



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Feeding Wisconsin Shares Governor Walker's Goal To Fight Hunger By Increasing Employment But is Concerned By Proposed Work Requirement

Statewide, Wisconsin – January 23, 2017: Feeding Wisconsin expressed concerns today about Governor Walker's proposed plans to alter the FoodShare program by sanctioning families with children participating on the program if they don't comply with work requirements.

"For those who can work, a good paying job is the best tool in the fight against hunger and FoodShare is an important work support that ensures Wisconsin families have the food and energy they need to be ready for work," said David Lee, Executive Director of Feeding Wisconsin.

"However, given the geographic distribution of the available jobs and potential job training programs, many of our friends and neighbors participating in the FoodShare program may experience significant barriers to avail themselves of these opportunities, such as lack of transportation or affordable childcare."

Of the beneficiaries with minors in the house, 66% live in single parent households, so access to high-quality, affordable childcare can be a real challenge for parents seeking for employment.

While the proposed sanctions for non-compliance with the work requirement would only reduce the FoodShare benefit for the adult in the family, the effect is the same as reducing the overall benefit for the entire family, including children.

"People utilizing FoodShare to get through a rough patch in their lives buy food the same way all Wisconsin families do – for their entire family. They do not separate out what foods are for the adults and for the children," Lee said. "To build ladders of opportunity, we need to ensure that all of our children have access to the food they need to learn, play and grow."

Federal law already requires all FoodShare participants to register for work and requires that people who are already working comply with commonsense rules regarding their employment. In 2015, Wisconsin implemented a requirement for single adults without children to work 20 hours a week as a condition to receive FoodShare.

"We share the Governor's goals of reducing hunger and increasing employment. Toward that end, we would support fine-tuning existing law and better understanding the barriers to existing jobs and enrollment in training programs that FoodShare participants face so that we may increase the effectiveness of these programs."

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Feeding Wisconsin is the statewide association of the six regional Feeding America food banks that provide emergency food assistance and access to benefit assistance in every corner of our state. Its mission is to coordinate, support and enhance the work of its members by securing food and funds, raising public awareness and creating the partnerships necessary to end hunger.

The Feeding Wisconsin network of food banks provides over 40 million meals every year to nearly 600,000 people. Together, we are leading the way forward toward a hunger free Wisconsin.

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