

## CHILD NUTRITION

Over half a million children in Ohio live in poverty. Families who live in poverty are often forced to make impossible choices between basic needs. Prior to the current pandemic, nearly one in five children experienced persistent hunger and that number is only growing as more families are losing income, unemployment benefits, and the safety nets in our society are becoming threadbare.

Offentimes, our schools fill critical roles in our communities to help children get the daily nutrition they need. With over a third of children enrolled in these school-based nutrition programs, many children are at risk of going hungry every day leaving many children to lack consistent access to adequate food. The majority live in families with one or more working adults—but are still unable to consistently afford enough food to keep the wolves of hunger from their door.

There is no excuse for any child in America to go hungry and malnourished in the richest nation on Earth. Yet child hunger is a widespread, urgent and shameful problem that cannot wait and has only increased during this pandemic.



### FAST FACTS

*From March to June, Ohioans who reported that they “sometimes or often did not have enough to eat” rose by 30%.*

*More than 500,000 children in Ohio live in food insecure homes, meaning 1 in 5 children don't know where their next meal will come from.*

*Over 850,000 Ohio children received free-or-reduced priced meals at school last school year.*

**Children's Defense Fund-Ohio recommends the following steps to protect and enhance the lives of all Ohio families:**

1. **SNAP Boost.** Provide additional funding for SNAP benefits, raising the maximum benefit by an urgently needed 15%
2. **Supporting children & families means we must demand more pandemic relief funding.** Support continued federal relief during this pandemic. This legislation is key towards helping families meet their basic needs, such as keeping food on the table as Ohio weathers this unprecedented storm and steadies itself economically.
3. **Administrative Flexibilities.** Provide for flexibilities and waivers to administrative barriers to SNAP and WIC benefit access and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) throughout 2020 and 2021.

## CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1. Many families are experiencing food insecurity for the first time due to COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn. What will you do to support families and make sure they are able to keep food on the table?
2. With over half of Ohio schools providing education in hybrid and online models, this means that many children will not have consistent access to school meals. What will you do to make sure all children get access to nutrition programs so they can thrive and flourish?