

HUNGER IN IOWA

April 2002

INTRODUCTION

*“Hunger amidst plenty is a profound contradiction of our age. Food security is fundamental to individual human dignity, growth, and survival.”*¹

The vast majority of households in Iowa are food secure. Yet, even in Iowa, the bread basket of the world, almost 75,000 households (6.5%) are food insecure, and of these, over 25,000 (2.2%) are hungry over the course of the year.² This “paradox of hunger amidst plenty is a threat to our nation’s prosperity and affront to our collective well-being. Adlai Stevenson once said, ‘A hungry man is not a free man.’ The effort to end hunger ... represents the best of who we are and the standard by which we must measure the health of our society.”³

Faced with limited resources, “one out of six Americans turns to government food assistance programs to achieve a measure of food security. Other Americans respond to food insecurity by skipping meals, substituting less expensive, less nutritious alternatives, or seeking emergency food from soup kitchens or food pantries.”⁴ Iowans respond the same.

Food is a basic human need. The current food system in Iowa does not provide enough affordable healthy food to all who need it.

What is Food Security?⁵

Food Security - access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: 1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and 2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies).

Food Insecurity - limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Hunger - the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. It is the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

¹ INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON FOOD SECURITY & FOOD SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, U.S. ACTION PLAN ON FOOD SECURITY: SOLUTIONS TO HUNGER 5 (Mar. 1999).

² See OREGON CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY, ISSUE BRIEF: HUNGER STATISTICS, at <http://www.ocpp.org/2002/issue020104.htm> (Release date: Jan. 2002).

³ MYOUNG KIM, ET AL., HUNGER IN AMERICA 2001, NATIONAL REPORT PREPARED FOR AMERICA’S SECOND HARVEST, iii (Oct. 2001).

⁴ INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON FOOD SECURITY & FOOD SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, *supra* note 1, at ii.

⁵ See Life Sciences Research Organization, *Core Indicators of Nutritional Status for Difficult-to-Sample Populations*, 120 J. NUTRITION 1559, 1559 (Suppl. 1990).

PUTTING A FACE ON HUNGER IN IOWA

Despite Iowa having some of the richest natural resources in the world to produce food, there are Iowans who are still hungry. In addition, there are many Iowans who have poor nutritional status, with the resultant poor health, from both under-eating (i.e., not enough vegetables in diet) and over-eating (i.e., too much soda in diet). Having enough healthy foods to eat for every Iowan should be our goal.

Basic Iowa Data

	<i>Population</i>	<i>Per Capita Income</i>	<i>Poverty Rate</i>	<i>Households</i>
2000 ⁶	2,926,324	\$25, 598 (1999)	7.3%	1,149,276 ⁷

Food Insecurity Data

	<i>Food Insecure Households</i> Iowa (National)	<i>Food Insecure Households with Hunger</i> Iowa (National)
1995 ⁸	8.6% (11.9%)	2.1% (4.1%)
1998 ⁹	7.0% (9.7%)	2.5% (3.5%)
1999 ¹⁰	6.5% (9.2%)	2.2% (3.1%)
2000 ¹¹	(10.5%)	(3.1%)

The prevalence of food insecurity and hunger varies considerably depending on the type of household. In the most recent national data (which we can extrapolate to Iowa), rates of food insecurity were 5.6% for households with more than one adult and no children and 5.9% for households with elderly persons.¹² Whereas, rates of food insecurity were substantially higher for:

- Households with incomes below the poverty level (36.8%)
- Households with children, headed by a single woman (31%)
- Black households (20.5%)
- Hispanic households (21.4%)¹³

Overall, households with children reported food insecurity at more than double the rate for households without children (16.2% vs. 7.3%).¹⁴

⁶ See ERS, USDA, Iowa Fact Sheet, available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/statefacts/IA.htm> (last updated Feb. 26, 2002).

⁷ See M. HANSON & W. GOUDY, HOUSEHOLDS & FAMILIES IN IOWA COUNTIES 1990 AND 2000 4 (2001) available at <http://www.soc.iastate.edu/census/Data/Counties/CS2001-17.pdf>.

⁸ See USDA, HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1995, 48, C-1 (Sep. 1997).

⁹ Numbers are the average for years 1996, 1997, and 1998. See MARK NORD, KYLE JEMISON, & GARY BICKEL, PREVALENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER, BY STATE, 1996-1998 3 (Sep. 1999).

¹⁰ Numbers are the average for years 1997, 1998, and 1999. See Oregon Center for Public Policy, *supra* note 2.

¹¹ See MARK NORD ET AL., HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES, 2000 5 (Feb. 2002).

¹² See *id.* at 6.

