



CAMPAIGN TO END
CHILDHOOD HUNGER
IN COLORADO



Five Year Plan

The Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Colorado

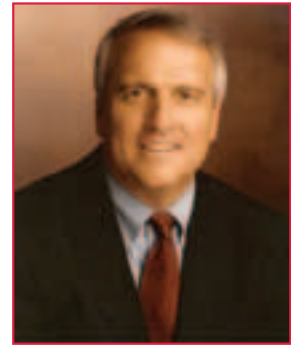
STATE OF COLORADO

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor



December 13, 2010

It is with great pleasure that I present this strategic plan to end childhood hunger in Colorado. In November 2009, I issued Executive Order B 007 09 that created the Colorado Campaign to End Childhood Hunger by 2015 (the "Campaign")--a partnership of the Governor's Office, Share Our Strength and Hunger Free Colorado. The Campaign had 3 important goals for 2010:

- Increase by 10,000 the number of children participating per day in summer meals programs;
- Increase by 15,000 the number of children participating per day in the school breakfast program; and
- Develop and execute a time-specific and measurable plan to end childhood hunger in Colorado by the year 2015.

Last summer, the Campaign had tremendous success getting hungry kids to participate in summer food programs across the state. Colorado had a record amount of sponsors and sites, and we look forward to increasing those numbers next summer. We also expect great results from Colorado's first-ever School Breakfast Challenge that is currently underway. Every school in the state was enrolled in this competition to increase their breakfast participation rates. The competition results were announced in December 2010. With all of that success, it is vitally important that Colorado has a roadmap to keep Colorado on course to reach our ultimate goal—ending childhood hunger.

I thank all of those involved with the Campaign who gave their time and shared their wisdom to craft the five-year plan. Several representatives from the Campaign partners, state agencies, the Colorado Department of Education, school district officials, nonprofit organizations and anti-hunger advocates collaborated on the strategic plan, and it shows. With the detailed benchmarks for progress, ending childhood hunger is not an abstract concept but a tangible goal. We know what we need to do, and the work must continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Ritter Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Acknowledgements

About the Campaign

The Colorado Campaign to End Childhood Hunger is a statewide, public-private coalition working to eliminate child hunger in Colorado. Launched by Governor Bill Ritter, Share Our Strength and Hunger Free Colorado in November 2009, the Campaign is working to ensure that all children have nutritious food at home, at school, and in their communities.

Offices of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor

www.colorado.gov/governor

On November 24, 2009, Governor Bill Ritter, Jr. issued Executive Order B 006 09, establishing the Colorado Campaign to End Childhood Hunger by 2015. Executive Order B 006 09 establishes the partnership between the Governor, Lt. Governor, Share Our Strength, and Hunger Free Colorado. This partnership will remain in effect until it is rescinded or another Executive Order is issued.

Share Our Strength® www.strength.org

Share Our Strength®, a national nonprofit, is ending childhood hunger in America by connecting children with the nutritious food they need to lead healthy, active lives. Through its No Kid Hungry Campaign™—a national effort to end childhood hunger in America by 2015—Share Our Strength ensures children in need are enrolled in federal nutrition programs, invests in community organizations fighting hunger; teaches families how to cook healthy meals on a budget, and builds public-private partnerships to end hunger, both nationally and at the state level.

Hunger Free Colorado www.hungerfreecolorado.org

Launched in 2009, Hunger Free Colorado (HFC) has emerged as the leading statewide, anti-hunger advocacy organization. HFC works on systems change from the federal to the local level. Using the tools of policy, coalition building, collaborative programming, targeted awareness building, and progress measuring, we create innovative solutions to the state's hunger challenges. Hunger Free Colorado is the lead on-the-ground partner and manages the Campaign's strategic planning and program implementation.

Campaign to End Childhood Hunger Steering Committee

The Campaign partners gratefully acknowledge the help of the various agencies and organizations in the formation and implementation of this plan.

Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Department of Agriculture
Colorado Department of Education
Colorado Department of Education, Nutrition Unit
Colorado Department of Human Services
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Denver Public Schools, Nutrition Services
The Denver Foundation
Family Resource Center Association
Food Bank for Larimer County
Greater Denver Ministerial Alliance
Pueblo City Schools, Nutrition Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services, Mountain Plains Region
Western Dairy Association

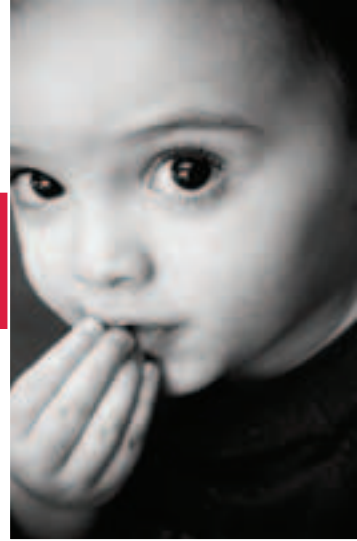
The Colorado Campaign to End Childhood Hunger is generously supported by:

Colorado Health Foundation
The Denver Foundation
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Kaiser Permanente
Share Our Strength
Taste of the Nation Denver
The Wal-Mart Foundation

Prepared by Hunger Free Colorado

Five Year Plan

- one** Provide children access to healthy meals during the summer (Expand the Summer Food Service Program)
- two** Ensure that all children have access to a nutritious breakfast (Expand the School Breakfast Program)
- three** Support families with the ability to purchase and acquire food to prepare at home (Increase access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations)
- four** Ensure the nutrition and health of pregnant and postpartum women, infants and young children (Improve nutrition through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children “WIC” and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program)
- five** Support child care providers’ ability to provide healthy meals and snacks (Increase access of good nutrition through the Child and Adult Care Food Program in child care settings)
- six** Help afterschool programs provide children with good nutrition and healthy snacks (Increase participation in Afterschool Nutrition Programs)
- seven** Encourage children and families to make healthy food choices through nutrition education (Increase participation of nutrition education classes)
- eight** Ensure access to high-quality nutritious food in low-income communities and schools (Increase access to nutritious food through improving statewide policy, improving school meal quality and decreasing food deserts)
- nine** Ensure families can access food from food banks and food pantries (Increase access to food through charitable food distribution)
- ten** Improve the economic security of working families (Increase access to the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit)



