

Domestic Food Programs

The 2014 Farm Bill became law. On Feb. 7, 2014, President Obama signed the Farm Bill, passing the legislation after years of debate over farming subsidies and Food Stamp reductions.

Successes

- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) funding remained intact** - OLHSA has been coordinating the CSFP program for Livingston County Seniors for over thirty years (800 households annually). We look forward to continuing to serve our local area seniors. OLHSA has partnered with Focus Hope in southern Oakland County for 10 years to ensure seniors have access to healthy food.
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) received an increase** - This increase will assist local pantries to help those families that will be impacted by the SNAP cuts. OLHSA manages the TEFAP program in Livingston County and has an innovative partnership with Gleaners Shared Harvest Pantry. These funds are vital to the continued success of this nationally recognized partnership, serving over 2,300 households per quarter. OLHSA has also managed the TEFAP program for over 20 years in Oakland County, serving 7,900 households per quarter. The increase will also ensure the continued success of the 41 pantries the TEFAP program supports in Oakland County.
- **Increased funding for healthy food incentives including Project Fresh and EBT use in Farmers Markets** - OLHSA has been the lead agency in Livingston County for the Senior Project Fresh program for the last five years; before that it was not available in Livingston County. As part of the Livingston County Hunger Council, OLHSA has also played a vital role in bringing EBT use to our local farmers markets for the first time in the summer of 2013. We look forward to bringing it to a second market in 2015. The OLHSA office in Oakland County continued its own farmers market. It offers families the opportunity to use their EBT card to purchase fresh produce every Tuesday during the warmer months.

OLHSA would like to **thank you** for your support and diligent advocacy during the long debate over the Farm Bill. Although there were 8.6 billion in cuts to SNAP funding, effecting 850,000 low income individuals, vital emergency food programs were kept operational.

Recommendations

Appropriations - The Appropriations bill is currently being reviewed. This bill contains funding for two very vital programs in our community, including:

- **Women Infants and Children (WIC)** - This program assists mothers, infants and children, up until the age of five, with acquiring nutritional food that is vital to their health and growth. The Farm Bill has eliminated the children and mothers portion of the CSFP program making WIC even more important than ever before. Mothers and children who previously utilized CSFP will now be turning WIC to meet their nutritional needs. Increased funding will be needed to meet the new demand.
- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)** - Many local families utilize the Free and Reduced Lunch program in their local schools. The Summer Lunch Program provides children with healthy meals during the summer months. With the reduction of SNAP benefits, this program is more important than ever to ensure that children have access to the food they need during the summer months when SNAP would have been used by their parents. Increased funding for this program is imperative; however, the stringent mandates passed down to local organizations by USDA makes it difficult to serve eligible children. Therefore, not only is funding support needed, but addressing the regulations is needed as well.

For more information: **Ronald B. Borngesser, CEO** | 248-209-2603 office | ronb@olhsa.org email | 248-209-2606 fax |

Childhood Hunger Awareness - In support of our national hunger programs, OLHSA would like to encourage you to educate Congress about access to nutritious and regular meals. Without it, our children can't live up to their potential Please encourage them to pass bills that support childhood nutrition in 2015.

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Central Office 196 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue P.O. Box 430598 Pontiac, MI 48343-0598
T 248.209.2600 F 248.209.2645 info@olhsa.org www.olhsa.org