¹³ See *id.*

Iowa Food Security Data from the Iowa WIC Program

The Iowa Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) conducted the 2000 WIC survey to determine the degree of food insecurity among Iowa WIC participants in 2000 as compared to 1997.¹⁵ Designed to improve the health of low-income, nutritionally at risk infants, children up to age five, and pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, Iowa WIC provides foods to over 62,000 women, infants, and children in Iowa each month (see *infra* page 7).¹⁶

Ten questions relating to food security were asked in the WIC survey. On all questions, more individuals felt food insecure in 2000 than in 1997.¹⁷ For example:

Survey Question	WIC Iowans Food Insecure - 1997 (%)	WIC Iowans Food Insecure – 2000 (%)
I am worried about whether my food will run out....	43.3 %	56.9 %
I feel that the food that I bought didn't last....	30.1 %	44.5 %
I ran out of foods I needed to put together a meal...	27.5 %	42.2 %
I eat the same thing for several days in a row...	21.8 %	36.3 %

Comment

This 2000 Iowa WIC survey data (which shows an increase in food insecurity) does not agree with the 1999 USDA national census survey data for Iowa (which shows a decrease in food insecurity). Possible explanations:

- 1) This is a special population of individuals who are low income and have selected into a program whereas the federal data of Iowa looks at a cross section of all groups. It is possible the low income population is feeling more food insecure (even though on a safety net program) while the general population is seeing a decline in food insecurity.
- 2) The WIC data is one year more recent and is picking up on the down turn in the economy which has occurred more recently.
- 3) Because of the increased stigma of “welfare programs” in recent years, the individuals who still participate in the WIC program are the most food insecure.

¹⁴ See *id.*

¹⁵ See generally IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH BUREAU OF NUTRITION & WIC, 2000 IOWA WIC SURVEY: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2001) (documenting food insecurity in the WIC population in 2000).

¹⁶ See *id.* at 1.

¹⁷ See *id.* at 2.

Food Security Data from America's Second Harvest

In 2001, America's Second Harvest (A2H), the nation's largest organization of emergency food providers¹⁸, completed the largest study to date on hunger in America. They interviewed 32,000 clients served by the A2H network and 24,000 A2H agencies.¹⁹ Their key findings were:

- 39% of the members of households served by A2H are children under 18 years of age.
- 11% are elderly.
- 37% of all A2H clients are classified as experiencing hunger.
- 30% of A2H clients are receiving Food Stamp Program benefits, however, it is likely that many more are eligible.
- Among A2H households with pre-school children, 52% participate in WIC.
- Among A2H households with school-age children, 63% and 50%, respectively, participate in the federal school lunch and school breakfast programs.
- Between 56% and 60% of the agencies surveyed reported that there had been an increase since 1998 in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites.²⁰

Comment

This data is showing an increase in the number of people who are food insecure, or at least those using emergency food services, similar to the Iowa WIC data. Possible explanations:

- 1) Within the subgroup of low-income there is an increase in food insecurity not seen in the general population.
- 2) This more recent data better reflects the more recent downturn in the economy.
- 3) The "welfare reform" (see page 5 *infra*) of the mid 1990's forced more individuals into using emergency food services rather than government programs.

Also extremely important in this data is the question, why are not more individuals who qualify for the food stamp program, the WIC program, and the school food programs not participating in these programs? Possible explanations:

- 1) Stigma of "welfare" programs
- 2) Lack of outreach, therefore lack of knowledge about programs
- 3) Application requirements too burdensome

¹⁸ America's Second Harvest Network includes approximately 26,300 pantries, 5,700 kitchens, and 4,100 shelters. See MYOUNG KIM ET AL., *supra* note 3 at 3.

¹⁹ See MYOUNG KIM ET AL., *supra* note 3 at 1.

²⁰ See MYOUNG KIM ET AL., *supra* note 3 at 1-3.

THE HUNGER ENVIRONMENT IN IOWA

Hunger in Iowa cannot be addressed without also looking at poverty and income in Iowa, which underlie hunger issues. Major changes were made to federal welfare programs in 1996 with the welfare law - Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The United States Congress set out “to reinvent the welfare system — or, as President Clinton put it, ‘to end welfare as we know it’.”²¹ This action dropped the caseloads on welfare by half nationally. These actions had already begun in Iowa.