Introduction

Child hunger is a serious, and often invisible, problem in Colorado. In thousands of homes in Colorado, parents are struggling to put enough food on the table. Although parents will do whatever they can to shield their children from hunger, often reducing their own food intake or skipping meals, thousands of families in Colorado are struggling so severely that children suffer from not having enough food to eat. Tragically, child hunger is not uncommon: a recent Gallup poll found that one in every 4.5 families with children in Colorado reported that they had experienced difficulty paying for enough food in the last year.¹ The problem of child hunger in Colorado has risen dramatically as poverty has worsened. In the last decade, the rate of child poverty has skyrocketed to 15 percent, nearly an 80 percent increase. Colorado now has the fastest growing rate of childhood poverty in the nation.²

Hunger afflicts the lives of children, families, and communities. Hungry children are more likely to suffer from health, developmental, and emotional problems. Hunger is associated with higher rates of chronic illness, anxiety, and depression among preschool and school-age children.³ Food insecurity, the inability to acquire nutritionally sufficient and safe food due to financial restraints, is found to impair children's academic performance in reading and mathematics as well as have negative impacts on their social development.⁴ Childhood hunger is associated with childhood obesity as families with limited resources often rely on low cost foods that are low in nutritional value, but high in calories, fat, and sugar. Experiencing hunger can interfere with children's metabolic rate and healthy eating habits, making them more susceptible to weight gain.⁵

The ill effects of hunger are so drastic that there have been dedicated responses on the national, state, and local levels for decades. Several federally funded programs exist to protect children and families from hunger, including school meals and programs designed to help families purchase food. Community-based organizations on the state and local level also play an essential role in relieving hunger by providing food packages and hot meals as well as nutrition education and financial literacy courses. Due to these public and private programs and partnerships, many families in Colorado are helped through difficult times and are able to ensure a better future for their children.

While these programs play an essential role in curbing hunger in Colorado, there is much work to be done. Several of the major federally funded nutrition programs are drastically underutilized in Colorado, serving only a fraction of children who come from low-income families. This means that many of the children in Colorado who are suffering from hunger could be helped if access to the federal nutrition programs were expanded. **In addition, Colorado is missing out on over \$750 million every year in federal funding due to low participation in federal nutrition programs.**⁶ This is funding that could be brought into the state and spent locally, helping local businesses and creating jobs. Low participation in the federal nutrition programs is harming the health of Colorado's children as well as the health of Colorado's economy.

The Colorado Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, a public-private partnership between the Offices of Governor Bill Ritter Jr. and Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien, Hunger Free Colorado, and Share Our Strength, was launched in November 2009 to confront childhood hunger. The goal of the Campaign partners is to end childhood hunger in the state based on a comprehensive Five Year Plan. This plan consists of ten goals that intend to expand access to nutritious food where children live, learn, and play. The following plan presents the specific work needed to achieve the vision that all children in Colorado have access to nutritious food at home, at school, and in their communities.

To develop this Plan, the Campaign partners collaborated with state agencies, community-based organizations, schools, and many other partners. In addition, the Campaign partners hosted several meetings with community stakeholders across the state. The following plan is based on the information, data, and goals of the individuals and organizations that participated in the planning process.



one

Provide children access to healthy meals during the summer (*Expand the Summer Food Service Program*)

2015 VISION

- 2 million summer meals will be served in Colorado.

Summer vacation should be a fun and carefree time for children, but for many children in Colorado, summer is the time of year when they are most at risk of experiencing hunger. This is because when school lets out for the summer, children often lose access to the meals they ate each day at school. For families struggling to make ends meet, finding the money to provide the meals that children usually eat at school can be a challenge.

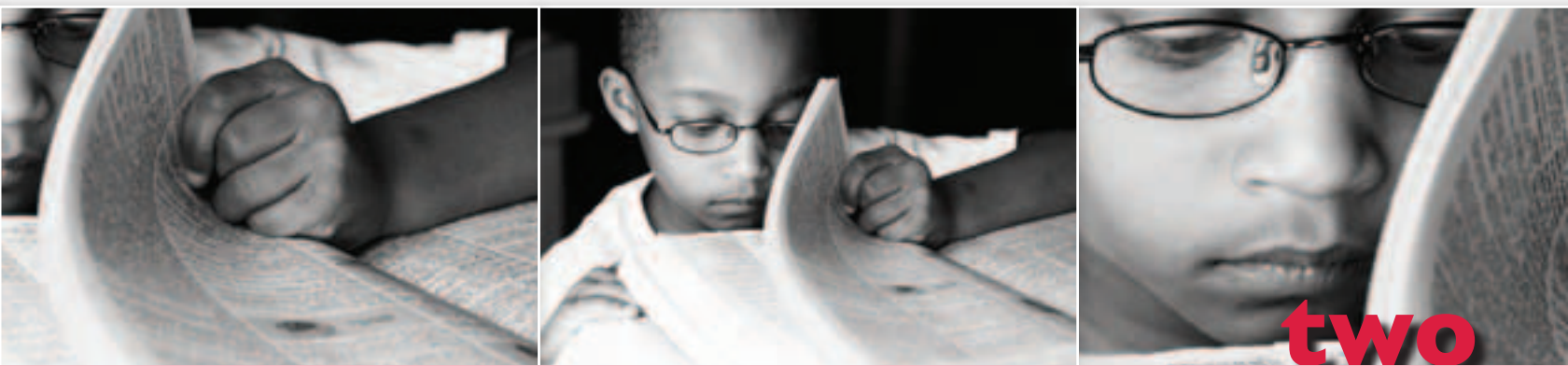
The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally funded nutrition program designed to replace school meals during the summer. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks can be served at schools, camps, parks, churches, community centers, or any other place that children gather in the summer. When served in low-income communities where at least 50 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-priced school meals, summer food can be served to all children aged 18 and under at no cost to families.

