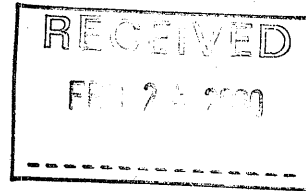


# Bonnie L. Ladwig

Assembly Children and Families Committee, Chairperson

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TO: Assembly Children and Families Committee members

FROM: State Representative Bonnie Ladwig, Chair

DATE: February 24, 2000

RE: Annual Report on Addressing Food Security in Wisconsin

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Attached you will find a copy of the 1999 Annual Report of Addressing Food Security in Wisconsin. Under s. 13.172(3) this report is required to be submitted to the Assembly Children and Families Committee.



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health and Family Services**

Tommy G. Thompson, Governor  
Joe Lekan, Secretary

FEB 23 2000

February 15, 2000

Mr. Charles Sanders  
Assembly Chief Clerk  
1 East Main Street – Room 402  
Madison WI 53707-7882

Dear Mr. Sanders:

Pursuant to s.46.76(4), the Department of Health and Family Services is required to develop an annual plan that documents areas of hunger and populations experiencing hunger within this state and to recommend strategies for state and federal policy changes to address hunger in these areas. The statute requires that this plan be submitted annually to the Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the appropriate standing committees under s.13.172(3).

The enclosed 1999 Annual Report on Addressing Food Security in Wisconsin is being submitted to you in accordance with this requirement. Please contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Joe Lekan  
Secretary

Enclosure: 1999 Annual Report on Addressing Food Security in Wisconsin

**ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY**

**IN**

**WISCONSIN**

**Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services**

**Annual Report - 1999**

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### Appendix A

Reimbursement Rates for School Breakfast and Lunch Programs

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## Acknowledgements

The Department of Health and Family Services would like to express appreciation for the persons and organizations that made this plan update possible:

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## Introduction

Pursuant to s.46.76(4), the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) is required to develop an annual plan that documents areas of hunger and populations experiencing hunger within this state and to recommend strategies for state and federal policy changes to address hunger in these areas. The statute further indicates that this plan be submitted by December 31 annually, to the Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction and the appropriate standing committees under s. 13.172(3). The material submitted below serves to meet this requirement.

### 1999 Status of Food Security in Wisconsin

According to a report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, hunger and food insecurity are much less common in Wisconsin than the rest of the country. In Wisconsin 7.2% of households have food insecurity and 2.3% report hunger.<sup>1</sup> In collaboration with public, private, state and local organizations, DHFS, has had great success in developing coalitions to strengthen the work of addressing food security. In 1999, through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), 4.5 million pounds of emergency food was distributed to local food pantries throughout the state. Nearly 35% of all pregnant women in Wisconsin were provided with benefits from the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which includes nutrition education, health care referral, breastfeeding support and supplemental nutritious food. The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) provided support to food stamp outstations across the state to ensure that low-income people were aware of the availability of the Food Stamp program. These are just a few of the many programs funded by federal, state and private agencies that work to identify high risk populations for food insecurity, provide emergency access to food, and ensure access to nutritionally balanced diets.

Despite the good news, food insecurity still remains a challenge in Wisconsin. However, the issues related to food insecurity are not insurmountable. By building on the success from 1999 and continuing in the efforts already established, Wisconsin will continue to move forward in its work to strengthen food security for low-income families.

State agencies involved in addressing food security include DHFS, DWD, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and the University of Wisconsin. On the local level, the above mentioned state agencies work with a myriad of community-based, faith-based and volunteer organizations to ensure food security for Wisconsin's most vulnerable population. A summary of the key food security programs follow:

### The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program, which provides food assistance to low-income families through the distribution of food available through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

TEFAP is designed to work in combination with other assistance programs in efforts to maximize and target limited food and funding resources available for emergency food assistance to address short-term food security needs. States are allocated limited amounts of commodities for distribution to eligible low-income families and individuals who have an emergency need for food and to supplement the food resources available at pantries and soup kitchens.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Welfare Act) mandated a minimum of \$100 million annually for the purchase of food by USDA/FNS through the federal agriculture price-support program and other sources. The USDA/FNS formula used to establish each State's fair share funding levels are based on the current weighted poverty and unemployment index which combines the number of persons in each State below the poverty level (60 percent) and the number of persons unemployed (40 percent). DHFS reallocates commodities to Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFOs) on the number of people below the poverty level (50 percent) and the number of unemployed people (50 percent) in each county. This formula is used to provide an equitable allocation method, as it considers fluctuations in the unemployment rate.

Wisconsin provided approximately 2.3 million pounds of commodities with an estimated value of \$1.3 million. Wisconsin also received an additional 2.2 million pounds of 'bonus' food with a value over \$1.7 million. We anticipate the combined amounts of entitlement and bonus food will provide over 4.5 million pounds of food valued at approximately \$3 million in FFY 1999.

In efforts to help achieve food security in local communities, DHFS collaborated with partner agencies to develop and implement a food delivery system that maximizes total food and funding resources in efforts to improve and enhance the overall effectiveness, efficiency and capacity of the food pantry network to meet the basic food needs of low-income people. In FFY 1999, fourteen Community Action Agencies, the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee and the Menominee Tribe administered TEFAP in all 72 counties throughout Wisconsin. By contracting with local agencies, DHFS is able to ensure a more effective and comprehensive system statewide and assist in promoting self-sufficiency to the families and individuals served by TEFAP.

The standards of excellence developed for the administration of TEFAP in Wisconsin were revised to provide clarification regarding the role of TEFAP as a supplemental food assistance program. The standards also support the concept that pantries serve families and individuals within well-defined geographic boundaries, and that these pantries will work with neighboring food pantries to ensure there are no gaps in, or duplication of service, within the EFO service area. These standards also provide guidance for implementation of consistent community standards to effectively address food security issues statewide.

