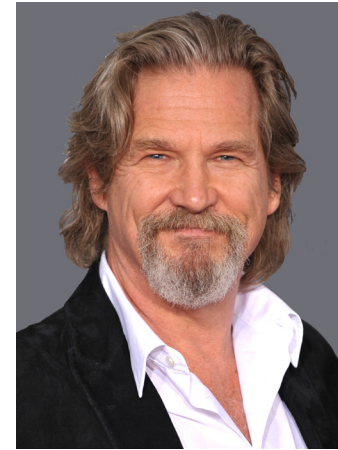


Toolkit for Ending Childhood Hunger in America

**END
HUNGER
NETWORK**

Imagine...there's no hunger....

— John Lennon



I know that everyone reading this is saddened by the fact that, in the richest nation on Earth, people suffer from hunger. But, contrary to common belief, the tragedy of hunger is not limited to a few Americans who live on the fringes of society. Can there be an American Dream when nearly 1 in 5 American children go to bed hungry?

For two decades, ending hunger has been a personal commitment. Either because of the injustice it symbolizes or because of the emotions that it triggers in me, I have always felt the need to take action. I have three children of my own, and when I imagine the pain that parents must feel who are unable to feed their children, I am brought to tears.

During the 1980s, world hunger was my focus, and together with some friends from the entertainment community, we founded the End Hunger Network. The End Hunger Network was part of the team that produced the Live Aid Concert broadcast to more than 1 billion people in support of bringing relief to the victims of a famine in Africa, and creating an awareness of the plight of the poorest of the poor in the world's least developed countries. Fortunately, the world has made great progress in reducing hunger in Asia, Africa and South America. Unfortunately, since that same period, hunger in the United States has reappeared.

As a result of national priorities and programs undertaken during the era of Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, hunger in the United States was basically ended. Perhaps some of you can recall the national outrage that was sparked by the revelations of the severe poverty in Appalachia, the inner cities and amongst the elderly that led to the creation of national initiatives such as School Lunches and Breakfasts; Women, Infants and Children (the WIC program which provides food and medical attention for pregnant women and newborns); and Food Stamps (now SNAP). These initiatives did their job, and continue to play key roles in insuring the nutritional well-being of America's poor. So, what happened?

There's no denying that the reduction of government funding for these programs has contributed greatly to the hunger crisis. Ending hunger has not been a priority for politicians, but I do believe that it is a priority for the American public.

As a people we value family, education and success. Hunger is an enemy to all three. Scientific studies have demonstrated that even brief periods of hunger can permanently inhibit a child's mental, physical and emotional development. Hungry kids can't learn in school and are less likely to grow into productive adults. For families, the experience of hunger means living in a world of shame and isolation.

Our society is only as healthy as our most vulnerable citizens. And the bottom line is that when so many of our children and brothers and sisters are suffering from hunger, we are all at risk. No other western industrialized country has widespread hunger within its borders. We really must end hunger in America if we are to sustain our prosperity and protect the future we want for our children and our children's children.

Food banks and emergency food programs are valuable, but they will not end childhood hunger in the U.S. We need to reach beyond charity to educate and empower Americans throughout our country and society. Our goal is to be a catalyst for change. Americans want their country to be free from hunger, but they don't know how their involvement can make a difference. The truth is that there are many ways — and this Toolkit will suggest some meaningful action you can take.

Ending hunger is not a partisan issue, it is an American issue. In his 1969 message to Congress, President Nixon said, *"That hunger and malnutrition should persist in a land such as ours is embarrassing and intolerable.... More is at stake here than the health and well-being of 16 million American citizens.... Something very like the honor of American democracy is at issue."* I believe it will take all of us — citizens, students, businesses, politicians, celebrities, the media — to make ending hunger a national priority. If we can make it important enough, we can change it. I invite you to join us.

Jeff Bridges is an Academy Award®-winning actor, a musician, a photographer and a philanthropist. For more than 30 years, he has been a leading anti-hunger activist and advocate for children. In 1983, Jeff founded the End Hunger Network, a non-profit organization dedicated to feeding children around the world. Jeff participated in the 1985 Live Aid Concert and received the Presidential End Hunger Award in 1988. In 2010, Jeff became the national spokesperson for the No Kid Hungry campaign to end childhood hunger in America and has been working tirelessly since to increase national awareness on this often hidden issue.

First, the Facts.