Unfortunately, the majority of children who eat free or reduced-priced meals in Colorado during the school year do not have access to summer food. In fact, Colorado ranks 47th in the nation based on July 2009 participation in the program, serving less than 7 percent of children who ate free or reduced price meals during the school year. While more summer meals are typically served in June in Colorado than in July or August, the program is not being fully utilized to meet the nutritional needs of children in the summer.⁷

The Campaign partners are working with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Nutrition Unit to increase the number of summer meals served daily. In the first year, the Campaign partners set the ambitious goal of increasing access by serving an additional 10,000 meals a day (also known as average daily participation) – almost doubling participation in the program. In its first year, the Campaign began an expansion strategy focused on increasing the number of meal sites. The

Campaign partners identified underserved communities in Colorado and linked community-based organizations (such as nonprofit youth programs and faith-based groups) to existing sponsors (such as school districts or food banks). The Campaign partners also launched an extensive outreach effort aimed at increasing awareness about available summer meal sites among low-income children and families. Outreach materials such as business cards and flyers were sent to community-based and county public health partners who disseminated the materials throughout their communities. Postcards were sent to the principals of schools with summer food programs with a letter from the Governor asking the principals to put the postcards in the “backpack mail” of all of their students. The materials provided a number to a toll-free hotline in English and Spanish and a website www.summerfoodcolorado.org that allowed clients to search for summer food sites by location. In addition, automated calls with the Governor and Lt. Governor were recorded in English and Spanish in several school districts.

In 2011, the Campaign partners will work to increase access to summer food by further increasing the total number of meals served by an additional 15 percent over summer 2010. The Campaign intends to expand the outreach campaign and encourage the creation of new sponsors and sites. The 2011 outreach strategy includes specific targeting of housing communities, faith-based organizations, migrant sites, as well as park and recreation departments. The Campaign will convene the Summer Food Summit and then facilitate the creation of “summer food working groups” to create community strategies around the expansion of summer food. In addition, the Campaign partners are working with the Colorado Department of Education to streamline the application and reporting process for SFSP, thereby increasing efficiency for program sponsors and administrators.



Ensure that all children have access to a nutritious breakfast (*Expand the School Breakfast Program*)

Experts agree that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breakfast is shown to improve children's health, behavior, and performance in school and lower the risk of becoming overweight. Unfortunately, due to lack of resources and busy morning routines, many children do not sit down to a nutritious meal at home each morning. The School Breakfast Program is a federal nutrition program that provides reimbursement to serve breakfast to children at school. Studies show that the School Breakfast Program is associated with higher test scores, fewer behavioral or health problems, and better school attendance.⁸

Despite the many benefits of the School Breakfast Program, less than 38 percent of children who eat free or reduced-priced meals through the National School Lunch Program also participate in the School Breakfast Program.⁹ Almost 13 percent of schools in Colorado that participate in the National School Lunch Program do not offer breakfast. In schools that do have a breakfast program, participation is often low when school breakfast is offered in the school cafeteria before the school day begins. Many children do not arrive in time for a before-school breakfast, with school buses or parents dropping them off just before the bell rings. Children often feel pressured to play with their friends on the playground or are uncomfortable participating in the breakfast program, associating it as a program that is only for the poorest students. When breakfast is difficult to access or stigmatized, participation will be low.

These barriers can be eliminated by serving breakfast in a way that is accessible, attractive, and appealing to children. Many schools have had great success serving breakfast in the classroom during the first 10 minutes of class. In these schools, breakfast is usually offered free to all students, and eating a morning meal becomes an integrated part of the school day.

In 2010, the Campaign partners set a year one goal to increase the number of children receiving a healthy school breakfast by 15,000 children. To achieve this goal, Governor Ritter and Commissioner Jones introduced the Colorado School Breakfast Challenge. This friendly competition is meant to encourage school principals to work with school nutrition staff to implement new and expanded breakfast programs. The Challenge is open to all Colorado schools, and the Campaign partners are focusing direct on-the-ground technical assistance on high need, underserved schools.

In 2011, the Campaign partners aim to increase participation by an additional 15,000 students above 2010 baseline and add 10 new breakfast programs in schools that previously did not serve breakfast. The partners will continue to work on expanding creative serving models to more schools as well as maintaining the success of new and expanded breakfast programs that resulted from the Colorado School Breakfast Challenge.

2015 VISION

- 130,000 school breakfasts will be served daily during the school year.
- 90 percent of schools participating in the National School Lunch Program will also serve breakfast.





three

Support families with the ability to purchase and acquire food to prepare at home (Increase access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations)

2015 VISION

- 75 percent of eligible households in Colorado will participate in SNAP. Families living on reservations will be aware of both SNAP and FDPIR, and will be able to select the program that will best meet their needs.

Food provides more than the essential nutrients and energy that children need to thrive. Providing food to children is analogous to providing care. Food plays a role in all aspects of social, cultural, and family life. In many homes, sharing a meal is a time when families communicate and spent time together. Family memories are often made at the dinner table, on a typical evening or a festive holiday like Thanksgiving. When families lack sufficient resources to buy food, these experiences can become disrupted. A family recipe that has been passed down from generations may be replaced by a low-cost convenience meal, or by skipping meals altogether. Meal times may become stressful for parents and confusing for children in homes that lack adequate food.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as the Food Stamp Program or Food Assistance, is a federal nutrition program that provides low-income households with the resources to buy groceries. Benefit levels depend on income and family size, with families with the least resources receiving more assistance each month.¹⁰ SNAP benefits are spent in grocery stores and other food retailers by using an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which looks and functions like a debit or credit card. Nationally, more than half of all SNAP recipients are children; in Colorado, 80 percent of SNAP benefits go to households with children.¹¹

SNAP is heralded as the “first line of defense against hunger and malnutrition” and an extremely efficient and effective intervention, both from the perspective of ending hunger and from creating economic activity on the local level.¹² In fact, economists estimate that for every \$1 in SNAP benefits, an additional \$1.84 of economic activity.¹³ Unfortunately, SNAP is underutilized in Colorado. The most recent participation data provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the federal agency that administers the program, estimates that only 43 percent of eligible households in Colorado participate in the program.¹⁴ In December 2009, nearly 400,000 people in Colorado participated in SNAP. While this number represents a 27 percent increase from December 2008, more and more families are becoming eligible as parents lose their jobs, have their hours cut, and suffer other consequences of the recession.¹⁵

