



## Appleseed This Week

### Nebraska Appleseed Fights Hunger in the Nation's Breadbasket

**July 26, 2007** - Nebraska Appleseed is battling the state's growing hunger problem. With several new initiatives aimed at stemming the erosion of the food stamp benefit and increasing participation in school breakfast and summer food programs, the Center is making food more affordable for low-income Nebraskans and providing better nutrition to kids through the public school system.

Nebraska Appleseed recently released a report calling on Congress to increase the existing food stamp benefit to keep up with inflation. In Nebraska, food stamp recipients currently receive just 96 cents per meal, which continues to decrease annually. According to the Center's report, next year a typical working parent with two children will lose about \$350 in food stamp benefits as a result of the cuts, an overall loss of \$8 million in food stamp benefits for Nebraskans. The **Federal Budget Coalition**, which was formed by Nebraska Appleseed a few years ago and is comprised of about 200 individuals and human service organizations, is urging members of Congress to reauthorize the 2007 Farm Bill, which includes an increase in the minimum monthly food stamp benefit from \$10 a month to \$50 a month.

This spring, the Center was part of the **Coalition for Human Service Needs**, which succeeded in pushing through the Nebraska state legislature an increase in the amount of money the state provides for school breakfasts, which are served to children who qualify to receive free and reduced lunches. Starting this fall schools will receive more state funding to cover the costs of providing meals, which is expected to increase participation in the program. Nebraska currently ranks 45th among states in participation in the school breakfast program.

Nebraska ranks even lower (46th) in participation in summer food programs, which are designed to provide adequate nutrition for children when they aren't in school. "In a rural state like Nebraska, it can be difficult to find a site to distribute meals and even more difficult to transport kids to and from those sites," said **Becky Gould**, executive director of Nebraska Appleseed. The state's **Department of Education**, which oversees Nebraska's summer food program, has contacted Nebraska Appleseed to work collaboratively on increasing participation in and access to the summer food program.

These efforts are all part of **Nebraska Appleseed's Food and Nutrition Project**, which was established three years ago to ensure that Nebraska's children, seniors, disabled and working families are able to meet their food and nutrition needs, focusing on the role of food programs that transition families to self-sufficiency. To help draw attention to this issue, Nebraska Appleseed held a **Hunger Awareness Breakfast** last month, presenting the first annual "**Food Policy Champion**" awards to state **Senators Gail Kopplin** and **Amanda McGill**. Both senators were recognized for their efforts to improve food policy in the state during this past

year's legislative session.

**For more information on Appleseed, visit [www.appleseednetwork.org](http://www.appleseednetwork.org). To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).**

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