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2023 Idaho Summit on Hunger and Food Security

Figure: Community Partners from across the state of Idaho meet to combat hunger in our state.

BOISE – (October 12, 2023) – Community leaders and anti-hunger advocates gathered this week to kick off Hunger and Food Security awareness month in Idaho at the 8th annual Idaho Hunger Summit. Idahoans from across the state learned about the status of food security in Idaho, and to identify goals to address hunger in our state. Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America stated “No one should be shocked that when the government takes away food, as well as money to buy food, hunger increases.” “My biggest concern is that while Idaho has had a 97% increase in the amount of people that don’t have enough to eat over a one-week period, the nation’s average is 52%. Things need to change in Idaho,
especially for our children. Children are our future, and they don’t choose to go hungry.” Said Denise Dixon, Executive Director of the Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force.

The Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force hosted the Idaho Summit on Hunger and Food Security on Thursday, October 12, 2023. The event provided anti-hunger advocates, government officials, business leaders, and representatives from non-profit agencies, schools, and faith communities with information on the state of hunger and food security in Idaho. Participants were equipped with the knowledge and tools for moving efforts from hunger relief to sustainable food security.

The meeting began with a proclamation from Governor Brad Little declaring October as Hunger and Food Security awareness month in Idaho.

“Hunger Awareness Month not only sends a message of support to those in need but raises awareness of this critical issue among Idahoans and Idaho’s hunger relief partners.” - Proclamation from the Office of Governor Brad Little

Previous summit’s have resulted in numerous successes, including:

- 63,903 backpacks filled with nutritious, kid-friendly foods were distributed among low-income school children in 2022 ensuring students have access to healthy foods to support learning and increasing usage of school programs;
- Funding was secured for the Rx for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program to expand outside of Treasure Valley, increasing access to healthy produce in surrounding communities; and
- Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force and many other community partners are continuing to utilize translation and interpretation services to support our multi-lingual multi-cultural community members.

This year, the summit focused on the four pillars to end hunger, identified by the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health held on September 28, 2022. The first pillar focuses on improving food access and affordability by exploring federal policies and programs, childhood nutrition, underserved communities, and access to transportation. The second pillar focuses on integrating nutrition and health through healthcare, connecting patients to nutrition resources to achieve optimal health. The third pillar draws inspiration from the success of the WIC Program on empowering Idaho consumers and will focus on enhancing access to healthy foods through school policies and healthy workplaces. Lastly, the fourth pillar focuses on advancing Idaho food security research.

Without their generous support of sponsors the 2023 Idaho Summit on Hunger and Food Security would not be possible. Sponsors include Dairy West, WIC Idaho, Pacific Source, Idaho Foodbank, Idaho Physical Activity and Nutrition Program, Idaho Department of Health & Welfare, Chobani, The Hunger Coalition, City of Boise, and Idaho Interfaith Roundtable Against Hunger.

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