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Feeding Wisconsin Releases 2023 Wisconsin Advocacy Priorities

MADISON, WI – Feeding Wisconsin, the state association of six Feeding America member food banks and 1,000 local food programs serving all 72 counties in the state, releases its legislative platform for 2023. Feeding Wisconsin calls for improving public and private solutions to support a healthy and hunger-free Wisconsin. Food insecurity remains an issue for 7.2% of Wisconsinites, including 12.6% of Wisconsin children. Regional food banks and pantries are experiencing a 30-45 percent increase in demand, and are anticipating a surge in need as extra COVID FoodShare benefits will end in early 2023.

"Ending hunger in our state will take a public-private partnership approach," says Feeding Wisconsin Executive Director, Stephanie Jung Dorfman. "Wisconsin is in a unique situation to be able to pair strong nutrition programs with our ability to leverage the robust resources of its agricultural, manufacturing, and retail industries to benefit people experiencing food insecurity. Programs like a Food Bank Food Purchasing program are a win-win for our state."

Feeding Wisconsin's 2023 state advocacy priorities include a call to:

Provide funding for Wisconsin's food banks to purchase additional Wisconsin food products, increasing access to fresh, nutritious food for Wisconsin families
- We support the investment of $20 Million over the 2023-2025 biennium to connect Feeding Wisconsin's network of food banks and pantries with Wisconsin producers to provide food to families experiencing food insecurity. A state funded food bank purchasing program would increase the capacity of food banks and pantries to procure, store, and distribute nutrient-dense locally grown food to low-income Wisconsinites who need it. This program would also allow for flexibility and local decision making over the types of food needed by local communities and in the local operation of food distribution organizations (allowing for choice shopping models as well as pre-boxed foods).

Ensure a strong, accessible, and effective Federal and State Nutrition Programs
- Maintain a strong, accessible, and effective FoodShare Program, which is Wisconsin's Largest Ending Hunger Program
- Expand the use of federal and state funds for healthy food incentives to provide FoodShare households with discounts on fresh produce and other healthy food options.
- Expand access to free school meals so all Wisconsin students facing food insecurity receive nutritious meals while at school

Support policies and programs that improve the health and economic stability of Wisconsin families

- Support policies and programs that promote financial security and household stability to help Wisconsinites build for a better future, such as increasing access to affordable housing, quality childcare for working families, and increasing access to healthcare and health insurance.

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Feeding Wisconsin is the state association of the six regional Feeding America food banks that provide food to 1,000 local food programs in all 72 counties of the state. Through food banks and food pantries, Feeding Wisconsin works to ensure that everybody has access to the food and benefits they need to work, learn, play and live healthy lives. Together, Feeding Wisconsin is leading the way Forward together toward a healthy and hunger-free Wisconsin.

Feeding Wisconsin member food banks include: Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin, Feed My People Food Bank, Second Harvest Heartland, Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank, and Channel-One Regional Food Bank.

To learn more about Feeding Wisconsin, visit www.FeedingWI.org. Stay connected with us by following @FeedingWI on Twitter and Facebook. This release is also available in PDF Format.