



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 30, 2023

Ohio Association of Foodbanks Statement on Conference Committee Budget
Media Statement from Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director, Ohio Association of Foodbanks

“The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is deeply grateful to Chairmen Rep. Jay Edwards and Sen. Matt Dolan and conference committee members Rep. Jeff LaRe, Rep. Bride Rose Sweeney, Rep. Beth Liston, Sen. Jerry Cirino, Sen. Vernon Sykes, and Sen. Nickie Antonio for prioritizing hunger relief and food security in Sub. H.B. 33, the state’s two-year operating budget.

“The budget agreed upon today by the conference committee includes a **\$32.05 million per year** investment in the Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program. This public-private partnership has supported food insecure Ohio families, the foodbanks that serve them, and the local farmers, growers, and producers that are the backbone of our state’s economy for nearly 25 years. On behalf of our 12 member foodbanks that serve Ohioans in all 88 counties in partnership with 3,600 community and faith-based hunger relief organizations, we are profoundly thankful for the Ohio General Assembly’s support for our network and the millions of people who are counting on us.

“The conference committee also included funding to offset the cost of reduced-price meals for at least 80,000 K-12 students who live in families with incomes between 130 to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Ohio should be incredibly proud of this step to expand access to free breakfast and lunch for our students, which will directly support working families and which acknowledges that adequate nutrition is an essential part of every child’s ability to learn, grow, and fulfill their potential.

“Additionally, we are extraordinarily relieved that the conference committee removed many harmful provisions related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid that were proposed by the Senate. Access to food, medicine, and health care is critical for the health and well-being of Ohio’s kids, parents and caregivers, workers and jobseekers, disabled residents, and older adults. Strong nutrition and health care safety nets are in direct alignment with Governor DeWine’s goals to make Ohio the best place to live, work, learn, raise a family, and age.

“The reinstatement of Governor DeWine’s proposed Healthy Aging grants is also welcome news, as our network knows firsthand not only how much more cost-effective, but also how much more people-centered, it is to promote aging in place with dignity through access to in-home services and supports.

“We are enormously appreciative of the hard work undertaken by Chairman Rep. Edwards, Chairman Sen. Dolan, House Speaker Stephens, Senate President Huffman, House Minority Leader Russo, Senate Minority Leader Antonio, members of the conference committee, and their staff. We look forward to the passage of this biennial budget and to continuing our strong partnership with Governor DeWine and the State of Ohio to provide food and other resources to Ohioans in need.”

###

About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio’s largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,600 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2022, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute more than 242 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

Contact: Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks
614-271-4803 (cell) – or – lisa@ohiofoodbanks.org