

Texas Baptists aim to eradicate hunger by 2015

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SAN ANTONIO—Working with government and faith partners, Baptists are taking aim at hunger.

Cooperating on a policy and practical level, Baptists are gathering with fellow Christians as well as with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Texas Department of Agriculture in an effort to make Texas food secure—with every person getting three healthy meals a day—by 2015, starting with San Antonio by 2012. If successful, San Antonio would be the first food-secure city in the nation.

The cooperation, spearheaded by the [Texas Hunger Initiative](#)—an effort sponsored by the Texas Baptist [Christian Life Commission](#) and the Baylor University School of Social Work—has brought a variety of leaders across denominations to work together to provide food for the 1.4 million Texans who do not know where their next meal is coming from, including more than 250,000 children.

The hunger initiative is bringing together groups who serve the hungry in seven pilot areas to brainstorm ways local food ministries can be more effective and create other outreaches. The initiative also is bringing together groups to discuss public policy and legislation that affects hungry people and efforts to help them.

Texas Hunger Initiative Director Jeremy Everett believes San Antonio can achieve food security in the next two years because groups are used to working together and already have achieved much. Baptists are strongly represented in the effort, with local leaders including [San Antonio Baptist Association](#) Director of Missions Charles Price participating in the first

citywide gathering of food ministry leaders. Redeeming Christian Church, a congregation affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, fed more than 40,000 people last year by itself.

The goal of ending hunger may seem like a daunting task, Everett said, but grand tasks have been undertaken throughout American history, particularly the struggle for civil rights. Large goals can be accomplished if people are committed to the task.

“Today really begins a journey that you are going to work together for the next several years until your city reaches food security,” Everett said.

The hunger initiative focuses particularly on two areas—summer feeding programs for children and increased participation in the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#).

Two million Texas children participate in the free or reduced school lunch program during the school year. Only 9 percent of children are enrolled in a summer feeding program, meaning many of them may be going hungry.