



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Feeding Wisconsin Responds to Governor Walker's Budget

Milwaukee, Wis. – “Feeding Wisconsin hopes that as our state legislative leaders begin the work on the budget that they can find a way to include some help for the nearly 700,000 food insecure Wisconsinites gain access to the healthy, nutritious food they need to work, learn, and provide for their families,” said David Lee, Feeding Wisconsin’s Executive Director.

“While we remain deeply concerned about the unintended consequences of reinstating the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) provision in FoodShare, we applaud the funding that the governor has provided to ensure that the estimated 38,000 Wisconsinites affected by this decision have the access to the training and skills they need to attain work. We hope that these slots remain fully funded and provide the pathway to the right skills, job training, and placements for the unemployed single adults.

We are also concerned about the plan to drug test this same population for public benefits, including FoodShare. No public funds should be used to subsidize illicit behavior and we appreciate the desire to help people with substance abuse disorders get connected to treatment. However, given the evidence emerging from other states that shows that rates of substance abuse are no more prevalent in public assistance beneficiaries than in the general population, we are concerned that this proposal only increases the stigma and barriers for someone looking for help in purchasing the food they need to be ready for work.

Furthermore, as the state already drug tests ex-drug felons for FoodShare, this proposal seems redundant and expensive providing no net budget relief or improved outcomes for food insecure Wisconsinites.

We were heartened to learn that the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has goals to reduce food insecurity in the state to 9%. Unfortunately, these goals were not met and our actuals were 11.3% during the two years that were measured. We believe that we can and must do better than 9% and we welcome the opportunity to work with the administration, legislature, DHS, and other partners to work toward a healthy and hunger-free Wisconsin.”

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Feeding Wisconsin is the statewide association of the six Feeding America food banks that provide emergency food to all seventy-two counties of Wisconsin. Our mission is to coordinate, support and enhance the work of our members by securing more food and funds, raising public awareness and creating the partnerships necessary to end hunger. More than 573,000 people in Wisconsin rely on food from our member food banks for nearly 40 million meals. Together, we are striving forward toward a hunger free Wisconsin.