

Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2013: 9:00 am – 11:00 am

I. Welcome and Administrative Items – Cristal Thomas, Co-Chair

- Attendance: In Chicago: Cristal Thomas, Kate Maehr, Frank Finnegan, Doug Schenkelberg, Mark Ishaug, Dan Lesser, Janine Lewis, Kerry Lofton, Juanita Irizarry, Caronina Grimble, Michelle Saddler, Dawn Melchiorre, Karen Lehman, Angel Gutierrez, Suzy Lee, Kim Drew, Steven McCullough, Peter Vina, Shelia Chalmers-Currin, Elizabeth Kenefick
On Phone: Mark Haller, Marla Goodwin, Mary Ellen Abbott, Terry Solomon, Betsy Creamer, Gary Tomlin
- Approve Minutes from Last Meeting – Janine Lewis motioned to approve the minutes and Frank Finnegan second.
- Membership – Cristal Thomas introduced two newly appointed members: Karen Lehman from Fresh Taste and Angel Gutierrez from Catholic Charities. Dawn Melchiorre will follow up with each to provide more detail of the work to date.

II. Updates - Cristal Thomas, Co-Chair

- Hunger Summit – Cristal Thomas thanked everyone for their participation and support of the Hunger Summit especially the Chicago Community Trust for their financial support that made the Summit possible. Dawn Melchiorre informed the member that 242 people attended with representation from around the state. The evaluation from the day indicates the participants found the Summit educational and motivated them to become more involved in hunger issues.
- No Kid Hungry Funding Update – Kate Maehr provided background of the funding for the NKH campaign beginning with the SOS investment and the proposal the Greater Chicago Food Depository presented to a private funder around school breakfast. We now have confirmation the private funder will fully-fund the School Breakfast Project. The hope is to use these investments to leverage more resources and get more funders engaged.
- Underserved Populations, Marla Goodwin gave the updates for the committee :
 - Working with the Lt. Governor's office, the Illinois Farmers Markets Association, Experimental Station, and the food banks of Illinois, the work group developed a survey for farmers' markets members and food pantry agency to obtain information concerning partnership between farmers markets and food banks/pantries. The information gleaned from the survey will aid in developing a toolkit to aid in building collaborations.

- Members of the Underserved Populations work group served as panelists at the Illinois Farmers Market Association conference to forge new partnerships.
 - A volunteer researcher worked to develop a comprehensive research paper examining agricultural surplus programs implemented in other states along with recommendations for developing a program in Illinois. Agricultural surplus programs provide farmers with necessary resources to glean their fields of products unwanted in the commercial marketplace for use within the private hunger response network within Illinois.
 - Experimental Station and the Lt. Governor's office presented to the work group about the using EBT cards at farmers markets throughout the state as well as the Double Value Coupons. The work group expressed interest in learning more about the programs and how the Commission could support these outreach efforts to get more markets involved and more SNAP clients access to the Double Value Coupons.
- Vulnerable Adults, Dan Lesser provided the update:
 - Thanks to interns we were able build a data base to help identify the distinct food insecurity challenges of each vulnerable population identified. Consulted with experts and practitioners from the social service network serving vulnerable adults to gain their insight into the perceptions of SNAP amongst the populations they serve including the circumstances that limit a population's ability to apply for and utilize SNAP benefits. A scan of health professional organizations revealed that little training or awareness around the issues of food insecurity.
 - Researched possible SNAP program options and waivers that could be implemented to increase access to SNAP for vulnerable populations and increase efficiency. We hope to meet with IDHS to review and possibly pursue those that would make the most sense for Illinois.
 - Identified a validated two-question screening tool for distribution to organizations serving vulnerable populations. Examining possible collaborations with partner organizations to promote referral services for social service organizations as well as health care providers that serve vulnerable populations. GCFD is going to be implementing a pilot program using this screening tool soon. We will stay in close contact with them as we work to develop something for the whole state. (Steven from GCFD will be there and can explain their pilot)
- No Kid Hungry, Janine Lewis provided the updates:
 - Along with our partners Midwest Dairy Council, we awarded 12 schools with Breakfast Challenge Awards in March at a ceremony and luncheon at the Governor's mansion. Governor Quinn was joined by Billy Shore of SOS to honor the winners. We had multiple districts have 2 schools win and those were the schools that have implemented the Breakfast in the Classroom models. We also launched the next challenge that will be based on the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014. We won't be awarding until fall of 2014.