In 1993, under waivers from the federal government, Iowa replaced the cash assistance program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, with the Family Investment Program (FIP).²² Implementation of federal welfare reform legislation in 1997 required relatively few changes in Iowa’s FIP program. The long-term goal of FIP is to help families become self-sufficient. To achieve this goal, the program relies on strict work requirements, consequences for failing to meet those requirements, financial incentives and other policies to make work pay, and a 60-month time limit on the receipt of cash assistance.²³

By December 2000, the FIP caseload had dropped 50% from a high of almost 40,000 cases (1994) to 20,000 cases. In studying this drop, researchers found:²⁴

- Almost 60 % of families chose to leave FIP on their own.
- 14% felt they left FIP because they could not comply with program requirements.
- 70% were able to remain off cash assistance for 8-12 months; 30% were not able to remain off cash assistance.
- 60% of the heads of families that left FIP in spring 1999 were working at a job for pay 8-12 month later; the average pay was \$7.34/hr; 25% who had worked at the time of or soon after leaving FIP were no longer working 8-12 months later.
- Many families that appear eligible for the Medicaid, Food Stamp, and Child Care Assistance programs after leaving FIP do not participate in them. Most do not participate because of uncertainty about their eligibility or about the requirements for determining their eligibility.
- 53% of families had incomes above poverty and 47% had incomes below poverty 8-12 months after leaving FIP.
- 85% relied on support from family members, friends, and neighbors to make ends meet after leaving FIP.

Iowa FIP/TANF Data²⁵

	FY 1994	FY 2000	FY 2001
Av Caseload/mo.	38,731	20,272	19,578
FIP State \$	\$61,650,982	\$36,779,947	\$39,047,138
FIP Federal \$	\$105,852,377	\$42,074,545	\$37,552,716

²¹ Robin Toner, Welfare in the Post Welfare Era, The N.Y. Times, Mar. 3, 2002.

²² See JACQUELINE KAUFF ET AL., IOWA FAMILIES THAT LEFT TANF: WHY DID THEY LEAVE AND HOW ARE THEY FARING? ix (Feb. 2001).

²³ See *id.*

²⁴ See *id.* at ix-xii.

²⁵ Communication with Ann Wiebers, IA Dept. of Human Services (Apr. 2002).

PROGRAMS WORKING TO END HUNGER

GOVERNMENTAL

THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

The food stamp program is the most critical component of the safety net against hunger because it provides basic protection for citizens of all ages and household status. Its purpose is to provide low-income persons of limited resources with access to a nutritious, healthful diet. Households receive monthly allotments, based on their size and income, in the form of coupons or electronic benefits. Eligibility and allotments are based on household size, income, assets, work registration requirements, and other factors.²⁶ States also receive money for nutrition education activities.

The federal government pays the full cost of benefits and approximately half of the administrative costs.²⁷ Eligibility is based mainly on monthly income and assets of household members.²⁸

Iowa Data

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2001	Jan. 2002
Participation/Mo. ²⁹	161, 184	128,790	126,494	139,175 ³⁰
Mo. Benefit/person ³¹	\$64.55	\$66.90	\$70.69	
\$ Federal ³²	\$124,851,060	\$103,388,504	\$107,294,570	
\$ State ³³	\$8,663,339	\$9,570,702	\$12,791,009	
\$ Nutrition Ed. ³⁴	\$351,867	\$687,749	\$2,279,511	

Comment

National research has been conducted to look at the steep declines in participation in the food stamp program during the end of the last decade. The data found that the improved economy

²⁶ See FNS, USDA, FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAM DATA, *at* <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/menu/about/programs/progdata.htm> (updated Mar. 2002).

²⁷ See *id.*

²⁸ Most households must have a “gross” monthly income at or below 130% of the poverty guidelines. After calculated specific deductions, the “net” income must be at or below 100% of the poverty guidelines. Households are permitted up to \$2000 in assets. The rules are somewhat more generous for the elderly or disabled. ROBERT KORNFELD, EXPLAINING RECENT TRENDS IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM CASELOADS – FINAL REPORT, 1, 2-3 (Mar. 2002).

Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2002 are: Family of 1 - \$8,860; Family of 4 - \$18,100. See Annual Update of HHS Poverty Guidelines, 67 Fed. Reg. 31, 6931 (Feb. 14, 2002).

The food stamp application in Iowa is 10 pages long.

²⁹ See FNS, USDA, FOOD STAMP PROGRAM: AVERAGE MONTHLY PARTICIPATION, *at* <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsfypart.htm> (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

³⁰ See FNS, USDA, FOOD STAMP PROGRAM: NUMBER OF PERSONS PARTICIPATING *at* <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fslatest.htm> (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

³¹ See FNS, USDA, FOOD STAMP PROGRAM: AVERAGE MONTHLY BENEFIT PER PERSON, *at* <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsavben.htm> (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

³² See FNS, USDA, FOOD STAMP PROGRAM BENEFITS, *at* <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fsfybft.htm> (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

³³ Ann Wiebers, *supra* 24

³⁴ See FNS, USDA, FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION, *at* <http://www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/pdf/FSPNutritionEducation.pdf> (last visited Mar. 30, 2002).

