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Advocates, lawmakers take action on hunger

TUES., FEB. 19, 2013 – Leaders from the faith community, charitable organizations and community groups this week are calling on state leaders to fight childhood hunger by restoring a harmful cut to State Food Assistance.

Childhood hunger affects 1 in 4 children in Washington, according to the [Children's Alliance's analysis](#) of 2012 data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And last year's cut to State Food Assistance plunged [thousands more children](#) deeper into hunger.

"No child should go hungry here in Washington," says Debbie Christian, executive director of the Auburn Food Bank. "Singling out the children of immigrants to pay the price for hard times is simply not fair."

The Auburn Food Bank is one of 58 co-signers of a [community letter](#) to legislators and Gov. Jay Inslee to "restore the integrity of our food security system" by fairly funding the State Food Assistance program.

Some lawmakers have taken personal action to show their support for anti-hunger strategies. Eight legislators are fasting for hungry children.

Their fast begins today at sundown and continues through the day on Wed., Feb. 20, coinciding with [Interfaith Advocacy Day](#). The fast ends with an evening program at United Churches of Olympia.

Then on Friday, Hunger Action Day brings anti-hunger advocates together to call for the restoration of [State Food Assistance](#), Washington's smart answer to childhood hunger. For more than 15 years, Washington has strategically leveraged federal resources to make sure food stamps help families when times are tough. State Food Assistance creatively piggybacks on the food stamp program to efficiently deliver benefits to eligible families. But during the recession, state legislators cut State Food Assistance benefits in half. The cut went into effect in July 2012, damaging nearly 14,000 children's access to healthy food.

"Hungry kids can't learn," says Jon Gould, deputy director of the Children's Alliance. "Our state Constitution promises children the right to an education. Without enough food each day, it's hard to get a firm grip on that opportunity."

State Food Assistance also hastens our economic recovery; USDA analyses show that every \$5 spent in food aid programs like Basic Food or State Food Assistance generates \$9 in economic activity.

Fasting legislators and faith leaders will speak to the media at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, in the Fellowship Hall of the United Churches of Olympia, 110 11th Ave SE ([map](#)), before breaking their 24-hour fast with a shared meal at 6 p.m.

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The Children's Alliance is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the state and federal levels to ensure that all children have what they need to thrive. More information: www.childrensalliance.org.