

## **Hunger Action Faces Big Cut in Funding**

For twenty years the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) has provided funding to the PA Hunger Action Center. Beginning in 2006, that funding will end.

The source of the problem is the deepening federal deficit. In a show of fiscal conservatism, Congress limited the growth in the spending authority of its appropriations committees for the 2006 budget. According to staff for Senate Labor-HHS-Education appropriations subcommittee chairman Arlen Specter, the subcommittee was "billions short" of what was needed to cover inflation. Thus, the subcommittee eliminated funding for numerous programs, including the \$7 million CFNP.

Hunger Action had expected to receive \$130,000 this year from CFNP. With the loss of funding, the following services will be at risk:

- Statewide emergency food referral;
- Food stamp screening and application assistance;
- School Breakfast and Summer Food Service Program recruitment;
- County food security workshops, conference, website and newsletter;
- Consultation with state personnel to improve food program effectiveness.

In a letter to Specter, Pat Temple-West, director for Nutritional Development Services at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, stated: "The federal government continues to look to the charitable and religious sectors to assume more and more of the burden of feeding the hungry and we are stepping up to the task. But we need technical assistance, guidance and mutual support – all of which is now provided by the Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center. Take this away and we will lose our efficiency, we will increase duplication and fritter away our scarce resources because of a lack of coordination and education; in short, hunger in Pennsylvania will increase."

Final congressional action on the \$600 billion Labor-HHS-Education appropriation is expected before Congress goes home for Christmas.