(explaining 20%) and policy changes making participation more difficult (explaining 21%) were the two greatest causes of decreases in participation. Participation decreases would have been greater had not the use of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) (the use of electronic cards instead of coupons) been implemented which precipitated an increase in participation in the states using it.³⁵ Of concern is the fact that Iowa is the only state that has not implemented the EBT system. Also of importance is the recent large increase in participation in Iowa. Is this a reflection of greater need being seen in Iowa or better outreach to get those eligible onto the program?

Issues

- 1) How can Iowa increase participation of those who are eligible to be on the program, but are not participating?
- 2) How can the state help seniors be more welcomed into the program? How can the 10-page application be made shorter and easier to complete? Can seniors have longer certification periods since their income does not likely change often? Can seniors be made categorically eligible?

THE WIC PROGRAM

WIC's goal is to improve the health of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding and postpartum new mothers, infants and children up to 5 years old. WIC provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, and access to health services. Participants redeem vouchers for specific foods that contain nutrients frequently lacking in the diet of low-income mothers and children. Iowa WIC provides benefits to over 62,000 women, infants, and children in Iowa each month.³⁶ Approximately 33 percent of all pregnant women, 40 percent of all infants, and 20 percent of all children in Iowa participate in the program.³⁷

To participate in the Iowa WIC program, participants must have one or more documented nutrition risks and family incomes less than or equal to 185 % of the Federal Poverty Level.³⁸ The WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) gives families increased access to fresh produce by providing coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables that can be used at authorized farmers' markets. This program not only helps the participants, but also the local farmers in Iowa.

The WIC Program has been successful in its goal of improving the health of mothers and their infants. A study of WIC and Medicaid costs in five States showed that women who participate in WIC during pregnancy have lower Medicaid costs for themselves and their babies in the first weeks after birth than do women who do not participate. In the States studied, Medicaid savings ranged from \$1.77 to \$3.13 for each dollar spent in prenatal WIC benefits.

All money received for the WIC Program is from federal sources except for some state dollars used in FMNP.

³⁵ See ROBERT KORNFELD, *supra* note 26 at 7, 3-7.

³⁶ See IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH BUREAU OF NUTRITION & WIC, 2000 IOWA WIC SURVEY – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, 1 (2001).

³⁷ See *id.*

³⁸ See *supra* FN 27.

Iowa Data

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2001
Av. Participation ³⁹	66,293	63,996	60,664
Monthly Benefit ⁴⁰	\$29.53	\$28.57	\$30.18
Food \$ ⁴¹	\$23,487,928	\$21,940,403	\$21,971,214
Nutrition/Admin \$ ⁴²	\$8,739,455	\$9,918,568	\$10,151,906
Farmer's Mkt. \$ (fed) ⁴³			\$639,078
Farmer's Mkt. \$ (state) ⁴⁴			\$304,680
No. Farmer's Markets ⁴⁵			85 (60 counties)
Benefit Level ⁴⁶			\$28 (all summer)
FMNP participants ⁴⁷			45,634

Comment

Based on the above data, there is a great need in Iowa for the WIC program to help pregnant and breastfeeding women and children up to age 5. In addition, FMNP is a great aspect of the program that can help both the recipients and local farmers in Iowa.

Issues

- 1) How can Iowa increase participation of those eligible?
- 2) How can the state help farmers markets be made available in every Iowa County so that all those who are on the program can participate?
- 3) How can the state increase dollars for the FMNP to give a larger benefit over the entire season?
- 4) How can the state help instill the perception that WIC is a health program rather than a welfare program?

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The National School Lunch Program provides funding and commodity foods to nonprofit food services in elementary and secondary schools, and in residential child care facilities for *lunches*. The program also offers *after school snacks* in areas that meet eligibility guidelines. To receive funding, food served must meet the nutritional standards of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and schools must offer free and reduced price lunches to eligible children.⁴⁸

³⁹ See FNS, USDA, WIC PROGRAM: TOTAL PARTICIPATION, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wifypart.htm> (last updated Feb. 27, 2002).

⁴⁰ See FNS, USDA, WIC PROGRAM: AV. MONTHLY BENEFIT PER PERSON, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wifyavg.htm> (last updated Feb. 27, 2002).

⁴¹ See FNS, USDA, WIC PROGRAM: FOOD COST, at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wicfood\\$.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/wicfood$.htm) (last updated Feb. 27, 2002).

⁴² See FNS, USDA, WIC Program: Nutrition Service and Administrative Costs, at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/WICAdm\\$.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/WICAdm$.htm) (last updated Feb. 27, 2002).

⁴³ 2000 FMNP Program Impact Report at <http://www.nafmnp.org/report.shtml>

⁴⁴ Communication with Mike Bevins, IA. Dept. Agriculture & Land Stewardship (Mar. 2002).

