



Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release.

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AR Hunger Relief Alliance Recognized in National Commission on Hunger Report to Congress

LITTLE ROCK, AR (Jan. 7, 2016)—The National Commission on Hunger, a congressionally appointed bi-partisan commission charged with developing innovative reforms in both public and private food assistance programs, released its [final report](#) on Tuesday. The [Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance](#) was recognized as an example of what works in reducing hunger through the development of public-private partnerships. The Alliance is cited for bringing together food banks, pantries and other hunger agencies to increase access to SNAP benefits for eligible Arkansans. Public/private partnerships are at the heart of many Alliance programs most especially the Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign, for which the Alliance is lead partner and includes state agencies, private businesses and nonprofits.

The Committee report also recognized the value of healthy food access partnerships such as Share Our Strength’s Cooking Matters program, which engages non-profits— such as the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance—to work with local organizations to teach nutrition skills to low-income people. [Cooking Matters](#) leverages SNAP Nutrition Education funding in local markets to help participants learn to shop for and prepare nutritious meals on tight budgets. The Committee lauded the value of Child Nutrition partnerships such as those between Feeding America and ConAgra Foods, which fund Kids Café programs through Feeding America’s network of food banks.

The Committee’s recommendations to increase access to summer feeding programs for low income kids and introduce summer electronic benefit transfer options represent issues the Alliance and [No Kid Hungry Campaign](#) have advocated in favor of over the past several years. “We are very gratified that the Committee recognized increasing access to summer and afterschool programs is a viable means of reducing childhood hunger,” said Alliance Executive Director Kathy Webb. “During the hearings in May of 2015,” Webb continued, “the Committee also showed keen interest in the possibilities represented by the [Arkansas Gleaning Project](#), a program that harvests excess locally grown produce left in growers’ fields and distributes it to food banks and pantries. The Committee’s recommendation to place greater emphasis on and funding for programs like the Arkansas Gleaning Project is going to make a difference in providing fresh produce to underserved communities all across the country.”

In May of last year, the Commission held public hearings to learn more about hunger and food insecurity in The Natural State. Arkansas was chosen because the state ranks consistently among the highest in the nation in child, senior and household food insecurity. The panel heard invited testimony from local leaders in the anti-hunger community about how USDA funds might be more effectively used to fight hunger in Arkansas. The Committee’s recommendations are meant to include ways to more effectively use federal programs and funds to end hunger.

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About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit www.ARhungeralliance.org for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.