



Media Release

For Immediate Release

November 18, 2010

Media Contacts:

[Scott Baker](#), MFBA, 573-355-7758

[Lindsey Neddenriep](#), OFH PR, 417-865-3411, ext. 110

Household food insecurity in Missouri reaches record high

USDA report ranks Missouri 7th in nation for overall food insecurity

Springfield, Mo.—The USDA reported this week that more than 50 million Americans, including more than 17 million children, are food insecure, or lacking consistent access to a nutritious, well-balanced diet. In Missouri, hunger has grown at a much higher rate than the national average over the past 14 years. The new report shows that more than 366,000 households in Missouri are struggling with hunger.

According to the USDA report, [Household Food Insecurity in the United States](#), Missouri ranks seventh in the nation, at 15 percent, in the category of “food insecurity”—meaning having limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. The national “food insecurity” average is 13.5 percent.

Missouri ranks sixth, at 6.4 percent, in “very low food security”—meaning at times during the year, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food. The national average is 5.2 percent.

Missouri also experienced the third highest increase in “very low food security” since 1994, at 3.4 percent, compared to the national increase, 1.5 percent. The state experienced the fourth highest increase in “food insecurity” since 1994 at 4.9 percent, compared to the national increase at 2.2 percent.

“Too many individuals in southwest Missouri are food insecure,” said Bart Brown, president/CEO at Ozarks Food Harvest. “Hunger continues to be a problem in the Ozarks, and especially among children. The pervasiveness of child hunger in our region is sobering—one in five children in our service area is at risk of going to bed hungry.”

The sharp rise in food insecurity rates during the recession mirror the findings in Ozarks Food Harvest’s [Hunger Study 2010](#), which showed that the number of people seeking emergency food assistance each year through Ozarks Food Harvest’s network of food pantries and other emergency food assistance sites increased significantly.

“Most Missourians would be very surprised to learn that we are among the worst states in the nation when it comes to the prevalence of hunger,” said Scott Baker, state director of the Missouri Food Bank Association (MFBA).

—More—

Transform Hunger into Hope™ at ozarksfoodharvest.org

Ozarks Food Harvest | P.O. Box 5746 | 2810 N. Cedarbrook Ave. | Springfield, MO 65801-5746 | 417-865-3411 | 417-865-0504

“Our state government has taken steps this year to bolster the safety net that is in place by partnering with us on projects like increased funding through the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program; however, we must continue to identify ways we can work together to address this problem during hard economic times. The first step would be to maintain Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credits that play a vital role in supporting the work of food banks and pantries,” Baker said.

According to the MFBA, Missouri’s leaders are looking at ways to modify or overhaul the state’s tax credit system. Baker says NAP credits equate into hundreds of thousands of dollars every year for food purchase, capacity building and other essential tools in the fight against hunger.

“This report confirms that the recession is taking a serious toll on Missourians from all walks of life and from every corner of the state,” Baker said. “Hunger is a foundational problem that impacts so many areas of life including health, education, and productivity. Addressing this basic need is imperative if Missouri is serious about excelling in the coming decade.”

About Ozarks Food Harvest

Ozarks Food Harvest is the only food bank in southwest Missouri, serving more than 300 hunger relief organizations across 28 Ozarks counties. The Food Bank reaches more than 14,000 individuals weekly and distributes nearly nine million pounds of food annually—made possible due to its network of charities and direct-relief programs such as the Weekend Backpack Program™, Kids Cafe® and the Mobile Food Pantry™ program. Learn more at ozarksfoodharvest.org and at facebook.com/ozarksfoodharvest.

About the Missouri Food Bank Association

The MFBA is a coalition of the six Feeding America® food banks in Missouri, serving every county in the state. Last year, Missouri’s food banks distributed more than 84 million pounds of food to hungry Missourians through a network of more than 1,500 pantries, shelters and kitchens.

About Feeding America®

Feeding America® provides low-income individuals and families with the fuel to survive and even thrive. As the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, our network members supply food to more than 37 million Americans each year, including 14 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States, more than 200 member food banks support 63,000 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community and across the country, visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org>. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/FeedingAmerica or follow our news on Twitter at twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.

For more information, contact [Scott Baker](#) at 573-355-7758.

#

Transform Hunger into Hope™ at ozarksfoodharvest.org

Ozarks Food Harvest | P.O. Box 5746 | 2810 N. Cedarbrook Ave. | Springfield, MO 65801-5746 | 417-865-3411 | 417-865-0504