

FRAC CONFERENCE

In June, Our Advocacy Coordinator (Gabby Murphy) flew to Washington DC to attend the FRAC (Food Research & Action Center) conference alongside hundreds of other food advocates. During conference sessions, training and the FRAC lobby day, we were able to create lasting connections across the food security network and meet with legislators and government officials to discuss key issues. In addition, we were able to meet up with close advocate contacts from the Feeding Illinois network to discuss better ways we can work together and connect across the state.

Personally, we met with members of the offices of Senators Josh Hawley, Dick Durbin, and Eric Schmitt to assert the importance of TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) funding and stability in the food assistance network for not only recipients, but farmers in the bi-state region. We were also able to connect with the offices of Representatives Ann Wagner, Blaine Luetkemeyer and Nicole Budzinski to discuss TEFAP funding and the different versions of the farm bill in the House.

Our staff representative met with Stacey Dean, Deputy under Secretary for the USDA Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services to assert the importance of access to telephonic signatures to ensure equitable access for our neighbors.



FARM BILL

The farm bill is the largest piece of federal legislation for food and farming. It impacts access to nutritious food for the millions of people in the United States facing hunger. As grocery prices rise and supply chain disruptions continue, lawmakers must come together to pass a bipartisan farm bill that supports foodbanks and the people they serve.

CLICK HERE to ACT NOW and write a letter to Congress to pass a strong farm bill to help people facing hunger!



MILITARY HUNGER WITHIN OUR REGION

The St. Louis Area Foodbank continues to salute our veterans and active-duty military personnel in our community by bridging the gap between those who have served and access to food. In May, the food bank hosted two military town hall meetings to talk with local veterans and military focused non-profits to learn more about how we can better connect with and serve our veterans. Through these meetings, we brainstormed ideas on how to change our military-focused efforts to be more direct and effective to service members. We will use these findings to assist in developing Military and Veteran programming in the future.





END OF SESSION UPDATE

- **Summer EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) (aka Sun Bucks) has been passed** and funded in both Missouri and Illinois for the Summer 2024!
- **In Illinois, the Farm to Foodbank initiative was fully funded in the state budget**, meaning it can now fully function as a program (whereas previously it had functioned as a pilot program)
- **Unfortunately, legislation for Breakfast After the Bell did not pass in Missouri or Illinois**, but we have taken the conversations and information gathered this year to continue advocating for Breakfast After the Bell in the future.



UPCOMING EVENTS

[CLICK HERE](#) to view **Volunteer Opportunities** in our Service Area in July, August, and September.

Congress in Recess
August 3 through
September 8, 2024.

Hunger Action Month!
September 2024.

Hunger Action Day!
September 10, 2024.

9/11 Day of Service!
September 11, 2024.

**Stand Down Veteran
Distribution and Resource
Fair in Marion, IL**
September 12, 2024.

**Stand Down Veteran
Distribution and Resource
Fair in Downtown STL.**
September 28, 2024.



SNAP NEWS

USDA has released national and state SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) payment error rates.

- The SNAP error rate is not a fraud rate—it is a measure of how accurately states determine eligibility and benefit amounts. This metric encompasses overpayments and underpayments to SNAP participants that result from unintentional mistakes made by state agencies or individuals applying for benefits. We will soon share talking points to help network members discuss SNAP error rates with policymakers.

For more information, [CLICK HERE](#) to view USDA's resources on SNAP quality control.



EMPOWER YOUR COMMUNITY

AMBASSADORS FOR CHANGE

Ambassadors for Change is a grassroots coalition of leaders in the St. Louis Area Foodbank with a focus on hunger relief advocacy (don't think this needs to be capitalized but please advise) initiatives. The group works to increase knowledge sharing and educations, empower our communities, and transform systems. We meet every other month on the 3rd Thursday from 2pm-3pm. **Upcoming Meeting Dates:**

July 25, 2024	@ SLAFB 2 – 3 p.m.
September 26, 2024	@SLAFB 2 – 3 p.m.
November 14, 2024	@SLAFB 2 – 3 p.m. (Note this is the 2nd Thursday due to Thanksgiving Holiday)
January 23, 2025	@SLAFB 2 – 3 p.m.
March 27, 2025	@ SLAFB 2 – 3 p.m.
May 22, 2025	@SLAFB 2 – 3 p.m.

Contact Melanie Hager, mhager@stlfoodbank.org for more information.

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St. Louis Area Foodbank

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