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ Children with family income at or below 130% of poverty guideline are eligible for free meals; children with family incomes between 130% and 185% of the poverty guidelines are eligible for reduced meals (child can not be charged more than \$.40). See *supra* FN 26 for guidelines. See FNS, USDA, NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM FACT SHEET at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/aboutlunch/faqs.htm> (updated Feb. 1, 2002).

Team nutrition is a component of the school food program which provides schools with technical training and assistance to help school food service staffs prepare healthy meals, and with nutrition education to help children understand the link between diet and health.

Iowa Data

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2001	FY 2001 Eligible
Participation/day ⁴⁹	386,811	381,877	380,864	527,299 ⁵⁰
Free lunch/day ⁵¹	86,806	83,761	81,296	93,823 ⁵²
Reduced lunch/day ⁵³	26,820	28,412	29,182	37,754 ⁵⁴
Food \$(federal) ⁵⁵	\$43,532,816	\$45,120,048	\$46,813,948	
Commodity \$(fed.) ⁵⁶	\$8,720,774	\$11,151,011	\$12,212,586	
State \$ ⁵⁷	\$2,445,173	\$2,440,000	\$2,400,000	
Team Nutrition \$	Requested	Requested	Requested	

Comment

The school lunch program is a program which provides nutritious foods to children, many for whom this is the best meal of the day.

Issues

- 1) How can the state reduce competition from unhealthy foods found in vending machines and snack bars?
- 2) How can the state help schools buy food, especially fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats from local farmers?
- 3) How can the state deal with the increasingly poorer eating habits of children?
- 4) How can the state deal with the obesity epidemic in our children?

THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The School Breakfast Program provides states with cash assistance for non-profit breakfast programs in school and residential child care institutions. Requirements for a program are similar to those for a school lunch program. Free and reduced price breakfasts are also served.

⁴⁹ See FNS, USDA, NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM: TOTAL PARTICIPATION, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slfypart.htm> (updated Feb. 27, 2002).

⁵⁰ See IA DEPT. EDUC., 2000-2001 PUB. & NONPUB. SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY DIST., at <http://www.state.ia.us/education/fis/pre/eddata/ied01/ied01262.xls>.

⁵¹ Communication with John Phillips, IA Dept. Educ. (Apr. 2002).

⁵² See IA DEPT. EDUC., 2001 FREE & REDUCED MEAL ELIGIBILITY GRADES PK-12 (Sept. 2000), at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/fis/pre/eddata/ied01/ied012b2.xls>.

⁵³ John Phillips, *supra* 51.

⁵⁴ See *id.*

⁵⁵ See FNS, USDA, NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM: CASH PAYMENTS, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slcash.htm> (updated Feb. 27, 2002).

⁵⁶ See FNS, USDA, NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM: TOTAL COMMODITY COSTS, at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slcomm\\$.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/slcomm$.htm) (updated Feb. 27, 2002).

⁵⁷ John Phillips, *supra* 51.

Iowa Data

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2001
Participation/day	53,753	57,721	65,743
Free Brk/day ⁵⁸	30,598	31,607	33,722
Reduced Brk/day ⁵⁹	4,051	5,072	6,194
Federal \$	\$7,238,721	\$8,305,789	\$9,464,951
State \$ ⁶⁰	\$271,686	\$276,859	\$316,859

Comment

USDA studies have shown that children who eat the school breakfast do better in school. Iowa has seen an increase in participation over the recent years.

Issues

- 1) How can the state increase participation to provide a nutritious breakfast to more children?
- 2) How can Iowa increase participation or other methodology to help cover labor costs in providing the program?

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Summer Food Service Program was created to ensure that children in lower-income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations, when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast. Areas with more than 50% of students who qualify for reduced lunch (185% poverty level) can automatically have the program and all children in the area can come to the site for free breakfast and lunch.

Iowa Data

	FY 1991	FY 1996	FY 2000
Participation/day ⁶¹	7166	5822	4572
Sites ⁶²	108	91	98
\$ USDA ⁶³	\$604,251	\$598,294	\$583,870

Comment

Iowa has had a hard time reaching the children and getting them to participate in this program. There are 53 counties in Iowa which have areas where over 50% of the children are below the 185% poverty level.⁶⁴ These areas qualify for the program and could offer free lunch and breakfast to all of the children in the area. In 2001 only 13 school districts ran the program covering 12 counties. The other 19 sites in the program were mainly Upward Bound Program campsites.

Issues

- 1) How can the state increase the extremely low participation in this beneficial program?
- 2) How can the state secure sponsors to operate programs in areas of identified need?
- 3) How can the state help get children to the sites, especially in rural areas?

⁵⁸ John Phillips, *supra* 51.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ Communication with Patty Harding, IA Dept. Educ. (Fall 2001).

