

**Jewish Delegate Assembly of Greater Pittsburgh Policy Statement on Food Insecurity
Passed December 3, 2013**

Jewish tradition teaches us that we must feed the hungry. Hunger is a problem that affects people of all ages, but it is a particularly devastating problem for children. There is both a moral and an economic imperative to address this problem.

“Food insecurity” is a new term in the American lexicon. It has replaced the word “hunger” to accurately describe the experience of families who suffer from unreliable access to adequate food from non-emergency sources. One in six families in the United States is currently classified as food insecure--the highest level since the government began collecting data in 1995.

The Jewish Delegate Assembly of Greater Pittsburgh believes that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Federal Government should:

- Significantly strengthen Pennsylvania’s support for an essential service provided by the Commonwealth’s network of food banks, food pantries and other food assistance providers through the State Food Purchase Program.
- Significantly strengthen and expand the federal nutrition assistance programs at a level that will move over 36 million Americans, including well over 12.6 million children, out of food insecurity and stimulate economic growth across the country.
- Expand participation in food insecurity programs by substantially streamlining rules and enrollment processes and increasing creative outreach efforts and administrative improvements for program sponsors at state and community levels. These changes must be addressed to all programs, to improve the participation of low-income families and seniors in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), of seniors in the Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP), of mothers and young children in Women and Infant Care (WIC), of school age children in School Breakfast, Lunch and Out-of-School Time programs, and of schools in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- Encourage the planting of self-help fruit and vegetable gardens, such as community gardens and home gardens (21st century “victory gardens”).
- Respond to periods of economic crisis by temporarily boosting benefits as well as support for Pennsylvania to prevent cuts in their vital support systems.
- Mandate appropriate and sufficient reimbursements, state and national nutrition standards, and provide nutrition education funding.

The Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh should:

- Educate the Jewish community, the general public and public officials on hunger and food insufficiency needs and solutions among children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and other at-risk populations in the U.S. and internationally.

- Urge the state, federal administration and Congress to implement plans and take the actions indicated above to alleviate food insufficiency generally and eliminate child hunger in the U.S. by 2020 and, where appropriate, urge each state to fully implement these programs.
- Participate in coalitions with other local, state, and national faith, community, humanitarian, and non-governmental organizations, and engage political and community leaders to alleviate hunger and food insufficiency through education, service, advocacy
- Work with other advocates to increase participation in the range of Federal nutrition assistance programs, including the Farm to Cafeteria program which provides one time grants to connect farms and schools, the school breakfast lunch and after school food programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Support Community Supported Agriculture and other local food distribution systems by actively helping to link sources with distribution sites, such as community centers, schools, churches, synagogues, etc.
- Develop a network of community gardens and other innovative gardening programs to increase demand for and sources of local foods through synagogue social justice projects, community outreach programs and schools.
- Actively explore and work at putting into practice Jewish ethical ideals and values regarding food production and consumption.