In efforts to strengthen the emergency food system, agencies participating in this program must ensure they have a system that will maximize site availability and accessibility, provide emergency access to food, minimize the potential for the duplication of services, ensure access to nutritionally balanced food packages, provide a 50 percent food match for TEFAP commodities (combining federal commodities with nutritional food provided from sources other than USDA), and assure access to a comprehensive continuum of services. Agencies are required to submit a plan that addresses the provisions indicated above that must be approved by the Division of

Children and Family Services (DCFS).

In 2000, an Advisory Council for TEFAP will be created with membership to include representation from all Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFO). This body will act both as a program advisory and working committee to DCFS. This Council will be used as a vehicle for enhanced communication between the State and other related local and government agencies. Policies, procedures and issues concerning the program will be presented to the Council for discussion and recommendations. Other EFO staff, volunteers, or interested parties may address their concerns or questions in writing to the Council to be discussed at future meetings. This Council will also select representative(s) from its membership to serve on the Food Security Consortium.

### **Wisconsin Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children**

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC, provides nutrition education, health care referral, breastfeeding support and supplemental nutritious foods monthly to nearly 104,000 Wisconsin women, infants and children under age five.

WIC is a short-term intervention program designed to strengthen families by influencing lifetime nutrition and health behaviors in a targeted, high-risk population. WIC enables parents to properly feed their children during critical early years of growth and development, assuring normal growth, reducing levels of anemia, increasing immunization rates, improving access to regular health care and improving diets. Today, nearly 24% of all infants and young children in Wisconsin are WIC participants, and 35% of all pregnant women in Wisconsin receive WIC benefits.

Studies have shown that low-income children enrolled in WIC have a lower prevalence of anemia than those who are not enrolled.<sup>2</sup> In Wisconsin, 76% of infants and children with low blood iron at a WIC certification had an improved blood iron level at the subsequent certification.

Additionally, a 1988 National WIC Evaluation found that four and five-year-olds whose mothers participated in WIC during pregnancy have achieved better vocabulary test scores than children whose eligible mothers did not receive WIC benefits.<sup>3</sup> Children who participated in WIC after their first birthday have achieved better digit memory test scores than children who did not participate in WIC.

Studies have also shown that compared to those not enrolled in WIC, enrolled low-income pregnant women seek prenatal care earlier in pregnancy, consume more of such key nutrients as iron, protein and Vitamin C, have fewer premature births, experience fewer fetal and infant deaths.<sup>4</sup> In addition it has been estimated that every dollar spent by WIC for pregnant women produces approximately \$2.00 to \$4.00 in Medicaid savings for newborns and their mothers.

Wisconsin data indicates that WIC benefits provided to pregnant women has a positive impact on the outcome of pregnancy.<sup>5</sup> The incidence of low birthweight (<5.5 pounds) decreases the longer the pregnant mother is enrolled in WIC.



10/99, WIC 814	Not on WIC during pregnancy	1-3 months on WIC	4-6 months on WIC	7-8 months on WIC
Birthweight				
< 5.5 lbs	10.8%	8.0%	8.0%	4.7%
≥ 5.5 lbs	89.2%	91.9%	92.0%	95.3%

The WIC Program strongly encourages and supports breastfeeding because breastfed infants, as a group, tend to be healthier. In 1999, Wisconsin WIC mothers increased their breastfeeding initiation rate to 42% from 32% in 1989.

To qualify for WIC, the woman, infant or child must first be shown to have a nutritional reason, such as a level of iron in the blood or an inadequate diet. The program serves women and children whose family income falls within government guidelines. For instance, a family of four with a monthly income of less than \$2,574 would be eligible. At the local level, the WIC Program is administered through 230 clinics operated by 68 local health departments, private non-profit agencies and tribal health agencies.

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides food vouchers to WIC participating families to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs at selected farmers' markets. The two purposes of the FMNP are to expand nutritional resources for WIC participants and to expand the awareness, use of and sales at farmers' markets. Eligible produce is limited to Wisconsin grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs. The FMNP operates in 12 counties with plans for nine additional counties and one tribe in 2000.

### Wisconsin Elderly Nutrition Program

The Wisconsin Elderly Nutrition Program has provided meals and other nutrition services in every county of the state for 25 years. Elderly persons are provided meals either delivered to their homes or served in senior citizen centers or other settings. Meals served offer at least 33 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowance for an older person. Other services offered by programs include nutrition screening, nutrition education, and nutrition assessment and counseling services.

Elderly Nutrition Program services are available to anyone 60 years or older and their spouse, regardless of age. Provider agencies target services to seniors with the greatest nutritional, social and economic need. Participants are asked to donate what they can afford to pay toward the cost of service, however, no one is denied meals or nutrition services because of inability to contribute.

Federal and state funds granted to Wisconsin's Elderly Nutrition Programs in 1999 totaled \$13.7 million. The state GPR contribution accounted for 39 percent of the funds. In addition to the federal and state grants, local program budgets may be supplemented with other sources including voluntary participant donations (up to 33 percent of local program funds), USDA meal reimbursement (\$.55 per meal), and/or local county funding.

In 1998, the program served 2.9 million meals to 83,754 persons in more than 600 community sites across Wisconsin. The same year, 2.6 million home-delivered meals were provided to 21,748 homebound Wisconsin seniors. Statistics for 1999 were not available at the time of this report.

Recently, programs have experienced a dramatic shift in the demand for meal services. Ten years ago 80 percent of the meals were served to groups of elderly at senior centers and other community sites. Today, only 53 percent of meals are served in a congregate setting. The demand for meals, which are delivered to the homes of those too frail or ill to leave their home for a meal, has greatly increased. Many factors contribute to the greater need for home-delivered meals, including an increase in the number of community-dwelling elderly and shorter hospital stays.

### **The School Lunch Program**

The School Lunch Program was permanently established by the School Lunch Act of 1946. The program provides per meal federal reimbursement for lunches served to children in all public and private non-profit schools and residential child care institutions which apply to be in the program and meet the eligibility requirements. The School Lunch Program served 87 million meals to nearly 500,000 children in Wisconsin during the 1998-99 school year; 240,000 of these children were from low-income households who received free and/or reduced price meals.