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ See FNS, USDA, SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM: CASH PAYMENTS at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/sfcash.htm> (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

⁶⁴ Patty Harding, *supra* 61.

THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP)

A direct food distribution program with a target population similar to WIC (pregnant and breastfeeding women and children up to age 6 years), CSFP also serves the elderly (> 60 years). Iowa is one of 24 states with this program. As in WIC, food packages are tailored to the nutritional needs of participants and consist of specific healthy foods such as dry milk; instant potatoes, rice or macaroni; cereal; peanut butter or beans; canned fruits, juice, and vegetables; cheese. Food is either picked up at a site (45%) or delivered to the participant (55%).

Iowa Data⁶⁵

	FY 2001
Participation elderly/month	3736 (Polk plus 7 outlying counties)
Participation children/month	560 (Polk County only)
USDA Food \$	\$758,004 (retail value = \$2,458,918)
Food Package Value	\$45.00 (USDA cost = \$17.00)
Administrative \$ ⁶⁶	Federal \$217,337 Polk Co. \$374,698 Out of County Contracts \$48,617

Comment

This is a very valuable program that provides specific healthy foods to a needy population in a very cost effective manner.

Issues

- 1) How can the state expand this very cost effective program to more counties?
- 2) How can the state assist the operational staff in dealing with language barriers?
- 3) How can advocacy be increased for this worthwhile program?

THE CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

This program provides cash reimbursements and commodity foods for meals served in child and adult day care centers, family and group day care homes for children, and emergency shelters that serve children.

Iowa Data

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2001
Participation/day ⁶⁷	27,931	27,818	28,674
USDA \$ ⁶⁸	\$13,458,875	\$11,975,900	\$12,648,817

⁶⁵ Communication with Mary Ann Juhl, Polk Co. Dept. of Community & Family Services (Summer 2001).

⁶⁶ Communication with Mary Ann Juhl, Polk Co. Dept. of Community & Family Services (Apr. 2002).

⁶⁷ See FNS, USDA, CHILD & ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM: AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/cctypart.htm> (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

⁶⁸ See FNS, USDA, CHILD & ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM: CASH PAYMENTS at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/cccash.htm>. (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

Comment

This is a valuable program that is serving a wide range of Iowa citizens.

Issues

- 1) How can the state help staff with increased time demands without increased staff?

THE SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM

Children in schools, summer camps and child care institutions that have no federally supported meal program receive milk through the Special Milk Program.

Iowa Data

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2002
Total ½ pts. served ⁶⁹	1,412,244	1,082,951	987,175

NUTRITION SERVICES INCENTIVE PROGRAM (ELDERLY NUTRITION PROGRAMS)

This program provides cash and commodity foods to States to provide meals for senior citizens. The food is served in senior citizen centers where socialization is also an extremely important goal of the program. If a senior cannot make it to a congregate meal site, the meals are delivered by meals-on-wheels programs.

Iowa Data⁷⁰

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2001
Congregate meals/year	1,851,372	2,596,184	2,213,700
Delivered meals/year	1,248,443	2,047,294	1,683,414
Number of Sites	NA	NA	442
\$ Federal	\$5,501,469	\$6,145,296	\$2,165,814
\$ State	\$7,677,548	\$12,449,947	\$2,180,583

Comment

This program has been successful in providing nutritious food to seniors in Iowa. This is an especially important program considering the large senior population in Iowa.

Issues

- 1) How can the state help make Iowa’s seniors aware of the program so that they use the services available to them?
- 2) How can the state help the program recruit volunteers to assist with the program?

⁶⁹ See FNS, USDA, SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM: TOTAL HALF-PINTS SERVED, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/smhpfy.htm> (updated Mar. 27, 2002).

⁷⁰ Communication with Carlene Russell, IA Dept. Elder Affairs (Apr. 2002).

- 3) How can the state help keep senior sites open which may close because of decreased funding (i.e.: where agency depends on county funds for the center)?
- 4) How can the state help continue transportation programs which provide transportation for seniors to the sites?

ELDERLY WAIVER PROGRAM

This program is a Medicaid elderly waiver case management project for frail elderly to keep them in their homes. It includes nutrition services. The cost is \$380/month versus a cost of \$1976/month if the recipient were in a nursing home.

Iowa Data⁷¹

	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2001
Number Served/year	2694	2911	3943
\$ Federal	NA	\$2,560,137	\$10,095,000
\$ State	\$2,560,137	\$2,560,137	\$2,560,137

Comment

Good food and nutrition is one of the most important factors toward the health of the seniors and keeping them home on their own. As obvious from the program statistics this program is very cost efficient and should be continued.

