CSG Campaigns Packs 36,000 Meals for Food Insecure in Virginia

By
Lisa McKinney [1]
Sunday, December 11, 2016 at 12:01 PM

In Virginia, 1 in 8 people struggle with hunger. Members of The Council of State Governments gathered at the culmination of the 2016 CSG National Conference Dec. 11 in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, to help address this need as part of the CSG Campaign Against Hunger initiative.

“The Campaign Against Hunger service project is an opportunity to bring public servants together to work toward a common goal and make a positive difference in the communities in which we hold our meetings,” said David Adkins, CSG executive director.

Outreach Inc., in conjunction with CSG, organized attendees to package 32,000 meals to be donated to the Virginia Peninsula Food Bank, but attendees exceeded this goal, packaging more than 36,000, at the event. Outreach is a nonprofit organization that works to provide safe water, food and medical
The pre-packaged meals assembled at Outreach’s events are particularly great for backpack meal programs, said Floyd Hammer, who founded Outreach with his wife Kathy Hamilton in 2004. Backpack meal programs send children in need of food assistance home from school on Fridays with meals for the weekend. Hammer said there is enough food in each of the 36,000 meals packaged to serve six people, so meals sent home through backpack programs are often able to feed whole families.

The CSG Campaign Against Hunger began as an initiative of Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, former chair of the Southern Legislative Conference of The Council of State Governments, who spearheaded food packaging events at SLC annual meetings. When Norris came to the national office as national chair in 2014, CSG adopted the tradition at their meetings. CSG members have packed more than 600,000 meals since the tradition began in 2011.

“We are continuing our march toward a million meals,” said Norris. “The need is so great and CSG is so well situated to meet that need through community engagement like this.”

Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, who has made addressing food insecurity in Virginia a priority through the No Kid Hungry Campaign, joined the event to thank participants for their efforts.

“We know that child hunger is a national problem; it is a problem in all our states,” said McAuliffe. “This is not a partisan issue. It is an issue that challenges all of us. It doesn’t have to be this way in our great country.”

Nebraska state Sen. Beau McCoy, 2016 CSG national chair, and Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, 2014 CSG national chair, joined by Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, present a donation to Virginia Peninsula Foodbank’s CEO Karen Joyner during the CSG Campaign Against Hunger service project at the 2016 CSG National Conference on Dec. 11.