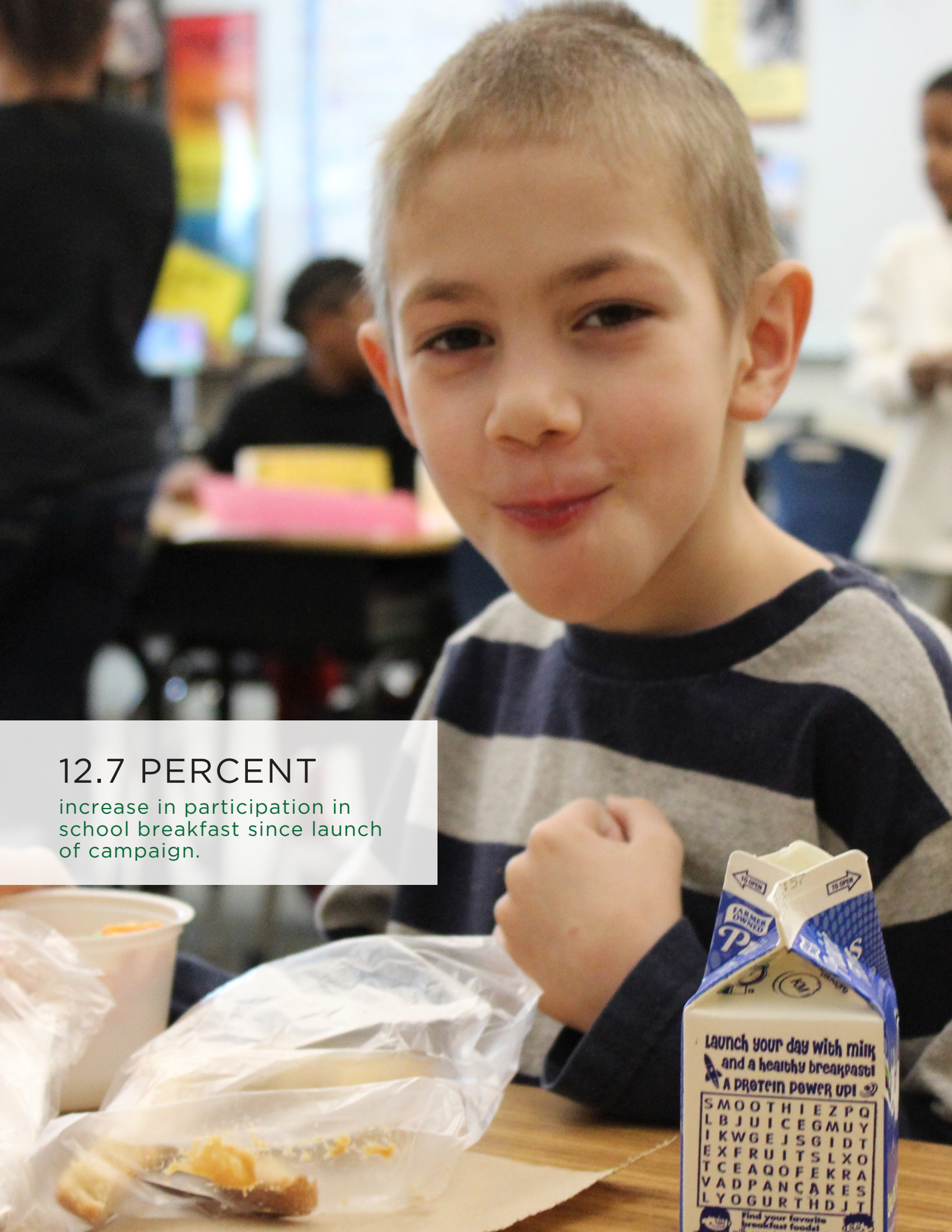
2015 REPORT

ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER



12.7 PERCENT

increase in participation in school breakfast since launch of campaign.

ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER

GOVERNOR RAUNER, CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

Food is an uncertainty for nearly 2 million people in Illinois. Simply accessing enough food to eat is a daily challenge for men, women and children in each of our 102 counties. There are many reasons why someone might be hungry: unemployment, health issues, rising costs and limited availability of quality food. But everyone in Illinois deserves access to quality meals, every day.