All children attending schools that participate in the School Lunch Program are eligible for the free or reduced price meals. The price each child pays for the meal is determined by that child's family income. There are three categories of payment for school lunches: free, reduced-price and full price. Children whose family income is below 130 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for free lunches. Children whose family income is between 130 percent and 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price lunches. Children whose family income is above 185 percent of the federal poverty level must pay full price for their lunches. Current guidelines can be found on the DPI website at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/fns>.

Schools administering the School Lunch Program distribute applications for free and reduced-price lunches to the parents or guardians of children attending the schools. In some schools, children in households which receive food stamps or Wisconsin Works (W-2) benefits may be directly certified as eligible for free lunches without further application. In these cases, the school directly communicates with the appropriate state or local agency to obtain documentation of this status. Direct certification may result in significant paperwork reduction if the school has large numbers of students eligible for free meals.

The USDA administers the School Lunch Program on the federal level, DPI at the state level and school districts and private schools at the local level. Funds are used for both program operation and administration. For school year 1998-99, Wisconsin received a total of \$68,217,314 in federal reimbursement under the School Lunch Program. Information regarding the federal reimbursement rate for school lunches is provided in Appendix A. Current reimbursement rates can be found on the DPI website at <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/fns>.

States participating in the School Lunch Program are required to provide matching funds for federal funds received. State revenues appropriated may not be less than 30 percent of the general cash assistance received by the state for the School Lunch Program in the 1980-81 school year. The 30 percent matching requirement may be decreased if the per capita income of the state is less than the per capita income of the United States as a whole. The percentage match requirement for school year 1998-99 for Wisconsin is calculated as just under 29 percent. The total required match for 1998-99 was

\$4,143,993, or a state matching payment of just under \$.05 per lunch.

The USDA also provides commodity assistance for the School Lunch Program. Commodity assistance, provided to Wisconsin for the 1998-99 school year for the School Lunch Program, was 19,664,674 pounds valued at \$13,409,227.

Lunches served under the School Lunch Program are required to meet nutritional standards prescribed by the USDA. Lunches are intended to provide approximately one-third of the daily nutrients that children require. The number and sizes of servings are adjusted according to the age of the child participating in the program.

### **The School Breakfast Program**

The intent of the School Breakfast Program is that it be available in all schools where it is needed to provide adequate nutrition for children. The School Breakfast Program provides per-meal federal reimbursements for breakfasts served to children in participating public and private non-profit schools and residential child care institutions

All children enrolled in a school that participates in the School Breakfast Program are eligible to receive school breakfast. The price the child pays for the breakfast varies with the family income of the child. The income eligibility criteria and application process for the School Breakfast Program are the same as for the School Lunch Program.

The school breakfast average daily participation for Wisconsin in 1998-99 was 45,152. The total breakfasts served in 1998-99 were 8,359,221. Statistics for 1999-2000 were not available at the time of this report.

The federal government reimburses the state for each meal served in the School Breakfast Program. Funds are used for both program operation and administration. Wisconsin received \$8,085,155 in federal reimbursement for school year 1999 - 2000. The federal reimbursement rates for each breakfast served for the 1999 - 2000 school year are provided in Appendix A. The DPI is not required to match federal payments received under the School Breakfast Program.

Breakfasts served under the School Breakfast Program are required to meet nutritional standards prescribed by the USDA. The nutrition standards for the School Breakfast program are designed to ensure that, over time, the school breakfast provides one-fourth of a child's recommended dietary allowances. The number and sizes of servings are adjusted according to the age of the child participating in the program.

### **Wisconsin School Breakfast Start-Up Grant Program**

The enactment of the 1993 Wisconsin Act 168 created a school breakfast start-up grant program. The Act provided \$150,000 GPR in a continuing appropriation for grants to be awarded by the DPI to assist school districts and private schools in establishing school breakfast programs. Under the program, a school board or a private school may apply to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for a grant to assist in establishing a school breakfast program. The State Superintendent may award a grant of up to \$10,000 to a school board or governing body of a private school if all of the following apply:

1. The school board or governing body agrees to operate a school breakfast program for at least three school years.
2. The funds will be used for programs in schools in which at least 20 percent of the pupils enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.
3. The school board or governing body of a private school has adopted a plan to maximize participation in the program of pupils who are eligible, under federal income guidelines, for free or reduced-price school lunches.

A school board or governing body of a private school that received a grant to establish a school breakfast program may apply in successive school years for a grant to expand the program to additional schools.

The grant funds may be used only for nonrecurring costs, including site improvement, the purchase of equipment, the costs of training necessary to establish a school breakfast program and the costs of publicizing new programs.

The 1999-2000 biennial budget changes the start-up program to a 10 cent per breakfast reimbursement program effective the 2000-2001 school year.

### **Special Milk Program**

This program encourages the consumption of milk by children in non-profit schools, nursery schools, childcare centers, settlement houses, summer camps and similar non-profit institutions. The program provides federal reimbursement for each half-pint of milk served in schools and other eligible institutions.

Any non-profit school or childcare institution that does not participate in another federal meal service program may participate in this program upon request. Schools that participate in the School Breakfast Program or School Lunch Program may not participate in this program. However, this limitation does not apply to split session kindergarten or pre-kindergarten programs conducted in schools where these children do not have access to the School Breakfast Program or School Lunch Program.

The federal government pays a reimbursement per half-pint of milk served. For the 1998-99 school year, Wisconsin received \$1,516,951 in federal funds under the program.

### **Wisconsin Morning Milk**

The Wisconsin Morning Milk Program was established by the 1987 Wisconsin Act 27. Under the program, the DPI provides payment for beverages (usually milk, but sometimes fruit juice) for children in kindergarten through grade five who meet certain income criteria. The public and private school programs provide each eligible child a half-pint of Wisconsin-produced milk on each day the school is in session. If the child has a condition that prohibits the child from drinking milk, the child must be offered juice as a substitute.

