

AN ACT concerning hunger.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Commission to End Hunger Act.

Section 5. Legislative findings. It is the goal of the State of Illinois that no man, woman, or child should ever be faced with hunger.

Despite being one of the wealthiest nations and the largest agricultural producer in the world, the United States is a country with pervasive hunger and Illinois is not exempt from this reality. In Illinois, hunger is less a story of starvation and more one of hunger and access, of individuals and families simply not having access to enough healthful, nutritious food. The number of families facing food emergencies is growing. Requests for emergency food assistance grew by an estimated 30 percent nationally in 2009 alone.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which defines food security as "access by all people at all times to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life," also estimates that between 2006 and 2008, 11.1 percent of Illinois households experienced food insecurity. Nearly 1/3 of those households were considered very food insecure. It is important

to note that the USDA numbers only reflect what was taking place between 2006 and 2008. Since then, the economy has significantly weakened, and there are likely many more people struggling with hunger than what the USDA report states.

When examining hunger in the region, participation levels in existing nutrition programs are an indicator of the level of need in the community. However, many nutrition programs are underutilized by the families and individuals that need them, so while examining program participation data, it is important to keep in mind that this likely underrepresents the true need in the community. It is estimated that only 79 percent of Illinoisans eligible for SNAP benefits were enrolled as of 2006.

The School Breakfast Program (School Breakfast) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), two child-focused programs, are also underutilized. Illinois currently ranks 51st amongst all states and the District of Columbia in enrollment for free and reduced priced school breakfasts. Illinois earned this bottom ranking because less than 33% of eligible children (those who receive free and reduced lunch) are also accessing School Breakfast. According to a report released by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), increasing School Breakfast participation in Illinois to just 60% would yield an additional \$42,655,714 in federal funds and would result in 189,668 more children receiving breakfast everyday. Likewise, increasing the participation rate in the

SFSP to just 40% would result in Illinois receiving over \$9.2 million in additional federal funds and in thousands of children continuing to have access to breakfast or lunch, or both, during the summer months.

Opportunities exist in several areas to eliminate barriers preventing individuals from accessing quality, nutritious food and achieving food security. Promoting health and wellness through nutrition education, coordination of services, and access to nutrition programs is one such opportunity that can help Illinois residents achieve food security. Establishing a statewide Commission to End Hunger will guarantee cross-collaboration among government entities and community partners and is essential to eliminating these barriers and ensuring that no man, woman, or child in Illinois should ever be faced with hunger.

Section 10. Creation of the Commission to End Hunger.

(a) The General Assembly authorizes the Department of Human Services to create the Commission to End Hunger.

(b) The purpose of the Commission to End Hunger shall be to develop an action plan every 2 years, review the progress of this plan, and ensure cross-collaboration among government entities and community partners toward the goal of ending hunger in Illinois.

(c) Key duties of the Commission shall include the following:

(1) Identify all funding sources which can be used toward improving nutrition and ending hunger, for which the State has administrative control, and develop recommendations for future funding.

(2) Identify barriers to access and develop sustainable policies and programs to address those barriers.

(3) Promote and facilitate public-private partnerships.

(4) Develop benchmarks and set goals to indicate success.

(5) Report to the Governor and the General Assembly on progress.

Section 15. Members. The Commission to End Hunger shall be composed of no more than 21 voting members including 2 members of the Illinois House of Representatives, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one appointed by the House Minority Leader; 2 members of the Illinois Senate, one appointed by the Senate President and one appointed by the Senate Minority Leader; one representative of the Office of the Governor appointed by the Governor; one representative of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor appointed by the Lieutenant Governor; and 15 public members, who shall be appointed by the Governor.

The public members shall include 2 representatives of food banks; 2 representatives from other community food assistance

programs; a representative of a statewide organization focused on responding to hunger; a representative from an anti-poverty organization; a representative of an organization that serves or advocates for children and youth; a representative of an organization that serves or advocates for older adults; a representative of an organization that advocates for people who are homeless; a representative of an organization that serves or advocates for persons with disabilities; a representative of an organization that advocates for immigrants; a representative of a municipal or county government; a representative of a township government; and 2 at-large members. The appointed members shall reflect the racial, gender, and geographic diversity of the State and shall include representation from regions of the State.

The following officials shall serve as ex-officio members: the Secretary of Human Services or his or her designee; the State Superintendent of Education or his or her designee; the Director of Healthcare and Family Services or his or her designee; the Director of Children and Family Services or his or her designee; the Director of Aging or his or her designee; and the Director of Agriculture or his or her designee. The African-American Family Commission and the Latino Family Commission shall each designate a liaison to serve ex-officio on the Commission.

Members shall serve without compensation and are responsible for the cost of all reasonable and necessary travel

expenses connected to Commission business, as the State of Illinois will not reimburse Commission members for these costs.

Commission members shall be appointed within 60 days after the effective date of this Act. The Commission shall hold their initial meetings within 60 days after at least 50% of the members have been appointed.

The representative of the Office of the Governor and a representative of a food bank shall serve as co-chairs of the Commission.

At the first meeting of the Commission, the members shall select a 5-person Steering Committee that includes the co-chairs.

The Commission may establish committees that address specific issues or populations and may appoint individuals with relevant expertise who are not appointed members of the Commission to serve on committees as needed.

The Office of the Governor, or a designee of the Governor's choosing, shall provide guidance to the Commission. Under the leadership of the Office of the Governor, subject to appropriation, the Department of Human Services shall also provide leadership to support the Commission. The Department of Human Services and the State of Illinois shall not incur any costs as a result of the creation of the Commission to End Hunger as the coordination of meetings, report preparation, and other related duties will be completed by a representative of a food bank that is serving as a co-chair of the Commission.

Section 20. Meetings and reports. The full Commission shall meet at least twice annually. The Steering Committee shall meet at least quarterly.

The Commission shall issue an interim report on its activities and recommendations to the constitutional officers and to the General Assembly no later than 12 months from the date of the first Commission meeting.

A work plan shall be adopted by the Commission not later than 12 months from the date of the first Commission meeting and sent to the constitutional officers and to the General Assembly. Following the adoption of the initial work plan, the Commission shall continue to meet and issue annual reports regarding progress on the goal of ending hunger in Illinois and on the implementation of the work plan.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.