

Steering Committee Minutes

Thursday, March 17, 2016

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Conference Call

Attendance: Kate Maehr, Janice Glenn, Janine Hill, Mike Miller, Dan Lesser, Bob Dolgan (GCFD)

I. Minutes from last meeting and introductions

- Reviewed and approved

II. New appointments and designees (Janice Glenn)

- Julie Yurko of Northern Illinois Food Bank has been officially appointed to an at-large vacancy.
- Becky Rossman of Neighborhood House in stated that she may be leaving her role at Neighborhood House and changing industries. She suggested that it may not be the best time to appoint her to the vacancy for “community food assistance program.”
- Grant Hammer has been named designee for Illinois Department of Agriculture.
- Mark Ishaug of Thresholds may be stepping down from the Commission “provider of services for people with disabilities” appointment.
- Gary Tomlin of Knox County has stepped down from the “representative of local government” appointment.
- We will be seeking appointments to these roles and request that the Steering Committee share ideas.

III. 2016 Hunger Summit update (Bob Dolgan)

- Approximately 100 attendees have registered, with goal of 300
- Plenary speakers include Diana Aviv, CEO, Feeding America, and tentatively Mindy Segal, Executive Chef/Owner, Hot Chocolate.
- Steering Committee members can send any additional invitees to Bob and he will add them to the email list.

IV. Statewide dashboard (Bob Dolgan)

- The charge coming out of the last Steering Committee call was to ask work groups about their thoughts on a statewide dashboard that shows food bank pounds, food insecurity rates and other measurements. Due to revised work group schedules, the dashboard conversation did not happen in time for the Steering Committee call. Emergency Food System will be discussing the concept in coming weeks. Mike Miller stated that the project relates to the ongoing conversation about clarity between the Commission and Feeding Illinois and the dashboard be coordinated with Feeding Illinois so that we have one dashboard rather than two.

V. Work Group action items

a. Benefits Access – Dan Lesser reported on SNAP education and training (E&T), which is regularly required of some SNAP recipients. E&T relates to the Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDS) waiver which likely will expire in Illinois at the end of the year. In the meantime, the Benefits Access Working Group recently learned from Illinois Department of Human Services that 40,000 people had been “called in” since November, to register at a site at 59th and Ashland. The “call-in” resulted in 32,000 no-shows, and sanctions, meaning removal of benefits, for 13,000 individuals. The Benefits Access Work Group is concerned about the “call-in” and the way it was communicated to recipients. A meeting with Director Diane Grigsby-Jackson has been scheduled for March 31 to discuss the issue.

It’s likely that Illinois will not qualify for the ABAWDS waiver next year, so Shriver Center and Heartland are exploring receiving a sub-state waiver for a smaller geography like Cook County. Kate Maehr requested that the sub-state waiver strategy be coordinated among the Work Group members including Illinois Hunger Coalition. Also, Lisa Hamler-Fugitt of the Ohio Food Bank Association may have insight into this issue since ABAWDS already has affected Ohio.

Dan also reported on state funding for home-delivered meals for the elderly. It’s known that some agencies have had to reduce meal deliveries, but it’s believed state funding is now flowing. The Benefits Access Working Group continues to monitor the situation.

b. Emergency Food System – Mike Miller provided an update on the agricultural surplus concept. The Work Group spoke earlier in the week about identifying next steps. The key questions the group has are about supply: if there is enough specialty agriculture, and surplus, in Illinois to support a program. The Work Group discussed trying for funding for a proof of concept, but believes that the best next step is to study feasibility on the supply side and whether there is enough food for a program. Kate stated that the initial study be conducted by a land grant university, for example University of Illinois and Craig Gundersen.

Mike provided an update on the Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger (ISAH) pilot that took place in northwest Illinois this past fall. The pilot found that hunters were more interested in donating through Farmers and Hunters Feed the Hungry rather than ISAH. The Work Group also learned that Northern Illinois Food Bank received 60,000 pounds of meat from ISAH, so there appears to be varying levels of successful implementation in the state.

The work group also has discussed collective purchasing as a concept, and food sourcing in collaboration with the state association.

c. No Kid Hungry – Janine Hill reported on SB2393, which was introduced by Senator Don Harmon and would update the School Breakfast and Lunch Act with a requirement to serve Breakfast After the Bell, including Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab N Go, in low-income schools. The bill is moving to the Senate Education Committee and likely will be heard in the first week of April. The Work Group is reaching out to education sector groups to make sure they are on board.

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The federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization passed out of the Senate Education Committee in January. The bill aligns with Work Group objectives including summer EBT, which offers a grocery store credit, and allows for the off-site consumption of meals. The next step is to go to the full Senate. Mike Miller added that there is good data available from Feeding America's Child Hunger Corps, and Bob will be following up to share that data.

The next meeting of the NKH Work Group will be April 7 at 1 p.m. at EverThrive Illinois.

VI. Next full Commission meeting: May 10, 2016 (Springfield), 10 a.m. (before Hunger Summit), at Wyndham (formerly Hilton)

VII. Next Steering Committee conference call: June 16, 2016, 1:30 p.m.