The program operates by reimbursing participating schools for free beverages provided to pupils eligible for free or reduced-priced lunches under the School Lunch Program. Schools may also provide milk to children not eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, however, schools are not reimbursed for the milk.

## The 1999 Community-Based Hunger Prevention (CBHP) Grants

The Community-Based Hunger Prevention (CBHP) Grants were created in 1994 by the state Legislature to encourage community organizations to undertake local hunger prevention projects. Legislative authorization for the \$250,000 annual appropriation expired in June 1999. Over the five years of the CBHP grants, Wisconsin funded a total of 70 hunger projects in 50 counties.

The last round of CBHP funded projects was concluded in September 1999. This report summarizes the accomplishments of those 10 projects (#61 through #70), that involved a wide variety of hunger prevention activities in seven counties.<sup>6</sup> Individual grants were authorized up to \$20,000. CBHP funding was used to:

- support breast-feeding in the workplace (Sauk County);
- support the Milwaukee Farmers' Market Association in efforts to develop six new farmers' markets in the inner city (Milwaukee County);
- improve food safety at food pantries and expand School Breakfast (La Crosse County);
- address the immediate food needs and underlying barriers to self-sufficiency of recently incarcerated persons (Milwaukee County);
- expand participation at a Summer Food Program site (Chippewa County);
- provide nutrition education and food stamp outreach to low-income Southeast Asians (Milwaukee County);
- provide low-income households with nutrition education, referrals, and food vouchers to purchase fresh produce at a local farmers' market (Portage County);
- co-locate a food pantry and farmers' market for Hmong refugees, conduct nutrition education, and hold workshops on becoming a farmers' market vendor. (Milwaukee County);
- increase the hunger prevention capacity of a neighborhood center through a food pantry, gardening, mentoring, food stamp outreach, facilities improvement, and youth education (Dane County);
- increase food security through gleaning, food preservation, community gardening, nutrition education and development of Summer Food sites (Adams County).

These were the last grants awarded under the 1993 Wisconsin Act 168. The Wisconsin Board on Hunger was eliminated by the State Legislature effective in June 1998.

## Food Stamp Program

The federal Food Stamp Program began as a pilot program in 1961 and was formally established by the Food Stamp Act of 1964. Twenty-two states participated in the initial program. In 1974, Congress extended the program to all states, and in 1977, Congress reenacted the Food Stamp Act, with substantial benefit increases. During the early 1980s, Congress reduced funding for the program, but between 1985 and 1990 partially restored the reduced amounts due to the growing concern about hunger in America. This program is viewed as the cornerstone of the Federal food assistance programs. Studies of the Food Stamp Program have shown that Food Stamp program participation

is associated with diets of significantly better quality. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Food Stamp Program at the federal level through its Food and Nutrition Service. At the State level, the program is administered by DWD. At the local level the program is administered by county or tribal social or human service agencies in cooperation with local Wisconsin Works (W-2) agencies, and the state's private retail food stores.

The basic program rules are the same everywhere in the country, as prescribed by the USDA. To participate, households must meet financial and non-financial eligibility requirements and provide proof of their statements about household circumstances. U.S. citizens and some aliens who are admitted for permanent residence may qualify.

The Food Stamp Program is designed to enhance the nutrition of low-income people by helping them buy food to improve their diets. Recipients are provided with food stamps, which are government coupons that can be used to buy food at most retail grocery stores. (See section about conversion to plastic cards.) Food stamps may not be used to purchase nonfood items, such as alcohol and tobacco products, pet food, and soap and paper products.

The federal government pays for the entire cost of the food stamp benefits and at least 50 percent of the administrative costs of the program. The remainder of the administrative costs are borne by the state.

To qualify for food stamps, a household of one or more persons must have:

- Less than \$2,000 in liquid assets (\$3,000 for households of two or more people if one member is age 60 or older)
- Gross income below 130% of the poverty level for the size of the household (\$1,504 per month in FFY 2000 for a family of three).
- Net income below 100% of the poverty level for the household (\$1,157 per month in FFY 2000 for a household of three).

The value of the food stamps that recipients are entitled to receive each month is determined by two factors – household size and income. See Appendix C-1. Households without any net income receive food stamp amounts that equal the monthly cost of the Thrifty Food Plan, a low-cost model diet plan based on Recommended Dietary Allowances and food choices of low-income households. The monthly cost of the Thrifty Food Plan is periodically updated to account for increases in the cost of food. If the household has some income, the allotment of food stamps is reduced by 30 percent of the net income.

In FFY 2000, an eligible three-member household with no net income can receive \$335/month in food stamps. Additional information regarding the maximum monthly food stamp benefit levels in effect from October 1, 1999 through September 30, 2000 is provided in Appendix C-1. The maximum monthly income limits are increased annually on October 1 based on increases in food cost.

During the month of November, 1999, DWD reported that 73,100 Wisconsin households (183,722 persons), an average of 2.5 persons/household, received food stamps valued at \$10.2 million at an average monthly benefit of \$55.61 per person and \$139.76 per household.

Information regarding the number of Wisconsin households that received food stamps and the total value of these benefits each month from January 1995 through November 1999 is provided in Appendix C-2 & C-3. Appendix C-4 contains information about household and individual participation and value of food stamps broken out by county for November 1999.

The food stamp population consists of three very different groups: families, the elderly/disabled, and able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD's).

- Families are subject to participation in work or work related activities in W-2 or the Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET) program. This has resulted in increased earnings and income for this group (including receipt of Earned Income Tax Credit). The income of many single parent families has also gone up due to an increase of child support collections in Wisconsin (approximately 20% from 1996 to 1999). This increase in household income has reduced the food stamp benefits per household.
- ABAWD adults are subject to more stringent work or work related activities as required by federal legislation in 1996. Thus, ABAWD participation in the program has decreased by approximately one third.
- Elderly/disabled are not subject to work requirements.

Wisconsin is moving to an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system for over 70,000 needy families who use about \$145 million worth of food stamps a year. Plastic cards (called "Quest") with magnetic encoded strips, which work like an automated teller machine card, drawing on the user's food stamp account, will replace paper food stamps in the year 2000.

