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Cities and Allies Combat Childhood Hunger on Many Fronts, New Report Shows

U.S. Conference of Mayors and Sodexo Foundation Report Showcases Initiatives in 24 Cities

GAITHERSBURG, Md., President Obama's goal of ending childhood hunger in the nation by 2015 is being pursued in a wide variety of ways by mayors and their public and private partners in cities across the country, according to a report issued today by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and funded by the Sodexo Foundation. The report showcases successful programs in 24 U.S. cities, many of which are leveraging established national programs to address hunger locally.

"These challenging economic times are increasing the number of families that are hungry and at risk of hunger, so we must learn from the innovative programs that are working and replicate these good ideas across the country if we are to address the recent reverses in the fight against hunger," said Stephen J. Brady, president of the Sodexo Foundation. "Because childhood hunger results in poorer academic performance, increased absences and tardiness, this report can help spread initiatives that break the cycle of hunger and poverty."

The report "Childhood Anti-Hunger Programs in 24 Cities" focuses on programs in cities including Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, Honolulu, New Haven, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Spokane, and Stockton. Many of these programs are addressing the needs of specific communities within their populations by:

- building on existing programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, and existing infrastructure, such as Feeding America and food banks
- educating parents and parents-to-be about how to maximize the nutritional value of the meals they do access
- providing meals to those in need at locations other than food banks and similar sites, to help reduce the stigma and physical obstacles associated with going to a food bank
- distributing food through back packs and other take-home efforts to ensure that children have adequate nutrition over the weekend as well as during the week

In publishing the report, both the Conference of Mayors and Sodexo acknowledge that the ongoing economic recession has worsened hunger problems in the nation, and that the increased pressure on governments and other public and private agencies to provide food to families in need will continue to grow for years to come.

“Ending childhood hunger in America by 2015 is an enormous challenge. We need reports of successful models if we are to inspire and motivate people to take action,” said Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of the Conference of Mayors. The Conference’s goal, he said, is to facilitate the exchange of information among mayors on the most effective programs to combat hunger in their cities, and “We offer this publication in support of that goal.”

Sodexo, Inc.

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U.S. Conference of Mayors

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (www.usmayors.org) is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.

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