



MEDIA RELEASE

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

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Arkansas's Ranking Improves on Annual School Breakfast Scorecard

*More Students from Low-Income Families Start the Day with a
Healthy School Breakfast*

LITTLE ROCK, AR (February 13, 2019)– The national [School Breakfast Program](#) makes it possible for all school children in the U.S. to receive a nutritious breakfast every school day. Arkansas ranks number 6 on the annual [School Breakfast Scorecard](#) released this week by the Food Research & Action Center ([FRAC](#), a national anti-hunger advocacy group). The *Scorecard* ranks all 50 states and the District of Columbia on the participation of students in the School Breakfast Program and finds that 157,877 students from low-income families in Arkansas participated in school breakfast on an average school day in 2017–2018. Fully 99 percent of Arkansas schools that offer school lunch also offer school breakfast.

The report finds that 65.7 percent of low-income students in Arkansas ate school breakfast for every 100 that received free or reduced-price school lunch during the 2017 – 2018 school year. This represents a 1.9% increase over last year's numbers and is well above the national average of 57 percent of low-income children eating school breakfast for every 100 who received school lunch in the 2017–2018 school year.

School breakfast participation nationally has been growing. According to the report, on an average school day during the 2017–2018 school year, nearly 12.5 million low-income students participated in the national School Breakfast Program, an increase of 1.2 percent over the prior

school year. In the 2017–2018 school year, 4 million more low-income children received school breakfast on an average day than a decade ago in the 2007–2008 school year.

School breakfast participation nationally has been growing, and several strategies exist to increase it further, including the use of [alternative breakfast models](#), such as breakfast in the classroom, “grab and go,” and second chance breakfast. Arkansas’s ranking can be attributed in large part to the widespread implementation of Breakfast After the Bell programs and adoption of USDA’s Community Eligibility Provision in which high need schools can feed all students at no charge. The [Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign](#), [Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance](#), and Arkansas Department of Education with the support of Governor Asa Hutchinson have made increasing breakfast participation a priority focus across the state.

“We’re very proud of the progress we’ve made in increasing school breakfast participation so that more students in Arkansas are starting their days with the nutrition they need to learn and thrive,” said Patty Barker, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign director. “Increases in school breakfast participation means less hunger, better health, and improved educational outcomes for our children. The Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign is committed to working with schools across the state to help tailor Breakfast After the Bell programs that will best serve their students.”

FRAC’s *Scorecard* shows that despite an overall increase in Arkansas’s school breakfast participation, too many children from low-income families are still missing out. FRAC has set an ambitious, but achievable, goal of reaching 70 low-income children with school breakfast for every 100 receiving school lunch. The report shows that an additional \$2.9 million in federal funding would flow into Arkansas child nutrition department budgets if the state could reach that 70% goal. The Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign is determined to reach and exceed that goal.

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About the School Breakfast Scorecard

This report measures the reach of the School Breakfast Program in the 2017–2018 school year — nationally and in each state — based on a variety of metrics, and it examines the impact of select trends and policies on program participation. On an average school day, 12.5 million children from low-income families participated in the School Breakfast Program in the 2017–2018 school year. Read the full [report](#).

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 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 mission is to reduce hunger and improve access to nutritious food by providing tools and resources, empowerment, advocacy, education and research. We invite you to visit www.ARhungeralliance.org for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

About the No Kid Hungry campaign

The No Kid Hungry campaign connects kids in need with effective nutrition programs like school breakfast, summer and afterschool meals and teaches their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals on a budget. The campaign works across the nation and in Arkansas to surround children with healthy food where they live, learn and play.