1995 Wisconsin Act 368 created s. 49.129 Stats. directed the DWD to administer an EBT system for the delivery of food stamps as an alternative to issuing food stamp coupons. All states are required to have a Food Stamp EBT system in place by 2002.

Quest cards will provide a more convenient and secure way for users of food stamps to buy food. They look like bank debit cards – and will help reduce the stigma many people have felt for years using the coupons. The cards also will make it difficult to exchange the food stamps for cash. In addition, by recording dates, times, locations, and account numbers for each transaction, the system will provide more certain fraud detection.

DWD contracted with Citicorp to administer the card issuance and fiscal process with the retailers and the federal government. The Department began testing the system in October in Rock County. The new system will be "rolled-out" in regional phases beginning with 14 southern Wisconsin counties in February, moving counter-clockwise around the state, with completion in Milwaukee from August through October.

Radio and television public service announcements are being aired statewide to publicize the new Quest card. Numerous community based food and nutrition organizations are assisting in outreach activities to inform current and potential participants about the transition to the new system.

Replacing food stamps with electronic cards is part of a more general outreach program to help families access this important supportive service. The Department and its contract agencies have ongoing activities to get out the message that food stamp benefits are available and should be used to support families in need as they move to employment and self-sufficiency, and for some, to maintain independent living.

Recent and ongoing outreach efforts include:

#### Outstationing

- Provided \$1.9 million in December 1998 to fund a Food Stamp/ Medicaid/ Child Care outstationing effort in 7 counties (Milwaukee, Dane, Kenosha, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Monroe, and Oneida) to increase the number of application and information sites for improved customer service access. Of the \$1.9 million, Milwaukee County Department of Human Services received \$1.2. There are now over 50 outstation sites in Milwaukee alone.
- Over 20 counties have outstationed eligibility workers to accept applications at community sites (i.e. hospitals, clinics, schools, and food pantries) in addition to the local agency sites.

#### Special Campaigns

- In November 1999, Employment Solutions (a W-2 agency in Milwaukee) began a \$350,000 media Food Stamp outreach and awareness initiative that includes 22 billboards, 25 bus placards, 600 television and 374 radio spots.
- In September 1999, the Milwaukee W-2 agencies announced a \$500,000 Food Stamp Program Outreach Initiative. This funding was used to pay for the co-location of additional Milwaukee county staff at the W-2 agencies, and continue the operation of outstation sites in Milwaukee.

#### Marketing

- Milwaukee W-2 agencies have developed a brochure and several information sheets on the Food Stamp Program to be distributed through the agencies, outstations, Milwaukee Public Schools, and many childcare centers.
- DWD distributed 75,000 food stamp publications, which provide information on food stamp rights and responsibilities for display in local offices statewide.
- DWD distributed 222 federal food stamp posters to local agencies to display in waiting and reception areas, Women, Infant and Children (WIC) sites, public resource areas, and community organizations.
- Many local agencies are offering extended weekday business hours, between 7:00 am and 8:00 p.m. to provide customer service for employed participants.

DWD credits these efforts for an over 1,700 food stamp caseload increase from November 1998 to November 1999.

#### Program & Policy Initiatives

- Food Stamp Privatization – The Department is negotiating with the Food and Nutrition Service regarding a request for a federal waiver to allow an individual, other than a public employee, to determine food stamp eligibility. If



the waiver is granted, the Department will be able to move closer to the goal of allowing families receiving W-2 (in Milwaukee and other privatized counties) to have just one case worker for multiple programs.

- Quarterly Reporting – The federal government has offered states the opportunity to apply for a waiver to implement quarterly reporting of changes that affect certain food stamp recipient's benefits. The primary objective is to lessen the reporting burden on participants who are employed, and will relieve these families of reporting most changes in the households for three months. Quarterly reporting will also relieve some of the workload for local agencies, and should improve payment accuracy, as frequent changes in earned income will not result in benefit errors. The Department submitted the waiver request to USDA in December 1999. Implementation will proceed as soon as federal approval is obtained.
- Categorical Eligibility – The federal government expanded the scope of families that can be considered "categorically eligible" for food stamp benefits, allowing persons that receive services and benefits funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant to automatically qualify. In Wisconsin, W-2 is funded by TANF, as are several other related programs, including childcare. Thus, under the expanded definition of categorical eligibility, food stamp applicants/recipients are able to use the state's W-2 asset test, a much higher level than the more restrictive food stamp asset limits. This will enable many of these families to retain ownership of a reliable car.
- Mail-in Recertifications – DWD received a waiver in 1999 from USDA that allows food stamp households subject to a 3 month certification period to complete alternate recertifications by mail or telephone. All recipients must be offered this as an option to face-to-face interviews. This will lessen the burden on working families, the elderly and disabled and those with transportation difficulties.
- Division of Economic Support (DES) is participating in efforts underway at the federal level to simplify policies and procedures, and change the focus from a welfare program to a nutritional supplement for low-income persons. For example, DES has a representative (the Office of Food Stamps and Medical Assistance Director) on the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) Food Stamp Modernization Workgroup to overhaul the Food Stamp Act, up for reauthorization in year 2001. We are also working with Congressman Tom Barrett, and the National Governor's Association, to pursue improvements in the program over the next two years.
- Payment Accuracy Project – In 1999, DES implemented an initiative called the Payment Accuracy & Case Review (PACR) project in Milwaukee County in a targeted effort to reduce the food stamp error rate and help eliminate federal fiscal sanctions to the state for exceeding the national error rate. DES will continue to contract with the UW-W Oshkosh Center for Career Development, Employment & Training (CCDET) group, in partnership with Milwaukee County, to continue the project and to expand it to other local agencies in 2000 to achieve further reductions in program errors.

## Recommendations for Year 2000

In 1998, DHFS provided a number of recommendations for future action due to the elimination of the Wisconsin Board on Hunger and the consolidation efforts to strengthen the TEFAP program in Milwaukee and statewide. The plan for the year 2000 is to continue our efforts to ensure that food security is addressed in a community-based comprehensive manner, with a goal of maximum self-sufficiency to the greatest extent possible for Wisconsin citizens.