Issues

- 1) How can nutrition services, which are currently underutilized in the program, be increased so that the health of seniors can be maintained and improved?

IOWA SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM (SFMNP)

This program for seniors has three goals: 1) to encourage healthy eating habits through the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, 2) to encourage seniors to purchase directly from the farmer, 3) to support local farmers who participate in the program. The SFMNP was offered for the first time in Iowa in the summer of 2001. To participate, seniors must be >60 years and have an income less than 185% poverty level.⁷²

Iowa Data⁷³

	FY 2001
Number served	13,682
Program benefit	\$28
\$ Federal	\$560,000
\$ State	\$45,000
Participating Farmers	734

⁷¹ Carlene Russell, *supra* 70.

⁷² Mike Bevins, *supra* 44.

⁷³ *Id.*

Comment

The goals of this program are perfect for the state of Iowa with its senior population and farmers who are looking toward a new agriculture.

Issues

1) How can the state support and expand this program that supports both seniors and farmers?

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

EFNEP is an education intervention program designed to help limited income adults with young children acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior leading to the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being. It has been in existence for over 30 years. To participate in EFNEP, families must be at 185% of the poverty guidelines and have at least one child <10 years or expecting a first child.

Iowa Data⁷⁴

	FY 1997	FY 1999	FY 2001
No. families served	2695	2486	2075
\$ Federal	Requested	Requested	Requested

Comment

A recent study in the 7 counties served in Iowa found EFNEP returns a benefit-cost ratio of \$10.75/\$1.00 invested.⁷⁵

Issues

1) How can the state expand this very beneficial program into more than 7 counties?

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)

TEFAP provides commodity foods to states for distribution to households, and to soup kitchens and food banks. First initiated in 1981 as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, TEFAP was designed to reduce inventories and storage costs of surplus commodities through distribution to needy households. While some surplus food is still distributed through TEFAP, Congress since 1989 has appropriated funds to purchase additional commodities for households.

⁷⁴ Communication with Joyce Greving, IA State Univ. Families Extension (Apr. 2002).

⁷⁵ See CORY WESSMAN ET AL., IOWA STATE EXTENSION, AN EVALUATION OF THE COSTS & BENEFITS OF IOWA’S EXPANDED FOOD & NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM 16 (Dec. 2000).

FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM ON INDIAN SETTLEMENTS

This program provides commodity foods to low-income families who live on Indian reservations, and to Native American families who live near reservations.

PRIVATE PROGRAMS

There are over 500 missions and shelters for the homeless, battered women and families in crisis programs, food pantries, child day care and adult centers, programs helping disabled people the unemployed and the working poor, and centers for low-income seniors which Iowans who are food insecure and hungry must depend in order to have food to eat. Most of these programs are run by charitable organizations that may receive funding from a variety of sources, but often depend heavily on volunteers.

Many of these agencies receive food through 3 food banks in Iowa which channel donated food from the food industry, USDA, etc. These agencies also receive donated food directly to give to needy families and individuals.

ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY IN IOWA

What can to be done?

The United States Action Plan on Food Security outlines ways the United States will address food security.⁷⁶ This outline can provide a framework from which to work in developing specific goals for Iowa. There are six key areas in the framework where specific agendas need to be set to integrate ongoing efforts with new initiatives to achieve food security for all Iowans. Under each major framework topic, possible activities, initiatives and policies are recommended.

I. Economic Security and Policy Environment

An economic, political and social environment is needed that enables individuals to achieve food security.

1) Focus on groups at risk:

2) Focus on education:

- Improve school to work education programs.
- Involve the State Dept. of Education in challenge academic standards so that graduating seniors are well trained for the job market.

3) Emphasize job creation:

- Create jobs which pay a living wage to help those working get out of poverty.

4) Help low-income persons obtain jobs:

- Support programs which train the homeless in the culinary arts in special food enterprises that also feed the homeless.
- Maintain sufficient retail food markets to serve the low income.
- Expand outreach through Iowa Workforce Development.

5) Help people keep jobs:

- Provide good childcare for low-income workers.
- Invest in public transportation systems so that individuals can get to work.

⁷⁶ See INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON FOOD SECURITY & FOOD SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, *supra* 1at 11-59.

II. Research and Education

The needs relevant to achieving food security are broad, encompassing many physical, social and life sciences and addressing agriculture, nutrition, economic, politics, family and gender, and numerous other elements of the food security equation.

Key areas of research and education:

1) Food Policy

- Support the Iowa Food Policy Council to investigate, to make recommendations, to evaluate, and to implement projects regarding the multifaceted Iowa food and agricultural system.

2) Economic security and human capital development:

- Support research on what a living wage in Iowa needs to be for a worker to meet basic needs including nutritional food.

