



## **Arkansans can Help Combat Prescription Drug Abuse, Hunger during Statewide Event**

*Find nearby drop-off location by visiting [www.artakeback.org](http://www.artakeback.org)*

Organizers are tackling two of Arkansas's biggest problems – prescription drug abuse and hunger – on April 26. Through a unique partnership between law enforcement officials and the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, these two critical issues will share the spotlight during the next statewide Drug Take Back event.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 26, when Arkansans drop off their unwanted or expired drugs at one of hundreds of Drug Take Back locations, they also can drop off nonperishable food items to help feed hungry families in their local communities. Even if they have no drugs to drop off, they can bring a food donation to select locations. To find a Drug Take Back site also accepting food donations, go to [www.artakeback.org](http://www.artakeback.org).

The April date marks the eighth Drug Take Back event in Arkansas. The events are sponsored by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Since collections began in 2010, more than 41 tons of expired and unneeded prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs have been collected in Arkansas and destroyed.

“Because of this effort and the success of other state initiatives, youth prescription drug abuse rates in Arkansas have fallen each of the last three years,” Arkansas State Drug Director Fran Flener said, adding that proper disposal of these drugs helps combat drug abuse since more than 60% of teens say it is easy to get drugs from family medicine cabinets.

The Drug Take Back events in Arkansas have been so successful that organizers felt they should be expanded to attack other problems vexing the state.

“We’re very pleased to be part of the eighth Arkansas Drug Take Back,” said Kathy Webb, Executive Director of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. “With demand at an all-time high, community food agencies across the state are having a difficult time maintaining adequate supplies of food. The generosity of people who contribute canned goods to the Take Back will make a difference for their food insecure friends and neighbors.”

Webb noted that nearly 20 percent of Arkansas households struggle with hunger on a daily basis, according to the most recent annual report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Hunger becomes a bigger problem in the summer months when children are out of school and don’t have access to school breakfast and lunch programs. Providing these additional meals for children puts a strain of as much as \$300 a month on family food budgets.

At the same time, she said charitable food sources such as food banks, pantries, shelters and food kitchens struggle to keep enough food to meet the record demand for food assistance. The Alliance’s top ten list of needed items for charitable food sources includes:

Canned meats/fish/poultry  
Canned/package meals  
Peanut butter  
Cereal  
Soups  
Canned vegetables  
Canned fruits  
100% juices  
Pasta and pastas sauces  
Diapers

*Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 400 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy.*

*The Drug Take Back event is sponsored by the DEA, the Office of the Drug Director, the Office of Attorney General, the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern and Western District of Arkansas, the Arkansas State Police, the Arkansas Sheriffs Association, the Arkansas Association of Chiefs of Police, the Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy, Arkansas Rotary Clubs, Arkansas Business Publishing Group, and more than 240 other federal, state, and local government agencies, law enforcement agencies, prevention coalitions, businesses, media organizations, and community groups statewide.*