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**School Breakfast Program reaching more children in Illinois, yet many opportunities remain
Illinois ranks 42nd in School Breakfast; more than 459,000 children at risk of hunger in the classroom**

CHICAGO – The annual national *School Breakfast Scorecard* released today by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) finds that , on an average school day in 2014-2015, 391,350 low-income children in Illinois participated in school breakfast, an increase of 5.4 percent from the previous year. Yet more than 459,000 eligible children are at risk of missing breakfast and going hungry throughout the school day. Progress has been made in Illinois, but the state lags the rest of the nation in providing breakfast to schoolchildren, ranking 42nd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The *School Breakfast Scorecard* measures the success of the School Breakfast Program at the national and state levels. The FRAC report finds that 46 low-income children in Illinois ate school breakfast on an average day for every 100 that received free or reduced-price lunch during the 2014-2015 school year. Nationally, 54 low-income children ate school breakfast for every 100 who also ate school lunch, an increase from the previous school year's ratio of 53:100 and a large jump from the 43:100 ratio of a decade earlier.

"FRAC's data confirms what we see every day: that Illinois is still below the national average in its rate of school breakfast participation among low-income students," said Bob Dolgan, Director of Statewide Partnerships for the Greater Chicago Food Depository and Campaign Manager for Illinois No Kid Hungry. "Every child deserves the opportunity to start the day with breakfast, and the School Breakfast Program makes federal funds available to cover schools' costs."

The report arrives as Rise and Shine Illinois releases localized data and recommendations for school districts and schools across Illinois. Among the recommendations is the introduction of legislation that would update the Illinois School Breakfast and Lunch Act and has the potential to serve nearly 176,000 additional students. Rise and Shine Illinois also advocates for the full utilization of the Community Eligibility Provision, which enables schools to reduce paperwork and serve breakfast and lunch to students at no cost.

Low participation means missed meals for hungry children and missed federal nutrition dollars for Illinois. Increasing participation to 70 low-income children receiving breakfast for every 100 who eat lunch – a goal some states have met – would lead to an additional 204,295 low-income Illinois children eating breakfast each day, and an additional \$54.6 million in federal child nutrition funding.

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About the report:

The full report, *School Breakfast Scorecard*, is available at www.frac.org. To measure the reach of the School Breakfast Program nationally and in the states, FRAC compares the number of schools and low-income children that participate in breakfast to those that participate in the National School Lunch Program. FRAC also sets a participation goal of reaching 70 low-income children with breakfast for every 100 receiving lunch as a way to gauge state progress and the costs of under-participation in the program.

To view Illinois' localized report, visit www.riseandshineillinois.org.

About Rise and Shine Illinois

The Rise and Shine Illinois campaign is a partnership of several anti-hunger organizations with support from the national child hunger organization Share Our Strength (Illinois No Kid Hungry) and the JB and MK Pritzker Family Foundation. Illinois No Kid Hungry is a public-private coalition working to end childhood hunger in Illinois by ensuring all children get the healthy food they need, every day. Launched in 2012 as a partnership with Share Our Strength and the Illinois Commission to End Hunger, the campaign is working to connect children with effective nutrition programs, like school breakfast and summer meals, while teaching families how to cook healthy food on a limited budget.