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PENNSYLVANIA HUNGER AND POVERTY TRENDS DETAILED IN NEW PUBLICATION

New Report Includes USDA Food Insecurity Data, Chronicles Participation and Service Gaps in Pennsylvania in Eight Federal Nutrition Programs

Harrisburg, PA – December 9, 2008 – Too many Pennsylvania households are struggling against hunger, and while the nation’s federal nutrition programs have a wide reach, too many Pennsylvania residents continue to slip through the nutrition safety net, according to a new report recently released by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC).

The Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center released Pennsylvania data and joined FRAC in calling on the new Administration and newly elected and returning members of Congress to seize opportunities that would address the growing need, starting with an economic stimulus package that includes a temporary boost in SNAP/Food Stamp benefits.

Compiled annually by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), *State of the States* provides a comprehensive snapshot of hunger, poverty, and federal nutrition programs for the nation and each state. The report includes detailed state-by-state information on the extent of hunger and poverty, participation in eight federal nutrition programs (including food stamps, WIC and school meals), and economic data. The full report is available online at www.frac.org.

The report also includes new data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that show the extent of hunger in each state. In Pennsylvania, 494,600 households struggled against hunger in the average year from 2005-2007.

“New data from USDA show us that hunger is widespread in our state, and these data predate the worst part of the recession. All indicators are that the situation is much worse now than a year ago. Public officials must respond,” said Joseph Quattrocchi, Hunger Action’s Executive Director.

“Too many Pennsylvania residents are missing out on nutrition programs that can help them. Our state particularly needs to improve access to and outreach for the School Breakfast Program where we lag other states,” added Mr. Quattrocchi.

During the campaign, President-elect Barack Obama committed to end childhood hunger in this country by 2015, as well as take other anti-hunger and anti-poverty strides forward. The Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center joined FRAC in pledging to work with the Administration and Congress to accomplish this goal.

“On the federal level, Congress most urgently needs to include a temporary increase in SNAP/Food Stamp benefits in a stimulus bill at the first opportunity. Congress also can

strengthen and improve these programs through the upcoming Child Nutrition Reauthorization,” said Jim Weill, president of FRAC. “On the state and local levels, officials can make hunger a priority by conducting more outreach to connect eligible families to these programs and adopting policies that make it easier for people to participate.”

Findings from the report include:

- 68 percent of eligible individuals are participating in SNAP/Foods Stamps in Pennsylvania. Of the working poor that are eligible for the program, only 63 percent are participating.
- Participation in the summer food program changed by -5.0 percent over the past ten years in Pennsylvania.
- 11.6 percent of Pennsylvania residents live in poverty.

About the Report

FRAC’s *State of the States* contains the latest data from official government sources. The federal nutrition programs covered are: Food Stamps, School Lunch, School Breakfast, Summer Food, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), WIC, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). The report also details economic and social indicators such as food insecurity, poverty, and minimum wage levels.

About the Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center

Celebrating thirty years as the statewide leader in anti-hunger advocacy, the Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center works every day for the day when all Pennsylvanians will have access to enough nutritious food for an active and healthy life. Beyond federal and state advocacy around food and nutrition programs, Hunger Action provides Food Stamp outreach, as well as School Breakfast and Summer Feeding outreach.

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