Providing food security for all citizens in Wisconsin will require a multi-faceted approach with contributions from policy makers, agency heads, technical experts, nutrition educators, hunger prevention advocates, members of non-profit charitable organizations, corporations, health professionals, food producers and processors, food distributors and retailers. Permanent solutions to food security will involve addressing underlying issues such as the level of support for elderly and disabled persons, the extent of affordable housing, the availability of health insurance, and increasing the number of jobs that pay families sustaining wages. The following are the recommendations for Year 2000:

1. Create a Food Security Consortium that will serve as a statewide advisory and working committee to DHFS. The Consortium will be a vehicle for enhanced communication between the State, related local and governmental agencies and the private sector to formulate a comprehensive plan to improve, expand and enhance local food systems in efforts to increase food security. The Consortium will be charged with reviewing data about the incidence of food security, making recommendations on ways in which problems can be solved and exploring funding options to augment local community efforts. Activities of this committee may include holding listening sessions to identify special populations and develop specific strategies for addressing their needs.
2. Increase efforts to enhance the effectiveness and capacity of the pantry network in Wisconsin by continued use of consistent standards and best practices which incorporates USDA's seven-step plan to achieve community food security. This will include the collection and summarization of countywide data including food pantry, and client surveys which will enable the Food Security Consortium to prioritize food security in Wisconsin. (See Appendix B).
3. Build public awareness about the existence of food assistance programs and their availability to low income people in the State. Integrate nutrition education into activities supporting the transition to self-sufficiency. Also, work to strengthen the food security safety net by supporting the full and efficient use of programs such as the Earned Income Credit, food stamps, WIC, school meals, summer feeding programs and all programs that provide emergency food assistance.

## References

1. Data are for 1996-1998 and based on 18 questions asked by the U.S. Census Bureau to a nationwide sample of households.
2. YIP R, Binkin NJ, Fleshood L, et al: Declining Prevalence of Anemia among Low-Income Children in the United States. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1987; 258: 1619-1623.
3. Rush D, Leighton, J. Sloan NL., et al: Part VI Study of Infants and Children in the National WIC Evaluation: Evaluation of the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women Infants and Children. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 1988, 48: 484-511.
4. Edozien JC, Switzer BR, Bryan RB: Medical Evaluation of the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 1979; 32: 677-692.
5. Wisconsin WIC Program. WIC812 Report: Hematocrit/Hemoglobin Improvements for Infants and Children with a Low Hematocrit/Hemoglobin at the Prior Certification of Infant Update, April 1996.
6. Summaries prepared from materials written and collected by Dr. Jane Voichick, Professor Emerita, Nutritional Sciences, UW-Madison, and from "*A Summary of Wisconsin's CBHP Grants Program 1995-1999*", by Jonathan Bader, Food Security Coordinator, WISCAP. For a full report, please contact Jonathan Bader at (608) 244-4422.

# APPENDICES

**REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS  
EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1999 - JUNE 30, 2000**

**SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM**

For Each Lunch Served:	Less Than 60%	60% or More
To students paying the full price	\$.19	\$.21
To students eligible for reduced price	\$1.58	\$1.60
To students eligible for free	\$1.98	\$2.00
Donated commodity value	\$.1475	\$.1475
State matching payment (Approximately 5 cents times the number of lunches served in the previous year, normally payable in October.)	\$.049	\$.049

**NOTES:**

- If 60 percent or more of the total lunches served in the second preceding school year (1997-98) were served free or at a reduced price, the reimbursement is an additional 2 cents per lunch.
- USDA regulations require that the reduced price charge to students not exceed 40 cents for lunch.

**SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

For Each Breakfast Served:	Non-severe Need	Severe Need
To students paying the full price	\$.21	\$.21
To students eligible for reduced price	\$.79	\$1.00
To students eligible for free	\$1.09	\$1.30

**NOTES:**

A school is eligible for severe need reimbursement if (1) the regular rates of reimbursement are insufficient to cover the breakfast costs and (2) 40 percent or more of the lunches served to students at the school in the second preceding school year (1997-98) were served free or at a reduced price. Severe need payment is made on a school-by-school basis.

## USDA Food Security

Seeking to cut hunger in America in half by the year 2015, the USDA Community Food Security Initiative is creating and expanding grass-roots partnerships that build local food systems and reduce hunger. USDA is joining with States, municipalities, nonprofit groups, and the private sector to strengthen local food systems by replicating best practices of existing efforts and by catalyzing new community commitments to fight hunger. Included below are the USDA's definition of food security and the initiative goals and methods to achieve them.

### USDA Definition of Food Security

The U.S. Action Plan on Food Security defines "food security" as: "When all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life." There are three key elements to food security:

1. Physical and economic access to food by individuals and households.
2. Adequate availability of food.
3. Full utilization of food, a balanced, adequate diet, safe water, sanitation, education and health care.

When communities lack one or more of the factors that create food security, they are considered "food-insecure" or suffer from "food insecurity." Hunger and under-nutrition are the potential results and symptoms of food insecurity.

### USDA Goals

1. Creating new - and enhancing local existing – **local infrastructures** to strengthen local food systems to reduce hunger and food insecurity.
2. Increasing **economic and job security** by helping low-income people obtain living wage jobs to attain self-sufficiency.
3. Strengthening the **federal nutrition assistance safety net** by supporting the full and efficient use of programs such as food stamps, WIC, school meals, summer feeding and TEFAP.
4. Bolstering **supplemental food provided by non-profit groups** by aiding food recovery, gleaning and food donation programs.
5. Improving community **food production and marketing** by aiding projects that grow, process and distribute food locally.
6. Boosting **education and awareness** by increasing efforts to inform the public about nutrition, food safety and food security.
7. Improving **research, monitoring and evaluation** efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security.