The reasons for low program participation are complex. Many potential recipients do not know about the program or have misperceptions, believing that they are not eligible. In some communities, participating in SNAP or other federal programs is stigmatized, and shame and fear can discourage participation even among hungry families. The 26 page application, verification and interview process can also be difficult, confusing, and time consuming. In Colorado, an additional barrier to accessing SNAP and other safety-net programs is that the Colorado Benefits

Management System (CBMS), the software system that is used to determine eligibility, has significant problems, resulting in processing delays and other issues that negatively affect SNAP clients.¹⁶

Increasing access to SNAP is a crucial component to ending childhood hunger. Several public and private entities are already working to increase access to the program. On June 5, 2010, CO HB 1022 was signed into law and was a first step toward increasing access to SNAP. The law eliminates the asset test for the state SNAP program, which will allow families with savings over \$2,000 (\$3,000 for families with elderly or disabled household members) access SNAP for the first time. This change is important for newly poor families as well as families working to improve their financial situation. In addition, the law creates a state outreach plan that will pull down additional federal funds to provide SNAP application assistance. In year one, the State is working with Weld County; this could be expanded to every county in the state. The online application, PEAK is currently scheduled to be “live” in early 2011 and a much-needed technical refresh of CBMS will be completed in November 2010 to expand the computer capacity of the county/state system.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides packages of “USDA foods” for low-income people living on Native American reservations. Food packages include vegetables, fruits, meat, dairy products, dry cereals, and grains. Households who received FDPIR food packages may also qualify for SNAP; however, they may not use both programs at the same time. FDPIR may be a preferred program for families who do have access to full-service grocery stores. It can also be of benefit to families who would qualify for the minimum SNAP benefits, as the food package is the same for all eligible families. There are two reservations in Colorado, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe of Indians and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, approximately 3,000 tribal members live on the two reservations combined. Participation in FDPIR averaged 596 people per month in 2010.¹⁷

The Campaign partners are committed to ensuring that all eligible families with children are aware of the tremendous benefits of participation in SNAP and FDPIR and have meaningful access to these important programs. Many organizations across the state are working to streamline program efficiency; the Campaign partners will continue to support these efforts. The focus of the Campaign efforts on this important goal will be to raise awareness among low-income families with children about the availability of SNAP and FDPIR. To this end, the Campaign partners will conduct effective outreach to families with children on the state and local levels by partnering with organizations and agencies that work with low-income families with children.



Ensure the nutrition and health of pregnant and postpartum women, infants and young children (Improve nutrition through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children “WIC” and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program)

Good nutrition is essential for pregnant woman and infants. The consequences of hunger for this population can result in health and developmental problems that can last a lifetime. Poor nutrition among pregnant women and infants can result in long-term health and development problems for children including birth defects, stunting, and failure to thrive. Even in families experiencing “marginal food insecurity,” the USDA term used to describe families with the least severe level of food hardship, the health and well-being of children can be significantly compromised.¹⁸

There are two programs that are designed to improve the nutrition of pregnant and postpartum women, as well as infants and young children. These programs serve a similar population, however they cannot be utilized at the same time by the same client.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children, better known by the acronym WIC, is a federally funded program that provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support, along with health and social services referrals to low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to five years of age. WIC provides checks that can be redeemed at authorized grocery stores for nutrient-dense “WIC approved” foods. Different “WIC food packages” meet the specific needs of women, infants, and children based on age, nutrient needs, breastfeeding status, and preferences. In 2009, WIC implemented changes to the food package. The new food package provides more fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grain options, less sugar by reduced juice, and overall changes that meet the Dietary Guidelines. There are as well as wider options to meet cultural preferences, including soy milk, tofu, and tortillas available in the new WIC food package.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is also a federal nutrition program that provides USDA foods and administrative funds to improve the diets of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to six years of age. Food packages for women and children include fruits, vegetables, infant formula, cereal, dairy products, juices, peanut butter, dry beans, canned meat, and canned fish. CSFP is administered in six counties in Colorado and serves pregnant and postpartum women and young children in seven counties. Non-breastfeeding women from six to 12 months after childbirth and children between the ages of five and six years old are eligible

for CSFP but not WIC. CSFP is also available to seniors 60 and over including grandparents who may be the primary caretakers of their grandchildren.

In Colorado, these two programs are meeting the needs of this vulnerable population. WIC continues to be associated with healthier mothers and babies. Studies show that women who received WIC during and after pregnancy have infants with higher birth weights and showed additional healthy characteristics when compared to eligible women who did not participate in WIC.¹⁹ In Colorado, participation in the WIC program has increased by 21.3 percent in the last 10 years.²⁰ In 2010, an average of 109,464 Coloradan women, infants, and children participated in the WIC program monthly. More than 76 percent of new mothers participating in WIC initiated breastfeeding, 29.9 percent continued through 6 months, and 18.9 percent continued through 12 months.²¹ In the seven counties in Colorado where CSFP serves mother and children, an average of 2,509 women and children participated each month in 2010.²²

To continue to improve the health of infants, young children, pregnant woman and new mothers, the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger will work closely with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to support low-income women in breastfeeding. These efforts will focus on increasing the rates of exclusivity and duration. In addition, other WIC improvements, such as a study to assess the feasibility of transferring WIC benefits to Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards are being conducted this year. Transferring WIC benefits to EBT cards would increase the ease, efficiency, and privacy of WIC clients when making food purchases. The Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE), which administers the WIC program, is conducting a study to assess how to best authorize farmers to accept the cash value of WIC vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetable at farmers markets. In addition, the Campaign partners will work in the seven counties with CSFP to increase communication between WIC and CSFP agencies, so that women understand their options and are able to participate in the program that best meets their needs. Children between the ages of five and six, and non-breastfeeding women after six months postpartum, will be encouraged to participate in CSFP when available.

