



PRESS RELEASE
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Food Bank Launches *Rhode Island Meals 4 Kids* Program to Provide Statewide Child Hunger-Relief

Program Utilizes Federal Stimulus Funds to Assist Low-Income Families

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Rhode Island Community Food Bank has launched a new, one-time emergency food distribution program to help the state’s hungry children. Through a partnership with the Department of Human Services to utilize federal stimulus funds, the Rhode Island Meals 4 Kids program will provide statewide child hunger-relief at the end of summer when child hunger peaks.

Rhode Island Meals 4 Kids will serve 10,000 low-income families with children, providing each family with a box of high-quality, nutritious breakfast and lunch items during the first few weeks of September.

At the end of August and the beginning of September, Summer Food Service sites are closed, but school is not yet in session, so children are unable to participate in the federal school breakfast and lunch programs. Additionally, many parents struggle to afford school supplies and children’s clothes, each one-time expenses that can deplete the money that low-income families would normally use to buy food.

“The need for food assistance continues to increase, and is of particular concern for families with children,” commented Andrew Schiff, Chief Executive Officer of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. “The Rhode Island Meals for Kids program is an innovative way to utilize available federal funding to help the most vulnerable population in our community. The goal of the program is to not only prevent hunger among children at a critical time of year, it is also to help them begin the school year well-fed and ready to learn,” finished Schiff.

The Rhode Island Meals 4 Kids program was created utilizing Federal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds. The TANF Emergency Fund was created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in order to address non-recurrent, extraordinary needs among low-income families with children. The fund is set to expire on September 30, 2010 at a time when unemployment remains high and many families continue to struggle to put food on the table. In Rhode Island, these Federal funds are administered by the Department of Human Services.

“No child in Rhode Island should go hungry,” said Congressman James Langevin. “I applaud the Rhode Island Community Food Bank for once again being creative in responding to the great need in our community. This program, supported by federal funds, will help provide thousands of children living in our neighborhoods with what they need to be healthy.”

Over the last two years, the Food Bank has experienced a dramatic 50 percent increase in the number of households requesting food assistance. At food pantries in Rhode Island, four out of every ten served are families with children. The Rhode Island Meals 4 Kids program will provide vital food assistance to low-income families at a time when it is needed most.

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank is a non-profit organization located in Providence, RI. The Food Bank solicits, stores and distributes food products donated by supermarkets, wholesalers, food processors, local farmers and community food drives. The food is then distributed to the Food Bank’s network of more than 300 member agency programs. In the past fiscal year, the Food Bank distributed 9.7 million pounds of food. For more information about the Food Bank, please visit www.rifoodbank.org.