Methods USDA Will Use:

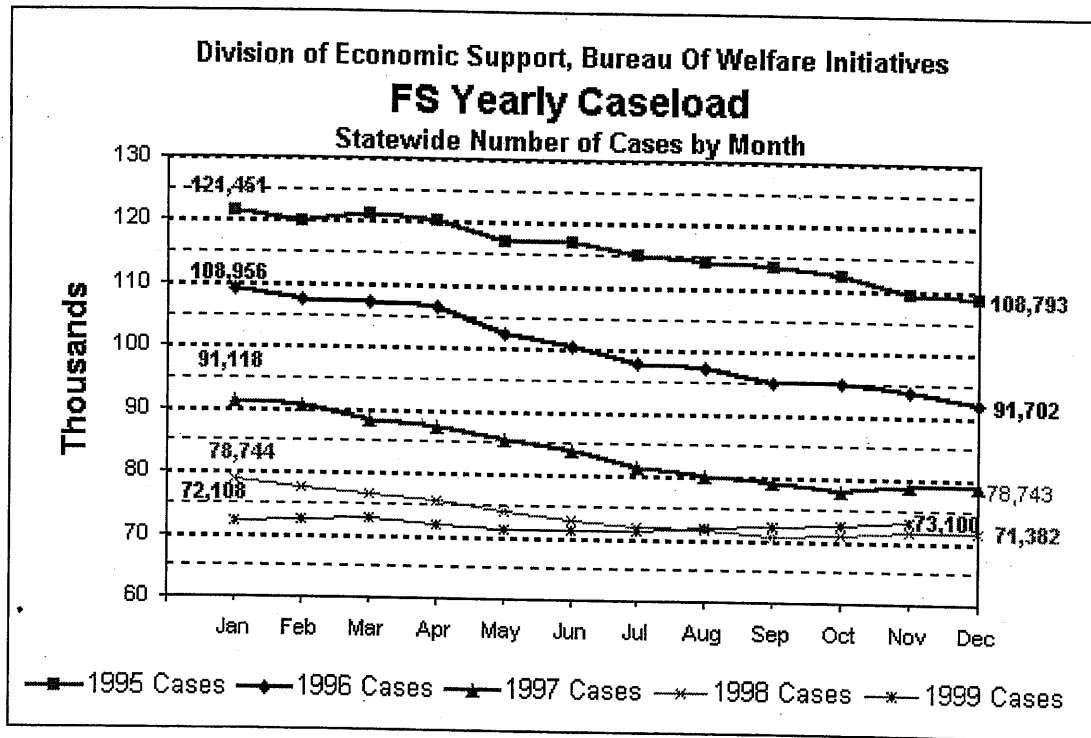
- Catalyzing the development of new partnerships on the local, State and Federal levels to help communities reduce hunger.
- Improving the coordination between existing USDA programs – such as nutrition assistance programs, community food grants, and ongoing research, farmers' markets and food recovery projects – and related Federal, State and community initiatives.
- Expanding technical assistance to States, communities and nonprofit groups to build long-term local structures to increase food security.
- Increasing public awareness of the causes of food insecurity and highlight innovative community solutions to hunger.

Appendix C - 1

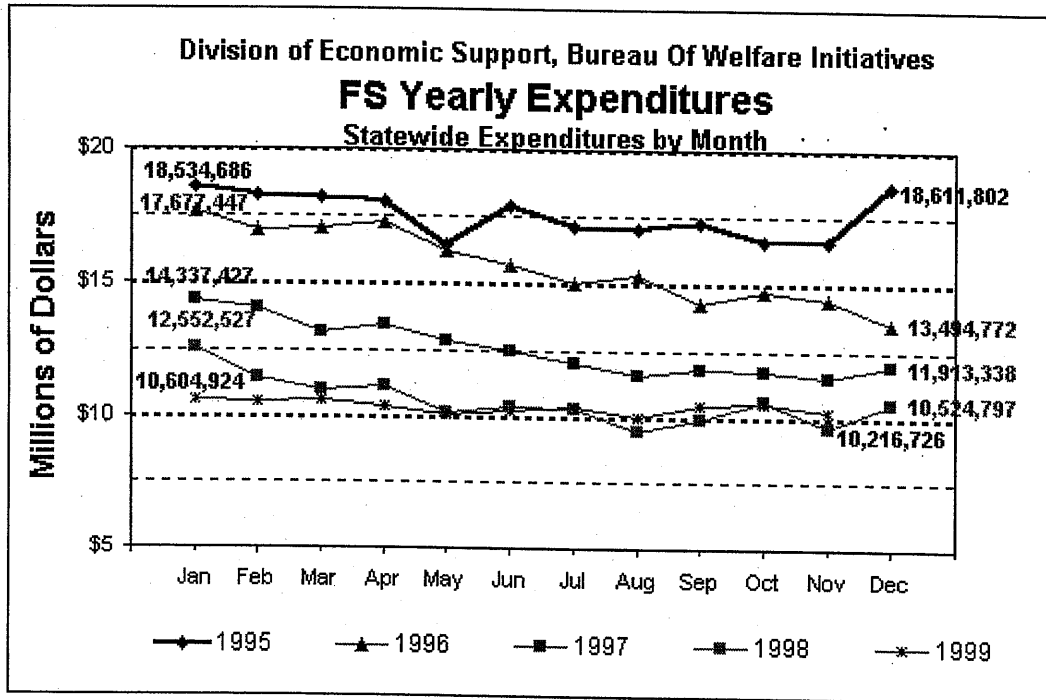
Income Limits			Elderly & Disabled Seeking Separate Household Status	
FS Group Size	Net Income Limit	Gross Income	Household Size	Gross Income Limit
Limit	(100%*)	(130%*)		(165%*)
1	\$ 687	\$ 893	1	\$ 1,133
2	922	1,199	2	1,521
3	1,157	1,504	3	1,909
4	1,392	1,810	4	2,297
5	1,627	2,115	5	2,684
6	1,862	2,421	6	3,072
7	2,097	2,726	7	3,460
8	2,332	3,032	8	3,848
9	2,567	3,338	9	4,236
10	2,802	3,644	10	4,624
Each Additional Member	+\$ 235	306	Each Additional Member	+\$ 388
See, Income Computation Unit before applying the Gross Income Test.				
Deductions			Monthly Maximum Allotment	
Type	Amount		FS Group Size	Maximum Allotment
Standard	\$ 134		1	\$ 127
Dependent Care for each dependent:			2	234
under 2	200		3	335
2 & over	175		4	426
Shelter Maximum	275		5	506
Heating Standard	201		6	607
Other Standard	115		7	671
Telephone Standard	27		8	767
Medical (Elderly & Disabled)	expenses over \$35		9	863
			10	959
			Each Additional Member	+\$ 96

\* Percentage of poverty level.