- We are working with ISBE and the University of Illinois's Family Resiliency Center on a School Breakfast Report. We hope to release the report in the fall of this year. The report will examine the participation in breakfast by the district and will include poverty data as well as food insecurity where available. We want to highlight the importance of breakfast as a way to fight childhood hunger.
- Four organizations have been awarded breakfast grants and coordinators have started. Each will be targeting at least 10 districts in their area and will provide technical assistance and grants to help school implement new models.
- We are approving grants for schools on a rolling basis and are working with our FRAC and Action for Healthy Kids partners on a possible collaboration for one or two targeted districts.

Summer:

- Summer is in full swing. As we had last year, we will have the texting program, Illinois Hunger Coalition hotline, and the website: www.summermealsillinois.org. The website has a Spanish translation feature for this year. All are up and running. Outreach materials have been sent throughout the state (I will have some copies) including all CPS students. CPS will start robo calls soon to remind parents of sites in Chicago.
- We gave just under \$70,000 in grants to 12 organizations thanks to SOS and the Chicago Community Trust.
- Thanks to a generous grant from CCT we will also be continuing and expanding our outreach efforts with COFI. The "parent food ambassadors" will be for 7 weeks in the Austin, Little Village and Englewood neighborhoods. The parents are very excited to continue the program. It will begin next week.
- PSA's were recorded through a donation from the Chicago Sky WNBA team. Two players recorded PSA for summer meals that will be airing throughout Illinois in English and Spanish.
- SFSP will be challenging this year as CPS late calendar along with going back to school earlier will mean we will have 7 - 10 less serving days this summer. Therefore, meals served might be down despite all of our efforts but we are working closely with all of the sponsors, ISBE and USDA to make sure we have maximum effort.

IV. Commission Report Update for 2013 – Kate Maehr, Co-Chair

We used the April 30th Hunger Summit to serve as a platform to receive comments and suggestion of the Commission's work for the last year and to update the workshops to get strategies as needed. The 2013 report provides the achievement and activities of the Commission and the work groups. A hardcopy will not be printed but available via PDF.

V. Farm Bill Update – Doug Schenkelberg, GCFD

The US Senate passed their version of the Farm Bill by a vote of 66-27 that included a \$4.5 billion cut to SNAP through the link between Heat and Eat. Illinois does not use this option so the cut would not hurt Illinois clients. House version should be on the floor soon and it is expected that they will cut \$20.5 billion from SNAP over 10 years including eliminating categorical edibility. This provision would affect Illinois in that we would have to reinstate the \$2,000 asset test. And, it would eliminate the automatic link between free and reduced price lunch edibility with SNAP. Feeding America estimates that the House cuts to SNAP would mean 8 billion meals less meals in 10 year the equivalent of the whole Feeding America shutting down for over 2.5 years. Members were encouraged to contact Doug for ways to get involved in advocacy.

VI. TEFAP Update – Doug Schenkelberg, GCFD

IDHS and the food banks worked together to streamline the process of monitoring for pantries and food banks to be in line with Feeding American while upholding USDA standards. Their efforts will provide more efficiency and a savings that will be passed along to the food banks.

There is also an idea to pilot a project to collect client signatures through an electronic system similar to the Ohio program. IDHS and GCFS are working on the protocols for a pilot. The Commission will be kept up to date.

V. Food Stamp Staggering - Dan Lesser, Shriver Center

The Illinois Retail Merchant Association proposed legislation during the legislative session that would require IDHS stagger SNAP distribution throughout the month rather than the first 10 days. This is a result of IDHS's implementation of a new electronic eligibility system rolling out in October. Due to that system, Illinois can only have one fiscal month per month. IDHS had been staggering over the past 3 years but the new system will force IDHS to stagger only in the first part of the month (10 days); it is the 27% that were in the last part of the month that will now have to be moved into the first part of the month. People tend to cycle on and of the program so this could affect families a few different times. (see attachments for more details)

IDHS and a number of advocates opposed the IRMA legislation. Instead a resolution was passed that sets up a task force to look at the issue and make recommendations by October 1st. Everyone will be at the table including Deloitte (software providers) and USDA.

Retailers have their own chart with a smaller chain that shows opposite the whole SNAP benefit chart so it seems the problem could be local within particular regions. Kate mentioned that maybe that is an opportunity for those groups with strong ties to retailers in specific problem areas could help in outreach and problem solving within specific communities.

Dan will stay in contact with Dawn to update the Commission.

VI. New Business/ Next Meeting – Cristal Thomas, Co-Chair

Secretary Saddler announced that IDHS will be issuing Disaster SNAP for 33 counties for flood victims from the April rains. They are working with Governor's office and other public entities to make sure this process runs smoothly. Thirty offices will be open and dedicated to these benefits. IDHS estimates that 65,000-70,000 people could be eligible in within specific zip codes.

The next full Commission meeting will be Thursday November 14th from 9:00am -11:00am.