



## MEDIA RELEASE

Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release.

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### Arkansas Ranks 7<sup>th</sup> on Annual School Breakfast Scorecard

#### *More Low-Income Students Start the Day with a Healthy School Breakfast*

**LITTLE ROCK, AR ( February 16, 2017)**– The national [School Breakfast Program](#) makes it possible for all school children in the U.S. to receive a nutritious breakfast every school day. Arkansas ranks number 7 on the annual [School Breakfast Scorecard](#) released this week by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC, a national anti-hunger advocacy group). The *Scorecard* ranks all 50 states and the District of Columbia on the participation of low-income children in the School Breakfast Program, and finds that 155,102 low-income children in Arkansas participated in school breakfast on an average school day in 2015–2016. This represents an 2.8 percent over the previous year.

The report finds that 63.5 percent of low-income children in Arkansas ate school breakfast for every 100 that received free or reduced-price school lunch during the 2015 – 2016 school year. This is well above the national average of 56 low-income children eating school breakfast for every 100 who received school lunch in the 2015–2016 school year.

School breakfast participation nationally has been growing, and several strategies exist to increase it further, including the use of [alternative breakfast models](#), such as breakfast in the classroom, “grab and go,” and second chance breakfast. Arkansas’s ranking can be attributed in large part to the widespread implementation of alternative service models across the state thanks to the work of the [Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign](#), [Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance](#), Arkansas Department of Education and the support of Governor Asa Hutchinson.

High-poverty schools can ease the path to implementing such models by adopting the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which allows eligible schools to offer breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students. Since implementation began in school districts and schools in Arkansas, community eligibility has been a key driver of school breakfast participation. In the 2016/2017 school year 139 Arkansas schools and 45 districts have adopted CEP.

“We’re very proud of the progress we’ve made in increasing school breakfast participation so that more children in Arkansas are starting their day with the nutrition they need to learn and thrive,” said Patty Barker, Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign director. “School breakfast means less hunger, better health, and improved educational outcomes for our children. We will continue working with schools across the state to improve our school breakfast participation rate so even more children can focus on learning, and not on their growling tummies.”

FRAC’s *Scorecard* shows that despite an overall increase in school breakfast participation across the country, millions of low-income children are still missing out. FRAC has set an ambitious, but achievable, goal of reaching 70 low-income children with school breakfast for every 100 receiving school lunch. The report shows that an additional \$4.35 million in federal funding would flow into Arkansas child nutrition department budgets if the state could reach that 70% goal.

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#### **About the School Breakfast Scorecard**

This report measures the reach of the School Breakfast Program in the 2015–2016 school year — nationally and in each state — based on a variety of metrics, and examines the impact of select trends and policies on program participation. On an average school day, 12.1 million low-income children participated in the School Breakfast Program in school year 2015–2016. Participation among low-income children increased by just over 433,000 students, or 3.7 percent, over the previous school year. Read the [School Breakfast Scorecard](#) in full.

#### **About the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance**

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance mission is to reduce hunger and improve access to nutritious food by providing tools and resources, empowerment, advocacy, education and research. We invite you to visit [www.ARhungeralliance.org](http://www.ARhungeralliance.org) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

#### **About the No Kid Hungry campaign**

The No Kid Hungry campaign connects kids in need with effective nutrition programs like school breakfast, summer and afterschool meals and teaches their families how to cook healthy, affordable meals on a budget. The campaign works across the nation and in Arkansas to surround children with healthy food where they live, learn and play.