16.2 million (nearly one in five) kids in America struggle with hunger. (Source: USDA Household Food Security in the United States)

10.5 million kids eligible for free or reduced-price school breakfast do not get it. (Source: Food Research and Action Center, School Breakfast Scorecard)

More than 20 million kids get a free or reduced-price school lunch on an average school day. Source: Food Research and Action Center, School Breakfast Scorecard)

Six out of 7 eligible kids do not get free summer meals. (Source: Food Research and Action Center, "Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report)

In 2010, 40.3 million people in over 18.6 million households across America got help through SNAP (food stamps); about half of those households (8.9 million) were households with children. (Source: USDA Food and Nutrition Services)

15.7 million children (21.6%) in America live in poverty. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports).

Food insecurity exists when families lack the means to get enough nutritious food on a regular basis. They live in food-insecure households and, as a result, they struggle with hunger at some time during the year. Food insecurity exists in 17.2 million households in American, 3.9 million of them with children. (Source USDA Household Food Security in the United States)

Child nutrition programs make a positive difference. They were developed to help needy families get the nutritious food they need. Rising participation is a sign that more families are using these programs as they were intended—they are a sign of good solutions at work. The goal is to make sure that every family that needs these programs and is eligible for them is using them. One in four Americans used at least one of the 15 USDA food and nutrition assistance programs sometime during 2009.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly "food stamps")

- 40.3 million Americans used SNAP on average per month during 2010 (4.8 million more than in an average month of 2009, a 20.3 percent increase)
- Almost half of these are children: 18.5 million American children received SNAP benefits on average each month of 2010.
- The average monthly SNAP benefit in 2010 was \$282.31 per household, or \$1.48 per meal.
- Nearly half (49.2 percent) of American children will receive SNAP benefits at some point in their lives, reports a study in the Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, November 2009.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- Nearly 9.2 million American women and children under the age of 5 received WIC benefits on average per month of calendar year 2010, up 5 percent over fiscal year 2009.
- Over 7 million infants and children under 5 received WIC benefits per month in 2010.

National School Lunch Program

- On an average school day in 2010, 31.6 million kids ate a federally funded school lunch and 20.5 million American children ate a free or reduced-price school lunch—1.2 million more than in 2009.

National School Breakfast Program

- 9.4 million kids get free or reduced-price school breakfast on an average school day, more than ever before...but 10.5 million eligible kids go without. Less than 50% (47.2%) of kids who get free or low-priced school lunches get a school breakfast.

Summer Meal Programs

- Two federal programs — National School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service Program — provide summer meals to kids in low-income families. Generally, children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch are also eligible for free summer meals.
- Only 1 in 7 kids who ate a free or reduced-price school lunch during the school year also participated in summer meal programs.

Why Childhood Hunger is an Important Issue.

- Children who struggle with hunger are sick more often, recover more slowly, and are more likely to be hospitalized.
- They are more likely to experience headaches, stomachaches, colds, ear infections and fatigue.
- Children who face hunger are more susceptible to obesity and its harmful health consequences as children and as adults.
- Undernourished children 0-3 years of age cannot learn as much, as fast or as well.
- Lack of enough nutritious food impairs a child's ability to concentrate and perform well in school.
- Children who regularly do not get enough nutritious food to eat have significantly higher levels of behavioral, emotional and academic problems and be more aggressive and anxious.
- Teens who regularly do not get enough to eat are more likely to be suspended from school and have difficulty getting along with other kids.



**Children are 23.3%
of our population...
but 100% of our future.**



Surround Children with Nutritious Food

We have all experienced hunger at one time or another: We've all craved a midnight snack, wanted something salty or skipped a meal. But there's a big difference between trying to satisfy a brief craving or stomach growl and wondering when or from where your next meal will come.

More than 16.7 million- almost one in four-children in America are at risk of hunger. Many of these children will endure lifelong consequences as a result of having limited access to nutritious foods. In fact, they're more likely to suffer poorer health, fatigue, hospitalizations, behavioral difficulties and impaired performance at school. And hunger doesn't discriminate. It can affect any child — even those you'd least expect. Despite the good efforts of government, private-sector institutions and everyday Americans, millions of our children still don't have daily access to the nutritious meals they need to live active, healthy lives.

What Can I Do?

Help kick off a local school's breakfast program to ensure all kids get a good start to the day. We all know that starting the day with a healthy breakfast is critical for our young people.

