

# OHIO ASSOCIATION OF FOODBANKS

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## *Ohio House Votes to Cut Funding for Ohio Association of Foodbanks for First Time in More Than Two Decades*

### **Media Statement from Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director for the Ohio Association of Foodbanks:**

“The House version of H.B. 49, passed today, includes an amendment to cut funding to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks by \$1 million over the 2018-19 biennium. It further proposes redirecting those funds to hunger relief organizations unaffiliated with the Ohio Association of Foodbanks.

“Let me be clear: feeding Ohioans who are hungry is our priority, and we firmly support those both inside and outside our network who share that same goal. Our concerns about this amendment come from our commitment to operating on an economy of scale and to leveraging our network for the most responsible, cost-effective use of state and federal dollars.

“The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is a statewide organization created more than 25 years ago through a partnership between Ohio’s 12 Feeding America foodbanks and their 3,300 member food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other hunger relief agencies. These charitable organizations recognized that they could help many more hungry people by working together than they ever could working on their own. Of equal importance was being accountable to the donors and taxpayers who support the worthy and vital cause of fighting hunger in our local communities.

“Since the association’s inception in 1991, our programs have become more efficient and effective each and every year. We proudly operate one of the most successful “food rescue” programs in the nation, called the Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program.

“Last year, through this program, we purchased 38.4 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables and protein items from 75 Ohio farmers, growers and producers. Those nutritious, Ohio-grown foods cost our network, and the taxpayers that fund us, just 21 cents per pound. Our 3,300 member agencies receive these state-funded foods at absolutely no charge and successfully manage complex logistics required to quickly distribute these fresh foods to families in need. The loss of \$1 million to our purchasing power means the loss of more than 5 million pounds of Ohio-grown apples, cabbage, potatoes, eggs, squash and corn for hungry Ohioans.

“Our affiliated agencies also must commit to rigorous public health and food safety requirements and comply with strict financial accountability and reporting standards. They must track eligibility for all clients they serve and submit reports detailing their service statistics and outcomes, which we compile and submit to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This is essential to our commitment to accountability at the high standards that Ohio taxpayers expect and deserve.

“Our members and agencies already cannot meet the needs of Ohio’s hungry, especially given that the number of seniors relying on our pantries and soup kitchens has increased 20 percent over the last four years. We implore the Senate to restore this funding to our network, which relies on a proven, efficient system to respond to the needs of hungry people in our state. We are asking the Senate to support an amendment for an additional \$5 million per year in support of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, which will allow the members of our statewide network to cost-effectively help the hungry children, families and seniors in their neighborhoods. We look forward to the opportunity to put these state funds to use responsibly in our local communities.”

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Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, representing the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, is available for interviews on how this budget amendment would impact vulnerable Ohioans. To arrange an interview, please reach out to her at the contact information below.

**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 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2016, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 208 million pounds of food and grocery items. The association also serves as the home of The Ohio Benefit Bank and operates the state's largest navigator program for the Affordable Care Act. Follow the association on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at [www.ohiofoodbanks.org](http://www.ohiofoodbanks.org).*

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