Federal Food Programs Overview

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- SustiNet Child and Adult Obesity Task Force
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Food Insecurity

- **Food Insecurity**: is the lack of assured access at all times to enough food for healthy, active lives.

- **Very Low Food Security**: Hunger combined with food insecurity, which is the mental and physical condition that comes from not eating enough food due to insufficient economic, family or community resources.
Consequences: The Impact of Hunger on Health

- Hungry children are more likely to be chronically sick and to have behavioral problems compared to children who are not hungry.

- Food insecurity with its associated health consequences, has long-term ramifications for the larger community.
State of CT

- In 2007, **10.6%** of Connecticut children under 18 (85,530 children) lived in a family with income below the Federal Poverty Level ($21,027 for a two-parent family with two children)

- **11%** households are food insecure

- **4.1%** of Connecticut households are very low food secure
The Paradox of Hunger and Obesity

- You can be hungry and overweight.

- In a recent study: 53% of women who were moderately food insecure were overweight, compared to 34% of those who were food secure.
The Paradox of Hunger and Obesity

The Link between Food Insecurity and Obesity:

- Poor quality diets, foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt are often cheaper than other foods.
- Physical activity may be difficult due to unsafe streets.
- Skipping meals when food is scarce and overeating when food supplies are good causes the body to store up calories as fat.
Eligibility

- Families at 185% of the Federal Poverty Level
  Family of 4 has an annual income of no more than $40,793.

- Open Sites for Summer Feeding Programs: 50% children in geographic area eat free and reduced price school lunch. Any children 18 and younger can eat for free.

- At-Risk Supper Programs: Children under 19.
SNAP / Food Stamps

- 30% increase in SNAP/Food Stamp usage in one year.
- New Income guideline – 185% of FPL with no assets
- Direct Certification for school meals
- Access Issues
  - Distance from DSS office
  - Overwhelmed DSS staff
  - Lack of timely benefits
School Breakfast

- 39.1% of children who participate in free and reduced price lunch program eat breakfast at school

- Connecticut last in the nation for the percentage of schools participating in the National School Breakfast Program
After-school Snacks

- Expand CACFP to more child care providers.
- Work with recreational programs to include snacks.

Summer Nutrition

- 25% of eligible children participate in Summer Nutrition Programs.
  - Increase participation 
  - coordinating recreation with food
  - Increase public awareness
“Summer Food”
WIC

- Only program aimed at providing basic nutrition to woman and infants
- Every $1 spent on WIC funding translates to a $1.77 - $3.13 savings in medical cost to the state.
Emergency Food

- 30-50% across the board increase in usage
- Increased fresh produce
- Client choice
Nutrition Education

- SNAP – Ed
- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Program Information

- Increased awareness of programs
- Outreach in communities => local advocates, schools, local elected officials
Outcomes

- SNAP/Food Stamp, summer food programs and school breakfast outreach leads the food insecure to:
  - No hunger
  - self–sufficiency
    - Ability to buy own food,
    - make cultural food choices,
    - ability to learn and work
    - children who eat a breakfast at school do better academically
  - better health
    - have fewer incidences of obesity and overweight
    - Fewer health issues as adults
    - Babies are born healthier

~Making Room at the Table~
If we want to, we can.