3) Food and nutrition sciences:

- Support basic applied research and education regarding relationships between food and health.
- Support research and pilot programs on how to get people to eat healthy.
- Support research that looks at the nutritional gap in urban vs. rural Iowans.

4) Food security and nutrition education:

- Support research which determines the best use of limited resources, i.e. breastfeeding is the healthiest and least expensive way to feed an infant.

5) Productivity and sustainability of agricultural and aquacultural food systems and rural communities:

- Support research that determines how to decrease dependence on other nations for food. Local communities are healthiest when they are as self-reliant as possible especially where food and agriculture are concerned.
- Support research that looks at the true cost of agricultural production including environmental damage.

6) Food and water safety:

7) Climate change and mitigation

III. Sustainable Food Systems and the Environment

Sustainable food systems have three interrelated components: environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. Sustainable communities, both human and natural, are essential to long-term food security. Environmentally sensitive agriculture keeps water clean and potable, builds soil fertility, controls pests with minimal chemical use, minimizes and mitigates adverse impacts of nutrient over enrichment, and maintains healthy air quality.

1) Environmentally sensitive agricultural policies:

- Develop policies which reduce non-point-source pollution.
- Develop policies which reward environmental stewardship by farmers such as decreased chemical use.
- Develop regulations which control nitrate and phosphorus contamination of drinking water.

2) Farmland protection:

3) Policies to mitigate global warming and climate change:

4) Development of local food systems:

- Develop food systems which do not have a negative environmental impact, but instead have an ecological infrastructure where waste of one component becomes the input of another and there is no net loss of nutrients in the system.
- Development of Farmer's Market Nutrition programs and Community Supported Agriculture programs in each community which support diversification in agricultural and small rural communities.
- Development of urban and rural greenhouses through both public and private initiatives.

5) Sustainable fisheries:

- Development of fish hatcheries/production as local food and farm diversification.

IV. Food Security Safety Net

Economic opportunity and security are the most important means of achieving food security. However, there are also instances where a food safety net is necessary. Food aid is also an efficient and productive way to use the U.S. agricultural bounty and helps to support local farmers.

Special need groups:

Homeless The working poor Legal Immigrants Children and adolescents
Elderly The immunocompromised American Indians Rural populations
Migrant and seasonal farm workers

1) Maintain an adequate food security safety net:

- Increase outreach for existing programs so that all eligible families know about the programs and how to apply.
- Cut red tape in the application procedures for programs, especially for seniors.
- Boost food stamp minimum benefit package from \$10 to \$25.
- Restore legal immigrants to all programs.
- Support child nutrition programs in the schools so they can help children stay healthy by not allowing non-nutritious foods to compete with the healthy school foods.

2) Community Food Security Initiative:

- Development of community gardening programs for schools, seniors, rooftops, neighborhoods and especially low-income families.

3) Coordination of public and private services:

- Pilot co-location of public and private services (i.e.: seniors and children lunches).
- Pilot a mobile farmer's market.
- Pilot the development of communal kitchens where all ages and all incomes eat together (i.e.: bring congregated meals to the schools).
- Coordinate senior public transportation programs with programs to transport children to save on transportation costs in rural areas.
- Support donations of refrigeration equipment for food pantries and kitchens from private food stores.

4) Food recovery (gleaning):

- Pilot, through the Sec. of Agriculture, programs which give excessive farm products to food banks.

5) Increase visibility of food security issues:

- Support a public conference on food security.
- Promote legislative and administrative officials touring to promote a food security agenda.

V. Information and Mapping

Understanding where hunger exists, both geographically and socially, is an essential tool for decision makers.

1) Refine measures:

2) Monitor changes in nutritional status and food security:

- Support the Iowa Food Security Report Card which is monitoring food security in Iowa.
- Monitor food security as welfare to work environments change.

VI. Food and Water Safety

Safe food and water, free from chemical and biological contaminants, are essential for food security, maintaining physical health and economic productivity.

1) Microbial contamination:

- Develop state policies patterned from the National Food Safety Initiative.
- Support and expand current training programs for all on safe food handling.

2) Pesticide and other toxic substance contamination:

- Develop state policies patterned from the Food Quality Protection Act.
- Expand integrated pest management programs (such as at the Leopold Center) for agriculture in the state.
- Develop state policies supporting the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendment of 1996.

* Susan Roberts prepared this report as a Legislative Intern for Representative Jack Hatch and while working with the Iowa Food Policy Council. Ms. Roberts is currently completing a law degree specializing in food and agricultural law from Drake University School of Law. In addition, Ms. Roberts has a Bachelor's degree from Iowa State University in Food and Nutrition and a Master's degree from The University of Iowa College of Medicine in Preventive Medicine and Environmental Health. She has worked for over 25 years in the field of food, nutrition, and health.