Serve fresh fruits and vegetables to school children. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) can be an important catalyst in efforts to combat childhood obesity by helping children learn more healthful eating habits. The program targets schools with a high percentage of children receiving free and reduced price school meals. It has been successful in introducing children to a variety of produce that they otherwise might not have the opportunity to sample. Encouraging more elementary schools to apply for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program will create healthier school environments and make a difference in school children's present and future health. [For more information, click here.](#)

Create a School Health Council to assess and improve your school district's Wellness Policy. Schools that participate in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast programs are required by Congress to have a local wellness policy that promotes the health of students and addresses the growing problem of childhood obesity. Local wellness policies help ensure that schools are addressing child health in a comprehensive way, including nutritious food, nutrition education, physical education and preventive screening. [For more information, click here.](#)

Ensure Children Have Food When School is Out

Hunger does not take a break during the summer months when school is out. Even in good economic times, millions of families struggle to feed their children healthy meals during the summer when their children no longer eat breakfast and lunch at school. As tough economic conditions continue, millions of parents are now unemployed or have had their wages cut. And families' budgets are stretched to the limit. When summer begins, parents of the millions of children who relied on the National School Lunch Program for free or reduced-price meals every day must figure out how to prevent their children from going hungry during the summer.

The Summer Food Service Program was created to address this problem. However, although nearly 19 million children depend on free and reduced-price school meals for the nine months that schools are typically in session, only about 2.3 million children participate in the Summer Nutrition Programs. One of the primary reasons for this disparity is a lack of host sites for the program, in both urban and rural areas.

What Can I Do?

Offer your organization's space to serve as a feeding site or prepare food for other sites. This winter sign up your community center or congregation to be a summer feeding site. Work with your State to see if you might even be able to become a program sponsor with several sites in your community. Deadlines vary by state, but typically occur in mid-spring. [Details are here.](#)

Supervise activities at an existing feeding site. Children are more likely to attend a summer feeding site if there are recreational or education activities occurring around the meal hours. Share your creative, academic or recreational talents with local low-income children. This is a great opportunity for high school and college graduates.

Transport food or children to feeding sites, especially in rural areas. One of the greatest challenges of operating the Summer Food Service Program in rural areas is getting prepared meals to the feeding sites or ensuring children can get to a feeding site. Volunteers are crucial to making this program operate effectively in rural areas.

By helping to enroll your community center, school, day-camp, or congregation as a summer feeding site, you will be giving hungry kids in your community a chance to learn, thrive and be fed all summer long.

Support Food Banks and Food Pantries

Hunger prevents millions of Americans from living healthy, productive lives. Children who live in households affected by hunger are negatively affected in both their physical and mental development. This threatens their ability to become productive, contributing members of society when they grow up, which in turn threatens future American prosperity.

Every day, families are forced to make the difficult decision between buying food and paying bills and rent. Many low-income families rely on emergency food assistance from our nation's food banks, food pantries, and feeding programs in order to make ends meet. In these tough economic times, the emergency food system is stretched to the brink because needs are up while donations are down.

During the current recession, many formerly middle-class families have been forced to turn to their local food banks and food pantries for help. Contrary to popular belief, many people served by America's food banks have at least one working adult in their household. Many others are too old or too young to work. There are currently more than 200 food banks in the country, with more than 63,000 affiliated agencies like food pantries and shelters. This network distributes more than 2.5 billion pounds of food to needy Americans each year.

What Can I Do?

Donate food to your local food bank. Make sure to contact your local food bank to ensure your donation meets the needs of the food bank and the population it serves. In addition, you can stretch your dollar by shopping in bulk, ensuring that the Food Bank gets the food items it most needs and reducing distribution and sorting costs.

Enroll eligible food pantry clients in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Many food pantries offer a variety of social services to their clients. Volunteer at food pantry to screen people for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps), talk to families about other nutrition assistance programs such as School Meals, and the Summer Food Service Program, and help connect eligible families to a variety of federal benefits.

Use your professional skill set to help the food bank operate more effectively. Food pantries often need skilled volunteers to help them run their operations. These are ongoing opportunities (such as public relations, accounting, IT and web design services, strategic planning, legal, accounting, design, and fundraising work), and volunteers can often perform these tasks on their own schedules, mostly from their home or office.

