies that will directly combat childhood hunger. This initiative has the support of national funders, including The UPS Foundation and Share Our Strength, as well as local foundations and donors. At the local level, the Children's Alliance collaborates with partners across the state with the expertise to customize national planning elements for local implementation. Partners include representatives and constituents from various fields and efforts that directly inform, influence and impact the desired outcomes of the strategic plan for End Childhood Hunger Washington. (See

acknowledgements for complete list of partners, and contributors to this plan.

To end childhood hunger in Washington, systems, policies and programs will need to align and strategically engage with one another. In addition, the issue of childhood hunger needs to gain public awareness while positioning itself as a solvable problem. Once the public and policymakers recognize the issue as urgent, the solutions become accessible and straightforward - surround children with nutritious food where they live, learn and play. This will ensure every child in every corner of the state gets three nutritious meals each and every day.

END CHILDHOOD HUNGER WASHINGTON'S MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

The Children's Alliance and Share Our Strength launched this project by bringing together a wide range of interested Washingtonians, including representatives from the food industry, agriculture, state agencies, schools, food banks and other community groups. More than 80 people participated in a summit in October 2007 to start drafting a blueprint to end childhood hunger in Washington.

Summit participants developed the following vision, mission and values for End Childhood Hunger Washington:

Vision

Every child in every corner of the state gets three nutritious meals each and every day.

Mission

Organize and collaborate across the state to develop a community-wide campaign to end childhood hunger.

Values

Put kids first

- We believe in responding to childhood hunger in ways that meet children and their families where they live, learn and play.
- We ensure policies, programs and opportunities to address the real, on-the-ground needs of kids and their families.

Food security for every child

- We believe programs and policies must be tailored to meet the needs of children of all ages from different regions and cultural backgrounds.

Collaboration

- We recognize that ending childhood hunger requires collaboration. We will succeed by bringing together a broad group of community partners joined by a single mission: to end childhood hunger in Washington.
- We believe there are multiple components to ending childhood hunger. All elements of the plan must work together to reach every child.

Anti-racist practice

- We believe economic injustice lies at the root of hunger in our society. Our efforts must acknowledge and address the impact of racism on our systems and institutions.
- We strive for culturally competent and responsive solutions to childhood hunger that are based on reaching out to and embracing the diverse communities affected by childhood hunger.

Integrity

- We believe that as adults, we are individually and collectively responsible for the well-being of children. We will hold ourselves accountable for ending childhood hunger through sound, competent and effective practices, policies and programs.

Section Two: Situational Analysis and Strategic Approaches

Beginning in 1995 and for eight years following, Washington ranked among the top five states in the United States for hunger. By 2006, Washington ranked 32nd in the nation for hunger. Washington's improved ranking is due, in part, to policy changes and state investments. However, the change is largely due to poorer performances by other states. Rather than measuring Washington's status by other states' performance, End Childhood Hunger Washington aims to focus on eliminating childhood hunger in Washington on our merits, not relative to other states. Improved rankings are laudable, but ultimately no child should grow up hungry.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The current state of childhood hunger in Washington serves as a guide for strategically approaching the issue. End Childhood Hunger Washington conducted a situational analysis using a statewide lens. The statewide data evaluated alongside national norms and trends reveal the following:

Hunger affects more than one-quarter of a million households in Washington.²

- One in 10 households is food insecure. "Food insecure" means a family is not certain all household members will be able to eat.
- Households that are food insecure include nearly 300,000 children.
- In 3.6 percent of all Washington households, someone is going hungry.

- African-American and Latino households are two to three times more likely than the general population to experience food insecurity. Households headed by single women are more than three times more likely to be food insecure.

Washington has not taken full advantage of federal programs already in place to combat childhood hunger.

- 38 percent of all students in Washington qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Of those who qualify, on an average day in 2005–2006, 71 percent participated in school lunch, and only 29 percent participated in school breakfast.
- Only 14 percent of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals during the 2006–2007 school year were served by the summer meal program.
- Over the past 10 years in Washington, participation by family home childcare providers in the federal childcare food program has declined 9 percent.
- In Washington, only 68 percent of people eligible for food stamp benefits receive them.

Hunger and access to anti-hunger programs vary widely in communities across Washington.

- The statewide food insecurity rate is 10.3 percent. Yet in the region that covers Yakima, Kittitas and Klickitat counties, the rate was almost 21 percent.

²"Household Food Security in the United States 2006", USDA Economic Research Service 2007.

