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## *Issue Brief – State Food Purchase Program*

Residents of all 67 Pennsylvania counties experience food insecurity. Over the course of the last decade, an increasing number of families have not known how to put enough food on the table to meet their nutritional needs. The Global Food Crisis of 2008 (when food prices rose dramatically worldwide) combined with the economic recession, resulted in higher percentages of hunger and food insecurity at the end of the decade than the beginning.

### **Consequences of Hunger in America:**

As Christians we pray for daily bread, knowing that it is the primary human need. When people are hungry we are obviously concerned for their individual well being. However, the consequences of hunger go far beyond the empty feeling in a person's stomach. Children who are undernourished have trouble performing at grade level in school. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are lost each year in Pennsylvania's economy because workers who are hungry are less productive, often missing multiple days of work for health problems related to lack of nutrients. Feedings programs such as WIC (supplemental food for Women, Infants, and Children) save \$3 in the Medical Assistance Program for every \$1 spent on food.

### **What is the State Food Purchase Program?**

The State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) provides grants to all 67 counties for the purchase of foods and nutritional supplements, for critical transportation and infrastructure needs, and to cover the charges associated with accessing federal food commodities worth millions. It is an essential tool for Pennsylvania's food banks and food pantries in the effort to provide for our most vulnerable citizens.

SFPP was first created during the economic recession of the early 1980's, when donations were down and needs were up. To qualify for food purchased or distributed with SFPP funds, recipients must be at or below 150% of poverty (\$33,000 a year for a family of 4).

### **What is LAMPa asking Advocates to do?**

LAMPa is encouraging advocates to write to their state representatives and state senators requesting that they **increase the appropriation for the SFPP from \$18 million to \$20 million**. In the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year, SFPP was funded at \$18.75 million – but we know there are MORE hungry Pennsylvanians now than there were then!