2015 VISION

- Participation in WIC will have increased by five percent over 2010 baseline, funding permitting.²³
- Breastfeeding rates among WIC mothers will increase to 81 percent for initiation, 39 percent after six months, and 29 percent after 12 months.
- WIC benefits will be issued on EBT cards.
- Some farmers will be authorized to accept WIC benefits.
- In counties that serve women and children through CSFP, coordination will be enhanced on the county level for non-breastfeeding women and five to six year-old children who have aged out of WIC and are eligible for CSFP.



Support child care providers' ability to provide healthy meals and snacks
(Increase access to good nutrition through the Child and Adult Care Food Program in child care settings)

2015 VISION

- All licensed childcare providers and child care licensing staff will be knowledgeable about CACFP.
- CACFP meals will improve children's consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, skim or 1% milk, and lean sources of protein.

Early childhood is a time of rapid growth and development. This is also a time when children learn good eating habits and are introduced to new foods. In many families, the primary caregivers of young children are employed so many preschool aged children in Colorado spend a large portion of their day and eat the majority of their meals and snacks in child care. The health and well-being of preschool aged children can be improved by supporting good nutrition in child care settings.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides nutritious meals and snacks to participants in child care facilities. Licensed child care centers and homes may qualify for CACFP benefits if the center is non-profit or if the center is for-profit and serves low-income families. Home care providers are eligible if the home is located in a low-income area or if the provider is low income or serves children from low income families. Child care providers receive reimbursements for the meals and snacks they serve to children and must meet federal meal pattern requirements.

In 2010, 39,376 children received CACFP benefits in family child care homes and child care centers. In Colorado, the daily participation of CACFP in family child care has decreased by 67.3 percent over the last

10 years; however, the daily participation of CACFP in child care centers (including Head Start programs) has increased by 33.4 percent over the same period.²⁴

To better understand the decrease in participation among family child care homes, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) will conduct five focus groups with former CACFP providers in Metro Denver, the Western Slope, northern Colorado, and southern Colorado. These focus groups will be designed to learn more about why child care providers choose not to participate in the program and better understand how to encourage CACFP use among eligible providers.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment plans to focus CACFP education efforts to implement healthier meal policies in addition to the existing meal pattern. CACFP providers will be required to serve whole grains every day, serve only skim or 1 percent milk to children aged two or older, decrease 100 percent fruit juice consumption to twice a week, and limit consumption of processed meats and meat alternates to once per week.





six

Help afterschool programs provide children with good nutrition and healthy snacks (Increase participation in the Afterschool Nutrition Programs)

Afterschool programs keep children safe and supervised when school lets out in the afternoon. Many afterschool providers agree that serving food after school is essential, reporting that children arrive at afterschool hungry – many having eaten lunch hours earlier. Food keeps children focused and engaged in afterschool enrichment activities and gives them the energy to participate in physical activities and sports afterschool.

Federal funding exists to support afterschool programs provide nutritious snacks. Community-based afterschool programs located where at least 50 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals can participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) at-risk snack program and receive reimbursement for all the snacks served to children in their care. School-based afterschool programs can receive funding for snacks through the Afterschool Care Snack Program. In low-income communities where 50 percent or more of the children qualify for free or reduced-priced school meals, snacks can be served to all students, and the program will receive the highest reimbursement regardless of student eligibility status. In communities where less than 50 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-priced school meals, programs can receive reimbursements for snacks served, based on the eligibility status of each student. These programs were utilized by almost 400 afterschool programs in Colorado in 2009, serving over 11,500 snacks each month.²⁵ Unfortunately, many afterschool programs find that a small snack covered by the federal reimbursement is not enough, and end up

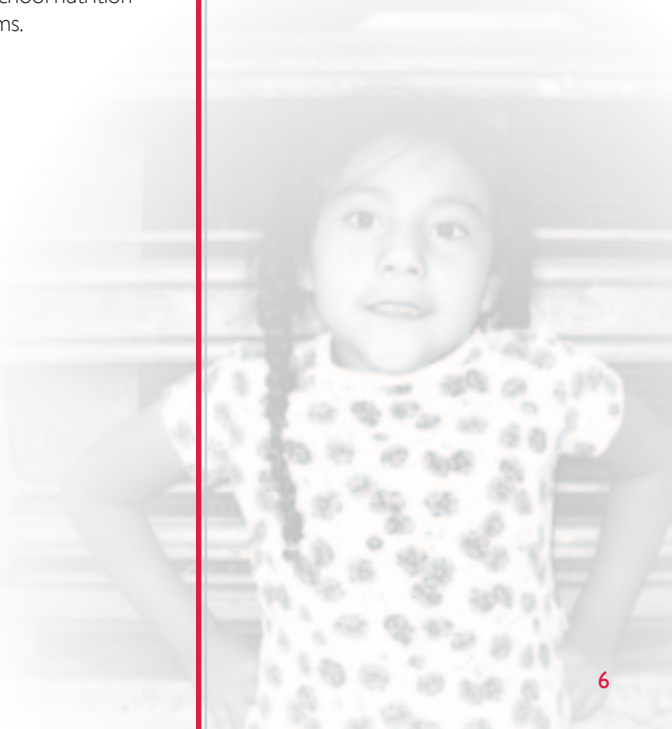
spending additional funds on food. These are funds that could be used to cover the cost of activities, enrichment, or staffing.

For this reason, the Campaign partners have been advocating to expand the Afterschool Meal Program, which currently exists in 13 states and the District of Columbia, to Colorado. The Afterschool Meal Program would allow afterschool programs that are currently receiving funding for a snack to serve a meal. The difference in funding for snacks and meals is significant: the current snack reimbursement is less than \$0.80, whereas an afterschool meal reimbursement is over \$2.70.²⁶ Expansion of the Afterschool Meal Program to Colorado would bring in additional federal dollars and help support afterschool enrichment programs for children from low-income families. The Campaign partners are working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to plan for a rapid implementation of the Afterschool Meal Program if and when it is expanded to Colorado.