The quadrennial Hunger in America 2014 study showed that food banks serve 1,982,400 Illinoisans annually. The stress of hunger has far-reaching effects related to health outcomes, economic productivity and, for children, academic performance and future career earnings. It is essential that we continue to respond to the daily crisis of hunger in the state while empowering individuals and creating opportunities for self-sufficiency.

While much work remains, we are encouraged by the progress we have seen, in particular in addressing child hunger. In 2009, the year before the Commission's enactment, Illinois ranked 51st in School Breakfast Program enrollment among all states and the District of Columbia. Because of cross-sector collaboration facilitated by the Commission, Illinois now ranks 40th. In 2013, Illinois provided 5,427,555 meals to children at risk of hunger in summer. Last year, Illinois provided 6,432,806 meals, one of the largest annual increases in the nation.

We stand at a moment when the opportunity exists to create partnerships and leverage existing capabilities to measurably reduce hunger in Illinois. Through creative solutions and the energy of committed partners, the Commission offers hope for a future without hunger. In too many rankings, Illinois trails the rest of the nation. But in providing food—addressing the most basic need for our most vulnerable citizens—Illinois can lead the rest of the nation by showing its compassion and fortitude. We look forward to collaborating with you on solutions in the year ahead.

Janice Glenn
Co-Chair
Director of Diversity and Recruitment
Office of Governor Bruce Rauner

Kate Maehr
Co-Chair
Executive Director & CEO
Greater Chicago Food Depository

September 2015

WHAT IS THE COMMISSION TO END HUNGER?

The Illinois General Assembly passed the Commission to End Hunger Act in 2010. The legislation's first sentence states: "It is the goal of the State of Illinois that no man, woman, or child should ever be faced with hunger." Five years later, the Commission has made measurable progress, but much work remains in ensuring food security for every Illinoisan. The Commission is a collaboration of the private organizations and state agencies that address hunger year-round and is uniquely positioned in that it garners bipartisan support and requires no direct funding from the state. The Governor appoints public members of the Commission while *ex officio* members are drawn from key state agencies.

The four overarching goals of the Commission are:

Goal 1: End hunger by improving access to quality, nutritious food among all Illinois populations.

Goal 2: Build needed state infrastructure and foster communication and collaboration among government programs and agencies.

Goal 3: Create public awareness of hunger and the solutions.

Goal 4: Build and expand collaborative partnerships between the public and private sector to implement Commission goals.

HUNGER IN ILLINOIS

Poverty, and in turn, hunger, have grown significantly in Illinois and across the United States during the past two decades. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 10.7 percent of Illinoisans lived in poverty in 1999. In 2013, 14.7 percent of Illinois residents lived in poverty. Economic forces have left many people out of work and unable to afford basic necessities, including food. The recession has placed an exacting burden on groups long on the margins of society, including older adults, veterans and people with disabilities. The Commission to End Hunger, and the thousands of organizations across Illinois that make up our safety net, are united in the belief that everyone deserves a nutritious meal.

In September 2014, Feeding America released Hunger in America, a quadrennial study that provides a demographic profile of people seeking food assistance and an in-depth analysis of the charitable response. The study provided the following data about Illinois[1].

3,072 Partner agencies

66,400 Food bank volunteers

232,000 Unique clients served in a typical week

64% Percentage of programs reporting an increase in volume in clients

45% Percentage of client households including one child under age 18

31% Percentage of client households including one older adult age 60 and over

18% Percentage of client households including one member who has served or is serving in the U.S. Armed Forces

61% Percentage of client households who include one member who has worked for pay in the past 12 months

