

FRAC WEEKLY NEWS DIGEST

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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

[What Americans get wrong about food stamps, according to an expert who's spent 20 years researching them](#) – The Washington Post, April 4, 2017

The highest proportion of SNAP recipients are children, and those recipients who are not children are on disability or retired, according to Craig Gunderson, professor of agricultural and consumer economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who has spent the last 20 years researching the program. SNAP does not discourage work, he notes; as an individual's income increases, their benefits go down. In addition, while children of undocumented immigrants who are legal U.S. residents are eligible for benefits, undocumented immigrants are not eligible.

  

[Food Assistance Programs Are A Hand Up, Not A Hand Out](#) – The Huffington Post, March 15, 2017

More than 40 million Americans struggle with food insecurity, and according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 13.1 million children lack access to the food necessary for a quality education. Yet many who need food assistance are too embarrassed to ask for it. "We can mend our nation's childhood hunger crisis by investing in the existing food assistance programs such as SNAP (food stamps), Women Infant Children Program (WIC)," and the school meal programs, writes Maryann Jacobsen, a family nutrition expert and author, in this op-ed.

  

School Breakfast Program

[Lawmakers lobbying for breakfast after the bell](#) – Boston Herald, April 1, 2017

FRAC reported recently that Massachusetts ranks 47th among states for school breakfast participation. New legislation in the state would require schools to provide breakfast in the classroom if they have 60 percent or more students receiving free or reduced-price school lunch. "Making breakfast part of the school day and allowing kids to eat in the classroom eliminates any barriers," said Crystal FitzSimons, director of school and out-of-school time programs at FRAC. "It makes sense that Massachusetts should be utilizing this federal entitlement program," said Catherine D'Amato, CEO of the Greater Boston Food Bank.

  

[Breakfast programs help students start the day in the right frame of mind](#) – Pennlive.com, March 28, 2017

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, in his 2017–18 budget address, proposed \$2 million to help expand school breakfast in the state. The money will help schools expand programs, such as breakfast in the classroom and grab-and-go models, writes David Lloyd of the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank in this letter to the editor. Lloyd implemented breakfast in the classroom in Harrisburg in 2002. “[O]nce the new format was in operation, teachers and principals saw benefits: students were calmer, visits to the nurses’ offices declined, and fewer children were being referred to principals because of discipline problems,” Lloyd notes.



Summer Food Service Program

[Grant to help expand Prattville’s summer feeding program](#) – Montgomery Advertiser, March 31, 2017

Prattville, Alabama, is the recipient of a \$22,000 grant through the National League of Cities’ Combating Hunger through Afterschool and Summer Meal Programs (CHAMPS) initiative, in partnership with FRAC and supported by the Walmart Foundation. Prattville will be working with United Christian Church to run the program and expand the number of meals served this summer to 6,000 during the 10-week summer program.



[Summer Food Program Takes Shape for Island Kids](#) – Vineyard Gazette, April 3, 2017

When school lets out for the summer on Martha’s Vineyard, the 700 public school students relying on free and reduced-price school meals are at risk of going hungry. This year, Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School will be sponsoring free summer meals from July 10 to August 11, enabling children 18 years and younger to receive three meals a day at Oak Bluffs Library, the English Language Learner program at the Tisbury School, and the Boys & Girls Club in Edgartown.



School Meal Access

[Md. Governor should signal support for poverty solutions on the table](#) – The Baltimore Sun, April 5, 2017

While Md. Gov. Larry Hogan announced a commission to look into “Two Generation Family Security,” there are solutions that, with sufficient funding, will help many struggling with poverty. The Maryland Cares for Kids Act would help 45,000 students receive subsidized school meals, and the Hunger-Free Schools Act “lets high-poverty schools all over the state utilize federal reimbursement to feed hungry kids,” writes Michael J. Wilson, director of Maryland Hunger Solutions, and Benjamin Orr, executive director of the Maryland Center on Economic Policy, in this op-ed. Helping families in poverty is “about using the solutions that are already on our doorstep as effectively and as efficiently as possible,” Wilson and Orr conclude.



[McGuire pushes childhood hunger bill](#) –Record-Bee, March 17, 2017

California State Senator Mike McGuire is sponsoring a bill that would make it possible for the 500,000 children on Medicaid (Med-Cal) in the state to be enrolled automatically in free and reduced-price school meals. The bill is a follow-up to a pilot program in which 14 school districts enrolled low-income students on Medi-Cal in free school meals statewide. Schools that participated in the pilot saw an increase of 60,000 students receiving free or reduced-price school lunch, and the state saw \$33 million in increased federal reimbursements.