To increase children's access to the nutritious meals and snacks after school, the Campaign partners will conduct a targeted outreach campaign to market the afterschool nutrition programs to afterschool providers across the state. These efforts will include presentations and on-the-ground outreach to afterschool providers and other key stakeholders. In 2011, the Campaign partners aim to increase use of the afterschool nutrition programs by 20 new afterschool programs.

2015 VISION

- Nearly 500 additional afterschool programs will be utilizing afterschool nutrition funding.
- All afterschool providers will know about the available afterschool nutrition programs.





seven

Encourage children and families to make healthy food choices through nutrition education (Increase participation of nutrition education courses)

2015 VISION

- SNAP-ed and EFNEP nutrition education will be conducted in more than 50 percent of Colorado counties, funding permitting.
- The number of participants will increase by two percent per year over baseline 2010, funding permitting.
- Participants will make positive behavioral changes including: eating fruits, vegetable, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy and other calcium rich food products every day, and will incorporate physical activity into every day as part of a healthy lifestyle. Participants will have increased food preparation and food safety skills in addition to increased knowledge of food resource management.

Hunger and obesity can co-exist in the same community, family, and child. Many low-cost convenience foods are high in fat, sugar, and salt, whereas healthier options such as fresh produce, whole grains, and lean proteins can be expensive or difficult to access in low-income communities. Preparing nutritious meals on a limited budget is a challenge; it is especially difficult for parents with limited time and support. In addition, many parents are unfamiliar with nutrition and lack cooking experience. For these reasons, many parents find it difficult to make healthy food choices and prepare nutritious meals at home.

Nutrition education courses can help support children and families make the best decisions possible on a limited budget. In Colorado, there are various sources of funding that support community-based nutrition and cooking classes; public, private, foundations and non-profit organizations. These sources of funding include the SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-ed) funding, which supports the programs of Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters Colorado (formerly Operation Frontline), Colorado State University Extension, Integrated Nutrition Education Program (INEP)/University of Colorado at Denver. Classes run with

SNAP-ed funding target families and children eligible for SNAP. In 2009, 126,549 participants were reached through SNAP-ed courses, class series, events, displays and newsletters throughout Colorado. In addition, the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is administered through Colorado State University and also targets low-income communities. In 2009, 1071 adult and 1726 youth participants were reached through EFNEP. The Colorado WIC program also provides nutrition education for low-income families.

These classes are providing low-income families and children with skills, knowledge, and experience to make healthy choices and cook nutritious meals on a limited budget all over Colorado. Unfortunately, these classes are not available in every county, and in some parts of Colorado, there are limited nutrition education opportunities.

The Campaign partners are working to ensure that all families and children have access to nutrition education opportunities. Nutrition education providers are working to expand to new areas.





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Ensure access to high-quality nutritious food in low-income communities and schools (*Increase access to nutritious food through improving statewide policy, improving school meal quality, and decreasing food deserts*)

Many low-income communities qualify as “food deserts” meaning that they lack locations for individuals to buy healthy food. In both urban and rural communities, fresh produce and other healthy food items may be unavailable or difficult to access. In dense urban areas, food deserts may lack full-service grocery stores but have a higher concentration of fast food restaurants or small food retailers (such as convenience stores) that have difficulty selling fresh produce due to a small scale and higher costs. In rural areas, a trip to a full-service grocery store may require a family to travel 50 miles or more, a costly endeavor for families with limited incomes. Lack of reliable transportation can also be a major barrier for low-income families in urban and rural areas. Some families must travel many miles, often relying on public transportation (when available) or rides from friends and family to do their shopping. For these families, accessing fresh food can be both inaccessible and expensive.

School meals are an opportunity to provide children with the nutritious food that may be inaccessible or cost prohibitive for their parents to provide at home. There are various ways of increasing children’s access to fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean meats through school meals.

Various efforts exist across the state to help make fresh produce more accessible and to ensure that school meals serve high-quality and nutritious food. Efforts to address food deserts include the creation of a statewide Food Systems Advisory Council that will oversee broad policy issues on the state level. Community-based partnerships all across Colorado,

including in Greeley, Longmont, La Plata County, and the San Luis Valley, are working to assess food access, with the goal of increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition, Colorado Department of Public Education (CDPHE) and LiveWell Colorado, with funds from the state’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant, are developing assessment tools that communities can use to better understand food access and barriers.

In addition, major efforts are underway to improve school meal quality. The Colorado Health Foundation and LiveWell Colorado have been helping schools serve healthier food by hosting “Culinary Boot Camps”. This program is helping school nutrition staff prepare healthier school meals without relying on additional funds above the federal reimbursement level. In 2010, 33 school districts participated in four Boot Camps that were held across Colorado. In 2011, LiveWell will double the number of Boot Camps offered.

Denver Public Schools (DPS), with their community partner Slow Food Denver, just completed a project with School Food FOCUS to transform school food procurement practices. In the first year of the project (2009-2010), 27 percent of all fresh produce into DPS kitchens came from Colorado farms. To support the procurement of fresh food items, DPS is providing scratch cooking training. In July 2010, 120 DPS kitchen employees from more than 30 schools received three weeks of scratch cooking training. The Campaign partners are working to support the efforts to increase access to healthy food by decreasing food deserts and improving school meal quality.

2015 VISION

- The Food Systems Advisory Council will make recommendations to the State Legislature that will improve healthy food access in Colorado.
- Existing retail markets will sell fresh produce.
- School meals in Colorado will be of high quality. More school districts will cook meals from scratch and include fresh produce.





Ensure families can access food from food banks and food pantries
(Increase access to food through charitable food distribution)

2015 VISION

- The five Feeding America Food Banks and partner agencies will distribute over 17 million pounds of fresh produce.
- Food pantries will receive education and technical assistance on how to make healthy choices available for their clients.