- In Columbia and Asotin counties, 20 percent of kids who receive free or reduced-price meals at school received meals in the summer of 2007. Yet that same year in four other counties, there was not a single summer meal program offered.
- In Washington, 49 percent of all infants are served by the WIC Program, designed to help low-income mothers and young children. Yet in rural counties, 66 percent of all infants are served by the WIC Program.
- Snohomish County has the largest number of childcare sites—1,154—participating in the federal childcare food program. Four counties have only one participating site.

People don't believe childhood hunger is a major problem in Washington, but they do believe it is a problem that can be solved.

- A majority of people in a national survey ³ identified hunger primarily as an international problem affecting developing economies, not a problem in the United States.
- Unlike other health issues, most people don't have firsthand experience with hunger.
- Yet more than 60 percent of people surveyed said the government spends too little to reduce hunger in the United States, and 76 percent of people surveyed believe hunger can be reduced drastically if it is made a priority.

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

End Childhood Hunger Washington identified five strategic approaches as an overarching framework for the multiple activities identified in the plan. These approaches group activities according to the type of work involved:

- Policy change
- Collaborative programming
- Strategic funding
- Targeted awareness campaigns
- Measures of progress

All five strategic approaches to ending childhood hunger will contribute to successfully meeting the plan's goals; these strategic approaches are interconnected and interdependent. Participants in the planning process noted that different organizations and individuals will be most suited to activities that fall within some—not all—of the approaches identified.

Policy Change

End Childhood Hunger Washington is focused on legislative and administrative policy changes at all levels that will result in greater participation in and improvement of underutilized public and private anti-hunger programs.

Federal policy determines a large part of the public sector resources and programs articulated in the plan's 10 goals (on pages 4 and 5). End Childhood Hunger Washington collaborates with other states to positively influence federal legislation and budget priorities. This plan also focuses on strategic state investments that leverage federal resources available through federal policy. At the state level, End Childhood Hunger Washington advocates for policy changes that

³Survey by: Alliance to End Hunger, March 2006.

improve access for low-income families, rural families and families of color to anti-hunger programs in local communities.

Additionally, a significant component of policy change is administrative: monitoring how policy is translated into practice to ensure that programs and policies meet families' needs effectively, respectfully and appropriately.

Collaborative Programming

Nutrition programs based in communities across Washington provide food assistance to children through schools, parks, after-school programs, clinics, food banks and more. End Childhood Hunger Washington's analysis demonstrates that these resources are unevenly distributed, resulting in gaps in services for children at risk of hunger. Comprehensive nutrition supports are available in only a few places in the state.

Collaborative programming is a means of identifying gaps, sharing information and expertise appropriately and expanding the reach of successful programs across systems. In addition, it includes coordinating the work of individual organizations within the framework of End Childhood Hunger Washington.

Elements of the plan focus on state-level program support and coordination as well as bolstering efforts to meet locally identified needs. End Childhood Hunger Washington will facilitate coordination and communications among state agencies, statewide and community-based organizations, and new programs with the goal of creating a network of comprehensive nutrition services that reaches every corner of the state.

Strategic Funding and Resource Development

Participants in the planning process outlined concerns about the long-term investments necessary to achieve the goal of ending childhood hunger in Washington. There are opportunities for investment and outreach in local communities; however, local funding for anti-hunger initiatives currently exists in only a few communities. Strategic resource development will produce plans that present a strong case to funders and leverage public funds. Creative thinking by state agencies and local nonprofits about leveraging federal and state resources will result in more efficiency and a stronger case for investment. By bringing together the groups' ideas and targeting solicitation of funds, End Childhood Hunger Washington hopes to surface public and private funding sources, share ideas with individual organizations, and send proposals to potential funders that are backed by a collaborative approach to solving the problem.

Targeted Awareness

Many participants in the planning process identified the need for a coordinated public awareness campaign to create greater concern about the problem of childhood hunger in Washington and build a stronger expectation that the problem can be solved. Marketing and communications research does not support the concept of mounting a broad general awareness campaign; however, End Childhood Hunger Washington identified the need for more targeted awareness campaigns. These targeted awareness strategies would support the 10 goals outlined in this plan by identifying communications needs for specific audiences who are critical to effectively implementing the plan.

Each goal in the plan identifies specific awareness initiatives and identifies a target

audience for each. Taken together, these targeted campaigns will have a broader impact on ending childhood hunger than a more generalized awareness campaign.

Measures of Progress

Participants in the planning process emphasized the importance of measuring growth progressively in addition to measuring final outcomes. They also noted the importance of recognizing both qualitative and quantitative progress as significant and valuable. Each goal has a variety of objectives that fall within a strategic approach. However, one measure may serve multiple objectives since combined efforts often work together to influence both qualitative and quantitative change. End Childhood Hunger will collect, analyze and report data that measures progress in each goal.