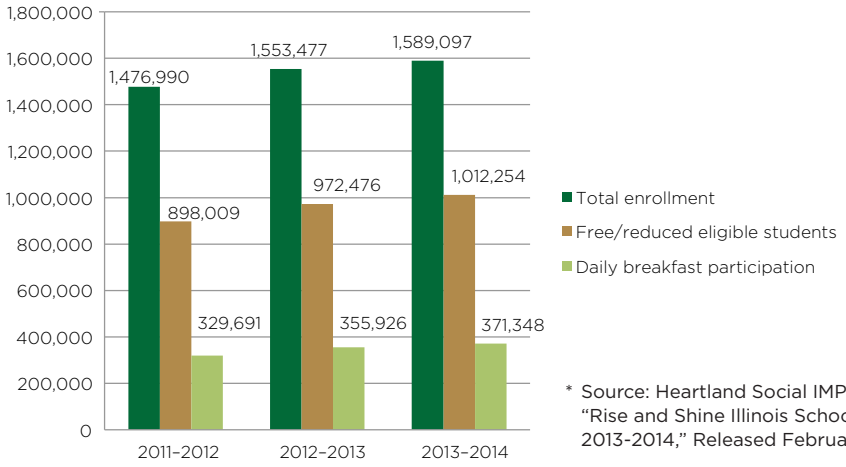
1. Feeding America, "Hunger in America 2014 – Illinois report," http://feedingillinois.org/media/pdf/2014-HIA-Illinois-full-report-2.pdf

SPOTLIGHT: GENERATING MOMENTUM TOWARD ENDING CHILD HUNGER

Three years ago, a group of public and private organizations made school breakfast a priority as a primary hunger-fighting strategy. Breakfast is a proven method for addressing child hunger, and a large-scale breakfast advocacy effort was needed in Illinois. The No Kid Hungry Working Group of the Commission to End Hunger identified funding from the JB and MK Pritzker Family Foundation, and a consortium of partners volunteered their help. Working closely with the Illinois State Board of Education, the "school breakfast project" launched in early 2013. In its first year, with a team of newly minted breakfast coordinators reaching out across the state, the project provided 10 grants to schools to help build infrastructure to provide more breakfast. Midway through its second year, the Rise and Shine Illinois campaign launched with the tagline "Hunger Makes School Harder," underscoring why the school breakfast gap is a critical issue for children. The campaign began to generate buzz in the education sector, and 38 grants were provided in Year 2. While school breakfast has inched upward in Illinois in recent years, change does not come swiftly with 863 local school districts, each with their own sets of procedures and approaches to school meals. Though the work is far from done—446,000 low-income Illinois children still do not receive school breakfast—the foundation is in place to ensure no child goes hungry. In the 2015-2016 school year, Rise and Shine Illinois plans to award $150,000 in grants so more schools can serve breakfast.

RISE & SHINE ILLINOIS

ENROLLMENT, STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE/REDUCED MEALS, STUDENTS' DAILY BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION IN ILLINOIS*



* Source: Heartland Social IMPACT Research Center, "Rise and Shine Illinois School Breakfast Report 2013-2014," Released February 2015.

To get involved, visit riseandshineillinois.org

BENEFITS ACCESS WORKING GROUP

Co-Chairs: Dan Lesser, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law;
Kathy Chan, Cook County Health and Hospitals System

The Benefits Access Working Group supports policies and practices that increase access to publicly-funded food and nutrition benefits. The work group builds and expands upon the work of the former Vulnerable Adults Working Group which had focused on older adults, people with disabilities, people with chronic illnesses, people experiencing homelessness and veterans.

The Working Group priorities are to identify and advance strategies to improve access to government nutrition programs (other than those directly serving children) and maximize the benefits obtained through such programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), Older American Act meal programs and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

WORK PLAN

- Seek changes in administrative rules and procedures and, as needed, statutes, that will simplify and improve access to food and nutrition benefits.
- Elevate nutrition as a critical health issue and increase involvement of the health care delivery sector in securing nutrition benefits.
- Identify and promote innovative ideas for increasing participation in the Older Americans Act programs, the congregate and home-delivered meals programs.
- Develop strategies to promote partnerships that result in increased access to all benefits.

SB1847

Led by members of the Benefits Access Working Group, Senate Bill 1847 passed both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly in May 2015 and was signed into law in July. SB1847 will expand access to SNAP for 40,000 low-income working families in Illinois while generating $60 million in revenue for the state. Twenty-six other states have already adopted similar provisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enact SB1847 and increase Illinois' gross income limit for SNAP eligibility from 130% to 165% of the federal poverty limit.
- Create a directory of community resources for benefits enrollment and post them to the Commission website.
- Educate health care providers about the connection between food insecurity and health outcomes.
- Implement the Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents time limit and ensure SNAP recipients subject to the limit continue to access their benefits.

EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM WORKING GROUP

Co-Chairs: Karen Lehman, Fresh Taste; Michael Miller, River Bend Foodbank

The Emergency Food System Working Group explores and supports public and private policies and practices that enhance and advance food security, the access of all people at all times to the nutritious food needed for an active and healthy life. The Working Group plans to fulfill its charge by increasing the available supply of food.

WORK PLAN

- Combine immediate hunger-relief interventions involving all types of surplus foods with long-term actions for sustainable growth.
- Investigate the development of a unified strategy that engages the state's agriculture community in increasing nutritional value and product volume of food donations to Illinois hunger-relief providers.
- Launch, in FY16, a "trial run" for full-scale implementation of a statewide agricultural surplus capture program.
- Gauge grower interest in agricultural surplus.

Agricultural Surplus

Agricultural surplus programs are a twin-track strategy, providing financial benefits for growers and fresh food for people in need. Illinois' local food production system does not yet include a unified statewide program to minimize the loss of surplus and unsellable produce. Agricultural surplus programs are already an effective strategy for addressing hunger in several states, including Kentucky, Minnesota and Ohio.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop strong relationships and distribution channels with entities that have access to surplus food: farmers, distributors, retailers and foodservice providers.
- Develop an agricultural surplus trial run project focused on a few regions, such as east-central Illinois, northeast Illinois and southern Illinois.
- Identify diversified revenue sources for agricultural surplus.
- Build diverse stakeholder connections and leadership across the state.
- Develop infrastructure and capacity-building elements for growers and hunger-relief organizations.

NO KID HUNGRY WORKING GROUP

Co-Chairs: Janine Hill, EverThrive Illinois; Tom Browning, Illinois Action for Children

The No Kid Hungry Working Group supports strategies that address child hunger year-round through school- and community-based programs. The work group seeks to expand the number of Illinois children utilizing the National School Breakfast Program, the Summer Foodservice Program (SFSP) and the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP). The work group advocates for policies that affect the nutritional needs of children while providing targeted communications outreach to families in need.

WORK PLAN

- Foster no-wrong-door partnerships and policies that expand food access for children.
- Seek sustainable funding streams for expansion of child nutrition programs.
- Increase school breakfast, summer meal and at-risk, after-school participation.
- Lead state efforts in advocating for child nutrition programs.

Breakfast legislation

Most Illinois schools are serving breakfast but are not maximizing their potential by utilizing alternative service models. A breakfast resolution, passed by the Illinois House and Senate in May 2015, directs the No Kid Hungry Working Group to provide a report to the General Assembly showing the impact of providing alternative breakfast models at all schools, in particular those with a 70 percent or higher free and reduced-price eligibility rate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage all potential Illinois schools to utilize the Community Eligibility Provision that enables schools in high-poverty areas to offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge.
- Maximize the number of “open” summer meals sites in the state by working with school districts, park districts and libraries.
- Advocate for the signing of the federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization in fall 2015, including support for CACFP, the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, SFSP and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mary Ellen Abbott, Illinois Hunger Coalition
State Rep. Patricia Bellock (R)
Leah Bradford, Kraft Foods
Brian Colgan, Office of Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti
Betsy Creamer, Illinois Department on Aging
Brendan Dailey, Illinois Department of Natural Resources
John Chaney Egan, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
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Esperanza Gonzalez, Illinois Migrant Council
Marla Goodwin, Jeremiah's Food Pantry
Angel Gutierrez, Catholic Charities
Mark Haller, Illinois State Board of Education
State Sen. Don Harmon (D)
State Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez (D)
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Mark Ishaug, Thresholds
Diane Grigsby Jackson, Illinois Department of Human Services
Ahlam Jbara, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Barbara Karacic, Beacon Place Inc.
Karen Lehman, Fresh Taste
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Bridgett Stone, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services
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Gary Tomlin

*-Commission Co-Chair

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*-Working Group Co-Chair

300 PEOPLE

attended the 2015
Hunger Summit in Springfield.

ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER

Report prepared by Greater Chicago Food Depository with input from partners statewide.

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