When families do not have enough money to buy food, they often turn to community resources for help. Food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens are crucial resources for families and children experiencing periods of financial hardship. In 2009, an average of 40 percent of clients served by Colorado's food banks and food pantries were children.²⁷

Charitable food distribution, commonly known as emergency food, provides free food and meals to individuals and families. Food banks receive donations of food and funds from private donors, corporations, and federal programs. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that provides USDA foods and administrative funds. In Colorado, the five Feeding America food banks receive USDA foods which are then redistributed to food pantries and soup kitchens. In 2009, TEFAP brought more than \$ 8,700,000 into Colorado.²⁸

Tremendous efforts are being made to meet the needs of hungry people in Colorado through charitable food

distribution. Food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens are distributing more and more food to meet the growing need. In 2011, the five Feeding America food banks in Colorado will deliver 15 million pounds of fresh produce to hungry families. By 2015, the five Feeding America food banks in Colorado will deliver 17 million pounds of fresh produce through member agencies.

Colorado State University's Food Science and Human Nutrition Department and Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters Colorado (formerly Operation Frontline) have each developed materials to work with food pantries to teach staff and volunteers how to select healthy foods and pantry clients how to choose and prepare healthy low-cost meals.

The Campaign partners are dedicated to supporting these efforts by raising awareness about the issue of child hunger in Colorado.





Improve the economic security of working families (*Increase access to Federal Earned Income Tax Credit*)

Many of the families in Colorado who face hunger have one or more working adult in the household. Working poor families find that their incomes are too low to meet their costs of living, and food budgets are stretched thin. Improving the economic security of working families with children is a key to ending child hunger in Colorado.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal tax credit that supports low wage workers and is heralded as an effective anti-poverty program that rewards work. The EITC is refundable, meaning that tax filers who do not owe any taxes (due to small incomes) receive tax refunds once their taxes are filed. Refunds are determined by wages earned and family size. For full time workers with children, refunds can be significant. A tax filer with two or more children earning under \$20,000 a year could receive as much as \$5,000.²⁹ Studies show that EITC can reduce poverty among families with young children by nearly 25 percent.³⁰

The benefits of the Earned Income Tax Credit are reaching many working poor families in Colorado. In 2007, nearly 300,000 low wage workers received EITC refunds, bringing \$515 million in federal funds into the

state economy. The Piton Foundation has been working for years to conduct outreach on the federal EITC. In addition, the Piton Foundation has been working to increase the number of free tax preparation sites, where tax filers who earned less than \$49,000 a year can receive help filing their taxes. Free tax preparation sites provide an enormous service to tax filers who may have not filed a tax return without help, or who might have paid high fees or taken out a high-interest loan in order to pay a professional tax preparer.

Outreach efforts and free tax preparation sites are on the rise. In 2010, students at nine state community colleges helped 4,000 low-income families prepare tax returns at no cost. In 2011, students at 15 community colleges in Colorado will help low-income families file tax returns and in many cases, receive the Earned Income Tax Credit. In late 2010, outreach flyers were sent in the mail to Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) recipients. In the past, this flyer included information on EITC, free tax preparation, and free weatherization services. In 2010, these flyers also included information on food and nutrition resources for the first time.

2015 VISION

- Low-wage workers will be aware of both EITC and food assistance programs.
- Free tax preparation sites will continue to expand capacity to help low-income families file tax returns.





Towards a Well-Nourished Colorado

The effects of hunger and poor nutrition are written on the brains and bodies of children for a lifetime. Child hunger touches every aspect of our lives and has far reaching implications for our state. Improving education, health, and economic development are just a few of the major issues that are facing our state that are undermined by the existence of child hunger.

Luckily, this problem has a solution. The resources and dedication exist within our state to make child hunger a thing of the past. Colorado needs strong leadership, coordination, and greater awareness to achieve this goal – but it can be done.

The Campaign partners are grateful to all of the dedicated people that are working on the ground –and encouraging others– to ensure that all children in Colorado have a place at the table.

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Goal	Baseline	State Agency Administering Program and/or Lead Partners	2010 Goals	2010 Action Items	2011 Goals	2011 Strategies	Year Five Goal 2015
1: Provide children access to healthy meals during the summer (Expand the Summer Food Service Program)	767,892 Total Summer Meals Served (Summer 2009)	Colorado Department of Education (CDE)	Increase the number of total meals served by 15 percent	Increase number of sites and sponsors; Outreach to families and children; Evaluation and Planning for 2011	Increase the number of total meals served by 10 percent	Purchase and implement technology changes to streamline SFSP application processes; Continue expansion strategy	Approximately 2 million meals will be served in summer 2015.
2: Ensure that all children have access to a nutritious breakfast (Expand the School Breakfast Program)	84,000 school breakfast served to children in 2009-2010 school year 87 percent of schools that participate in National School Lunch Program also serve breakfast	Colorado Department of Education (CDE)	Increase the number of children receiving a healthy school breakfast by 15,000	Colorado School Breakfast Challenge	Increase the number of children receiving a healthy school breakfast by 15,000 Ten schools will begin serving breakfast for first time	Phase Two of Breakfast Challenge; Expand programs through targeted outreach	Approximately 130,000 school breakfast served daily 90 percent of schools that participate in National School Lunch Program also serve breakfast
3: Support families with the ability to purchase and acquire food to prepare at home (Increase access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Food Distribution on Indian Reservations)	(a)SNAP: 55 % of eligible households participated in 2007 (b) FDPIR: Southern Ute reservation: 143 people/mo; Ute Mountain: 343 people/mo (2010)	Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) U.S. Department of Agriculture-Food and Nutrition Services Mountain Plains Region	Not a year one goal.	HB1022: Eliminate Asset Test and Outreach Plan legislated	Ten percent increase in participation from eligible households	Outreach to low-income families with children	(a) 75 % of eligible households participate in CO (b) Families on reservations know options regarding FDPIR and SNAP
4: Ensure the nutrition and health of pregnant and postpartum women, infants and young children (Improve nutrition through Women, Infants, and Children and Commodity Supplemental Food Program*) *Available in some counties	109,464 WIC participants (FY10) Breastfeeding rates: Initiation: 76.40%, 6-months: 29.60%, 12-months: 18.90% CSFP 2,890 per month -children 0-6, breastfeeding and postpartum women (FY10)	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (WIC) Colorado Department of Human Services (CSFP) Weid Food Bank (CSFP, Weld County)	Not a year one goal.		Plan for EBT	Study conducted on EBT and WIC	5 percent increase (funding permitting); WIC on EBT cards; Increase Breastfeeding Rates (initiation, 6 months, 12 months); WIC usable at some Farmer's Markets; Enhance coordination between WIC and CSFP