[Over half of students receive school lunches free or reduced price](#) – The Garden Island, March 14, 2017

According to the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE), more than half of Kauai's students have received free or reduced-price school meals. The state implemented the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) two years ago in seven schools; in 2016, 30 schools offered free meals through CEP. "I don't want it to sound like a cliché, but for some students, these truly are the only hot meals that they get," said Dexter Kishia, supervisor of HIDOE's School Food Services Branch.



[New Mexico Outlaws School 'Lunch Shaming'](#) – The New York Times, April 7, 2017

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez signed the Hunger-Free Students' Bill of Rights, which requires schools to work with parents to clear up school meal debts or sign up students for free or reduced-price school meals, rather than engage in practices that embarrass children. Schools across the country, in attempting to balance their nutrition budgets, have required students with outstanding meal charges to wear wrist bands, work off the debt by performing chores, or receive an alternate meal (after their hot meal has been thrown out by staff). "People on both sides of the aisle were genuinely horrified that schools were allowed to throw out children's food or make them work to pay off debt," said Jennifer Ramo, executive director of New Mexico Appleseed. "We have to separate the child from a debt they have no power to pay."



President's Budget and Afterschool Meals

[Budget cuts raise concerns for after-school, meal programs](#) – WTSP, March 21, 2017

The president's budget proposal would eliminate the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Initiative, a program which provides afterschool learning programs along with meals. Eight schools in Pinellas County, Florida, participate in the 21st Century program, and nearly 2,000 students could lose meals if the program is cut. "Here in Pinellas, we do have a hunger issue among our kids," said Lynn Geist, director of the school district's food service department. "We will see kids waiting at the back door of the kitchen waiting for breakfast because they had nothing to eat the night before."



Economic Inequality

[Black Americans Are Working More — With Little to Show for It](#) – The Atlantic, March 29, 2017

While there has been an increase in the number of paid, annual work hours for black and white workers between 18 and 64 years old in the past 36 years, according to research from the Economic Policy Institute, black-white wage gaps are actually much larger now than they were in 1979. Racial discrimination remains in the labor market, and economic downturns hit black families harder than white families. Poor black Americans do not have enough wealth to weather economic shocks and have higher rates of unemployment; when they find jobs, they are often scrutinized more while being paid less — a cycle of economic disadvantage that is tough to break.



[Why It's So Hard to Get Ahead in the South](#) – The Atlantic, April 4, 2017

Much of the south suffers from low economic mobility rates, in spite of booming economies in cities, such as Charlotte, North Carolina, where poor children are likely to remain poor instead of making it into the middle class. Southern cities tend to be racially segregated, have higher poverty rates than the national average; more income inequality; more single mothers; and fewer opportunities for people in the lower economic percentages to interact with others who can help them succeed through jobs, internships, and scholarships. Southern states also spend less on education, and much of the tax burden in the south is shouldered by low-income families.



From FRAC Chat

[Recess Matters: Engage Your Members of Congress When They Are Back Home](#) - FRAC Chat, April 10, 2017

Members of Congress in the House and Senate are now home for an extended recess until April 23. This is a great opportunity to get some face time with your Members of Congress and make sure they hear directly from you and other leaders in your community and state about the important role that federal nutrition programs play in improving the lives of their constituents — and what is at stake if these programs are weakened.



[The Impact of Food Insecurity on Health and Well-Being: A Conversation with Heather Hartline-Grafton, Dr.PH., R.D.](#) - FRAC Chat, April 6, 2017

Obesity continues to be a major health challenge in the U.S. What does the latest research say about food insecurity and obesity? The extent of research on food insecurity and obesity has grown considerably over the last 20 years, and much of that research is covered in the obesity section of FRAC's website. Overall, the strongest and most consistent evidence demonstrates a higher risk of obesity among food-insecure women. The evidence is mixed for children and men, but obesity and food insecurity often coexist in these populations.



[FRAC On The Move: Presenting From the World Congress on Medicaid](#) - FRAC Chat, April 5, 2017

Alex Ashbrook, director of Special Projects and Initiatives at the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), recently spoke at the World Congress 10th Annual Medicaid Managed Care Summit on the issue of food insecurity as a social determinant of health. This blog post is an edited transcript of her presentation.