In these tough economic times, America's food banks, food pantries and feeding programs are more important than ever. With the food banking system under enormous strain, there is a tremendous need for both volunteers and donations of food and funds to emergency food programs across the country. By helping one of these programs, you can help ensure that those who are struggling through the current recession need not go hungry. Find your local food bank at www.feedingamerica.org.



Develop a Plan to End Hunger

Ending hunger in America is a monumental task. There are many factors that contribute to hunger, and they often differ from community to community.

While a great deal of data exists on hunger at the national level, and to a lesser extent at the state level, an accurate assessment of the food security of individual counties and communities is much harder to obtain. Depending on the specific needs of a community, some approaches to ending hunger may be much more effective than others. If a community does not understand its unique food security challenges, it is much more difficult for that community to effectively address the problem.

As such, a key step towards ending hunger is to first understand the unique challenges and causes in your community. You can form innovative partnerships with local stakeholders that have the potential to make huge strides towards ending hunger in your area.

Dozens of communities and a handful of states have developed plans for ending hunger in their area, resulting in important effects on policy and program funding. [Click here](#) to access the USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit to analyze the hunger situation in your community.

Gather local stakeholders from business, social services, faith and non-profit organizations together to draft and implement a plan to end hunger. Your community can benefit tremendously from a thorough understanding of its unique hunger situation.

Three out of four teachers say they have children in their classrooms who regularly come to school hungry. American educators tell us that hunger is a serious obstacle to learning. Get their first hand perspective in this annual ["Hunger in Our Schools" Report](#).

Once you can show your local elected officials, faith-based and community leaders, and other community stakeholders how hunger affects your community, you will be in a much stronger position. This could lead to forming meaningful and lasting partnerships that will have a huge impact on ending hunger in your area. Others who have done this have formed state or city-wide food policy councils to continue the work.

Take individual action. Visit [No Kid Hungry](#) to learn about some actions that you can take to end hunger directly in your community. The "Ways You Can Help" section lists important opportunities to Advocate, Volunteer, Spread Awareness and Donate or Fundraise to help end childhood hunger.





Founded in 1983 by actor Jeff Bridges and other celebrities, the End Hunger Network works with the entertainment community to encourage, stimulate and create media projects, programs and events aimed at ending hunger.

Through cooperative efforts with writers, directors, celebrities, media executives, nonprofit organizations, corporations, community and service groups, the End Hunger Network seeks to motivate U.S. citizens to participate in the growing movement to end hunger.

In addition to managing the Presidential End Hunger Awards program from 1984-1990, some of the innovative events and programs produced by the End Hunger Network over the last twenty years include:

The End Hunger Televent — a three-hour television educational broadcast in 1983 featured Burt Lancaster, Gregory Peck, John Ritter, Jack Lemmon, Valerie Harper, Jeff Bridges, Dennis Weaver, Kenny Loggins and other well-known celebrities.

The Live Aid Concert — the End Hunger Network wrote and produced the educational and fundraising segments during this ground-breaking 16-hour global satellite broadcast, reaching 1.5 billion people simultaneously around the world and raising \$125 million for relief and development programs in Africa.

U.S. Mayors' End Hunger Awards — since 1985, this educational media program, in conjunction with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, has supported mayors in honoring local "hunger heroes" who have taken action and made a difference in combating hunger in their cities.

Prime Time to End Hunger — in December 1989, the three major TV networks came together for the first time to air special episodes of leading primetime TV shows, such as "Designing Women," "The Golden Girls," "thirtysomething," "Cheers," and "Head of the Class." Dealing with hunger, homelessness and volunteerism, these favorite shows in one week reached more than an estimated 238 million viewers, who were urged to get involved in solutions.

"Hidden in America" — this made-for-TV movie drama, broadcast on Turner Network Television, brought the critical and controversial problem of childhood hunger in the United States to millions of viewers, and won two Golden Globe nominations and an Emmy nominations. Jeff Bridges was executive producer of this film project.

Hunger Free America — the aim of this multi-year educational and media campaign was to raise awareness and provide the American public with ways to become involved in the issue of childhood hunger and support local and national legislation that can end hunger. This program was funded by UniLever, Inc. and we were joined in partnership with the Entertainment Industry Foundation (the "United Way" of the entertainment industry).

No Kid Hungry Campaign — partnering with Share Our Strength, this public awareness campaign is centered on building support for solutions aimed at ending US childhood hunger, specifically by increasing access to government nutrition assistance programs at the state level.

End Hunger Network

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