Goal	Baseline	State Agency Administering Program and/or Lead Partners	2010 Goals	2010 Action Items	2011 Goals	2011 Strategies	Year Five Goal 2015
5: Support child care providers' ability to provide healthy meals and snacks (Increase access of good nutrition through the Child and Adult Care Food Program in child care settings)	39,376 homes and centers participated in CACFP in March 2010	Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)	Not a year one goal.		Better understand why Providers drop off CACFP; Increase knowledge of CACFP among eligible providers	5 focuses groups in CO; Outreach campaign to childcare providers	All licensed childcare providers are informed about CACFP; licensing and technical assistance agents are knowledgeable about the program; CACFP Meal Quality Assessments
6: Help afterschool programs provide children with good nutrition and healthy snacks (Increase participation in the Afterschool Nutrition Programs)	*Combined Snack ADP 11,516 (FY09) *393 programs serving Afterschool Snacks (FY09)	CDPHE: At-Risk (CACFP) Community based Organizations CDE: Afterschool Care Snack Program (ACSP) School-based programs	Not a year one goal.	Advocate for Expansion of Afterschool Meal Program to Colorado	20 New Afterschool Programs Use At-Risk Afterschool Nutrition Funding	Outreach to Afterschool Providers, Target 21st CCLC	100 additional Afterschool participate in At-Risk Afterschool Nutrition Funding; All afterschool providers know about afterschool nutrition funding, can access At-Risk Snack and/or Supper
7: Encourage children and families to make healthy food choices through nutrition education (Increase participation of nutrition education classes)	Colorado State University Extension – reached 3,197 participants attended classes and events; and 60,611 viewed newsletters and displays. EFNEP reached 1071 adults and 1726 youth University of Colorado Denver – INEP reached 28,510 participants in classes and events; and 28,252 people through newsletters. Cooking Matters/SOS reached 5,979 participants through classes and events	C.S.U. Extension C.S.U. EFNEP INEP/CUD Cooking Matters/SOS	Not a year one goal.		Increase the reach of Colorado SNAP-Ed by 2% Improve overall diet quality of SNAP-Ed participants through emphasis on the latest Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid. Improve SNAP-Ed participants' food resource management behaviors by maximizing limited resources. EFNEP: 1000 adults and 1500 youth	Colorado SNAP-Ed programs will provide a nutrition education that focus on the following key behaviors: • eat fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free/low-fat dairy products every day • be physically active every day • maintain safe food resources.	Nutrition Education opportunities in more than 50% of counties. Increase number of SNAP-Ed participants by 2% each year between 2012 and 2015. EFNEP: 900 adults and 1200 youth

Goal	Baseline	State Agency Administering Program and/or Lead Partners	2010 Goals	2010 Action Items	2011 Goals	2011 Strategies	Year Five Goal 2015
<p>8. Ensure access to high-quality nutritious food in low-income communities and schools (Increase access to nutritious food through improving statewide policy, improving school meal quality and decreasing food deserts)</p>	<p>No statewide food policy council in existence; School meal quality is inconsistent from district to district; Urban and rural food deserts exist in Colorado; 22 LiveWell communities engaged in increasing access nutritious food work; 4 Culinary Bootcamps</p>	<p>CDA CDPHE Colorado Health Foundation LiveWell Colorado SlowFood Denver Farm to School Taskforce</p>	<p>Not a year one goal.</p>		<p>Food System Advisory Council makes recommendations; 8 Boot Camps and the establishment of mobile chef model to provide ongoing technical assistance to schools which have participated in the boot camp training; Recommendations completed by Denver Healthy Food Access Task Force; Coordination with LiveWell Communities. Slow Foods and DPS</p>	<p>Work with Food System Advisory Council; quarterly meetings; Work with Farm to School Taskforce; Support Culinary Boot Camps; tie access message to quality improvement. Presentations to 5 LiveWell Communities on child hunger issues; engage LiveWell Communities in hunger issues; Engage communities around the state to undertake community food assessments to identify community-specific needs around food security</p>	<p>Low-income communities have access to full service supermarkets; School meals include healthy and fresh options; Increased shelf space for fresh produce in existing retail markets including convenience stores; Increased direct fresh food markets in low-income communities (e.g. farmers markets, CSAs, community gardens, etc.); Increase in school scratch cooking; Increase in schools buying local fresh produce (Farm to School)</p>
<p>9. Ensure families can access food from food banks and food pantries (Increase access to food through charitable food distribution)</p>	<p>Feeding Colorado food banks distribute approximately 14 million pounds of fresh produce through member agencies (2010). Food distribution is 30 pounds of food per person in poverty</p>	<p>Feeding Colorado Food Banks and Food Pantries</p>	<p>Not a year one goal.</p>	<p>Food System Advisory Council Legislation passed; DDHE forms Healthy Food Access Task Force</p>	<p>Feeding Colorado food banks will distribute over 15 million pounds of fresh produce through member agencies. More pantries will participate in the Healthy Pantry projects</p>		<p>Feeding Colorado food banks will distribute over 17 million pounds of fresh produce through member agencies. Food pantries will receive education and technical assistance on how to make healthy choices available for their clients.</p>
<p>10. Improve the economic security of working families (Increase access to Federal Earned Income Tax Credit)</p>	<p>\$515,000,000 in EITC refunds (2007) 9 colleges helped prepare 4,000 free tax returns (2010)</p>	<p>Piton Foundation</p>	<p>Not a year one goal.</p>	<p>15 colleges to prepare free tax returns</p>	<p>Coordinate efforts with EITC outreach to increase access to EITC and nutrition programs among working families with children</p>	<p>Establish outreach practices to maximize effectiveness of income and nutrition programs</p>	<p>EITC recipients are aware of nutrition programs, nutrition program recipients are aware of EITC</p>



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Five Year Plan