Month	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases	Cases
Jan	121,451	108,956	91,118	78,744	72,108
Feb	119,717	107,492	90,621	77,585	72,358
Mar	121,151	107,041	88,278	76,620	72,677
Apr	120,119	106,483	87,362	75,453	71,738
May	116,981	102,307	85,519	73,855	71,165
Jun	116,816	100,456	83,980	72,884	71,175
Jul	115,104	97,868	81,191	71,691	71,031
Aug	114,144	97,115	80,031	71,391	71,928
Sep	113,434	95,008	79,016	70,458	72,125
Oct	112,047	94,843	77,706	70,895	72,331
Nov	109,401	93,801	78,716	71,364	73,100
Dec	108,793	91,702	78,743	71,382	



Month	Expenditures				
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Jan	18,534,686	17,677,447	14,337,427	12,552,527	10,604,924
Feb	18,297,071	17,010,769	14,015,500	11,416,999	10,495,374
Mar	18,177,231	17,060,718	13,147,343	10,934,190	10,602,185
Apr	18,072,527	17,273,431	13,459,958	11,109,671	10,363,183
May	16,445,517	16,242,283	12,823,778	10,144,123	10,040,049
Jun	17,877,287	15,697,211	12,434,277	10,336,461	10,235,098
Jul	17,172,803	15,011,603	11,974,932	10,252,978	10,354,566
Aug	17,083,782	15,297,124	11,589,460	9,471,318	9,961,822
Sep	17,316,502	14,249,799	11,772,923	9,913,728	10,397,063
Oct	16,625,871	14,697,130	11,692,289	10,588,737	10,473,960
Nov	16,628,653	14,457,611	11,483,816	9,574,743	10,216,726
Dec	18,611,802	13,494,772	11,913,338	10,524,797	10,524,797

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NOVEMBER 1999	FOOD STAMP ASSISTANCE GROUPS	FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS	NET BENEFITS	NOVEMBER 1999 AGENCY	FOOD STAMP ASSISTANCE GROUPS	FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS	NET BENEFITS
Adams	340	767	\$38,136	Monroe	480	1,125	\$49,922
Ashland	403	782	\$40,691	Oconto	263	588	\$27,795
Barron	715	1,359	\$65,362	Oneida	463	964	\$45,974
Bayfield	158	335	\$15,960	Outagamie	633	1,725	\$79,455
Brown	1,620	4,047	\$208,632	Ozaukee	217	407	\$19,907
Buffalo	169	347	\$15,501	Pepin	63	110	\$4,442
Burnett	201	408	\$19,009	Pierce	180	411	\$20,271
Calumet	148	364	\$16,701	Polk	395	801	\$38,436
Chippewa	577	1,380	\$63,086	Portage	612	1,447	\$68,887
Clark	224	508	\$22,944	Price	277	536	\$20,641
Columbia	309	636	\$28,330	Racine	2,372	6,257	\$358,619
Crawford	182	351	\$13,550	Richland	246	513	\$24,079
Dane	3,768	8,688	\$460,368	Rock	1,956	4,759	\$267,717
Dodge	486	1,014	\$46,609	Rusk	246	551	\$26,936
Door	178	388	\$17,034	St.Croix	235	485	\$25,341
Douglas	845	1,965	\$102,204	Sauk	453	1,043	\$52,138
Dunn	442	1,196	\$58,913	Sawyer	279	659	\$37,099
Eau Claire	1,062	2,496	\$118,581	Shawano	316	719	\$32,813
Florence	55	103	\$4,301	Sheboygan	559	1,385	\$64,674
Fond du Lac	610	1,469	\$71,001	Taylor	232	490	\$23,879
Forest	109	264	\$13,307	Trempealeau	315	667	\$29,985
Grant	328	676	\$29,830	Vernon	329	683	\$30,328
Green	272	526	\$24,701	Vilas	138	306	\$13,839
Green Lake	166	383	\$13,971	Walworth	477	985	\$52,694
Iowa	230	435	\$20,228	Washburn	222	462	\$22,354
Iron	79	132	\$4,898	Washington	478	1,006	\$48,369
Jackson	214	428	\$17,850	Waukesha	995	2,052	\$107,968
Jefferson	331	606	\$27,668	Waupaca	304	652	\$30,955
Juneau	249	599	\$25,123	Waushara	290	714	\$30,679
Kenosha	2,225	5,743	\$331,433	Winnebago	1,065	2,545	\$118,605
Kewaunee	86	175	\$8,665	Wood	907	2,247	\$114,144
La Crosse	1,304	3,283	\$150,076	Menominee	106	464	\$23,366
Lafayette	90	175	\$7,082	Red Cliff	102	311	\$17,247
Langlade	351	734	\$34,972	Stockbridge-Munsee	24	81	\$4,380
Lincoln	267	555	\$25,744	Lac du Flambeau	137	401	\$25,945
Manitowoc	414	927	\$38,493	Bad River	45	141	\$7,559
Marathon	1,045	2,917	\$136,380	Sokaogon Tribe	25	78	\$4,502
Marinette	435	910	\$40,777	Oneida Tr.	72	278	\$14,773
Marquette	132	249	\$10,119				
Milwaukee	35,773	96,354	\$5,841,780	STATE TOTAL	73,100	183,722	\$10,216,726