

## Illinois Commission to End Hunger

### Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2012 9:00 am – 11:00 am

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

- Attendance
  - Chicago: Tracy Smith, Ahlam Jbara, Kate Maehr, Cristal Thomas, Sarah Grusin, Dan Lesser, Caronina Grimble, John Cheney Egan, Michelle Saddler, Kerry Lofton, Diane Doherty, Terry Solomon, Mark Ishaug, Barb Karacic, Esperanza Gonzalez, Doug Schenkelberg, Dawn Melchiorre
  - On Phone: Laura Kessel, Mark Haller, Juanita Irizzary
- Approve Minutes from Last Meeting
  - Tracy Smith moved to adopt the minutes; Kate Maehr seconded, motion passed
- Vacancies on the Commission including No Kid Hungry Committee
  - IDHS Secretary Michelle Saddler is replacing Grace Hou representing IDHS. Caronina Grimble will be her designate when she is unable to attend meetings. Kathy Ryg has resigned as President of Voices for Illinois therefore she resigned her Commissioner position as well as chair of the No Kid Hungry Committee.

#### II. Working Group Updates - Cristal Thomas, Co-Chair

- Underserved Populations, Marla Goodwin, Chair
  - Tracy Smith presented the update for the Underserved Populations Work Group that met on June 12<sup>th</sup>. The work group reviewed their recommendations and strategies from the Commission's report and agreed upon their primary area of focus that will be used to build their action plan. The priorities are:
    1. Working with the Illinois Migrant Council to provide assistance as need to support their migrant workers study in order to better understand and document the need in our state. The IMC is currently talking to three state universities to develop and implement a study.
    2. Developing a statewide strategy to engage the agriculture community in increasing access to fresh produce ultimately to include a state investment in local food acquisition.
    3. Reaching out to local government organizations to educate local leaders on the problem of hunger and encourage them to adopt outreach practices that engage the most vulnerable citizens.
    4. Supporting the efforts of the Illinois State Bar Association and Illinois Attorney General's Office in raising funds for hunger relief through the "Lawyers Feeding Illinois" project.

- The next two meetings for the work group are scheduled for Sept 25<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 am – 12:00pm and December 11<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 am – 12:00pm. Location to be determined.
- Vulnerable Adults, Dan Lesser, Chair
  - The Vulnerable Adults Work Group met and reviewed their recommendations and narrowed down a few priorities focusing on SNAP outreach to increase participation in the program among vulnerable adults. Staff is working to obtain SNAP participation and eligibility data for the specific populations. The work groups three key areas are:
    1. Bring new partners to the table or increase the level of engagement of current partners (AARP – Drive to End Hunger) who have already identified hunger as an issue and encourage them to build the Commissions priorities and recommendations into their work.
    2. Identify the level of SNAP outreach being conducted by other social service and/or health providers. Build a connection with state associations that represent nurses, primary care physicians, social workers, caseworkers, etc to increase the exposure of the issue of hunger to these potential partners and help them develop an understanding of the Commission’s goals and recommendations.
    3. Meet with corporate partners such as the Illinois Retail Merchant Association to discuss a possible roll of the corporate sector in connecting their customers with SNAP. A similar model would be the Illinois All Kids program which partnered with pharmacies to provide information about the program.
  - Commission members agreed with the areas of focus and urge the work group to focus attention on the health providers’ networks as Illinois begins to implement integrated care model to the states health delivery system.
  - The next two meetings for the work group are September 17<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 – 4:00 and December 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 – 4:00 at Shriver Center.
- No Kid Hungry (formerly Children and Family at Risk), Dawn Melchiorre in lieu of chair
  - The No Kid Hungry Campaign – the first recommendation from the Commission’s report - was launched with the report’s release on March 14<sup>th</sup> thanks to the partnership with Share Our Strength. The work group recommended the year one priorities for NKH: increasing participation in the School Breakfast Program and Summer Food Service Program as ways to ending hunger in Illinois children. Because of NKH chair Kathy Ryg’s resignation from Voices for Illinois Children, Dawn Melchiorre (NKH campaign manager) gave the update of current activities for the work group.
  - a. School Breakfast - Increasing participation in school breakfast is a core strategy for NKH. Illinois is currently 44<sup>th</sup> in the country in participation leaving over \$38 million in federal dollars unclaimed. The goal for year one is to increase participation by five percent and NKH has implemented a few activities to reach the goal including:

1. Two breakfast summits (conducted April 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>) bringing together over 100 individuals including school superintendents, school nurses, food service providers, and advocates from around the state to hear speakers from national organizations and ISBE. Participants heard about the alternative breakfast models (Breakfast in the Classroom and Grab and Go) to increase participation as well as an Illinois waiver program called the Community Eligibility Option (CEO) that can help schools provide universal breakfast.
  2. Launch of the Illinois Breakfast Challenge with partners ISBE and the Midwest Dairy Council to challenge schools and districts to improve breakfast participation. Cash prizes for top performing schools will be handed out in March of 2013.
  3. Share Our Strength will be providing grant dollars to support schools to implement alternative breakfast models to increase participation. Grants will range from \$1,000 - \$5,000 and will be awarded in August. More information can be found on the NKH website.
- b. Summer Food Service Program – The year one priority is to increase participation by five percent; currently fewer than 15 percent of eligible children participate in the program that participates in school lunch. The focus of the summer food work is outreach to let families inform them of the program existence through a variety of communications platforms and grants to organization to expand programming.
1. Website – The Chicago Community Trust provided resources to create a summer food website that allows parents/community members to search by county and/or zip code for a program in their community. It is based in Google maps and provides the food site name, address, hours and phone number.
  2. Flyers, postcards were designed, printed and distributed to SFSP sponsors through the state.
  3. Texting platform- Share Our Strength created a texting platform for all of the NKH states. In Illinois, an individual can text FoodIL to 877877 and enter their address and receive a text with the three closest food sites to their address.
  4. Door to Door Outreach – NKH has engaged COFI (Community Organizing and Family Issues) to train “food ambassadors” to do door to door outreach in Auburn Gresham, South Shore and Humboldt Park neighborhoods of Chicago. The food ambassadors are trained parent/community leaders from those areas who will engage parents about summer food programs.

### III. Illinois State Budget Update – Dan Lesser, Shriver Center

- Dan Lesser provided an overview of the fiscal year 2013 state budget that was passed by the General Assembly on May 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - The ISBE free breakfast and lunch program budget line was cut from \$26 million (10 cents per meal) to \$14 million (6 cents per meal). This budget line is a

mandatory budget line passed in legislation a few years ago to help schools defray the cost of administration of these programs.

- Home meals programs for seniors including home delivery and congregate sites were cut by 6 percent to \$10.75 million
  - Medicaid was cut by \$1.6 billion including the elimination of programs (Illinois Cares RX program) restrictions on eligibility, new co-payments and utilization limitations.
  - TANF was increased and the General Assembly rejected shortening the time limit from 5 years to 3.
  - Department of Children and Families Services budget was cut by \$86 million. DCFD is committed to not have the cuts impact services while honoring all consent decrees.
- Diane Doherty, Illinois Hunger Coalition, stated their hotline is getting calls from seniors confused by the letter concerning the termination of the RX program. A few others agreed and asked if there could be a broader awareness campaign to reassure seniors and provide options for care.

#### **IV. Federal Legislative Update – Farm Bill, Doug Schenkelberg, Greater Chicago Food Depository**

- Doug Schenkelberg provided an update to the federal Farm Bill which is up for reauthorization this year. The Farm Bill is authorized every five years and it includes farm subsidies along with funding for SNAP, the emergency food and commodity food program, and other smaller programs related to farmers markets. The House and Senate are working on separate bills that will need to be reconciled before the bill reaches President Obama.
  - The Senate bill passed 64 -35 and included a \$4.5 billion cut to SNAP related to the SNAP Heat and Eat program, (Illinois has not taken up the Heat and Eat program) limits college students access to SNAP, and includes a provision around lottery winners. The Senate bill is thought to be the best case scenario for SNAP.
  - The House version of the bill will be released around July 4<sup>th</sup> and is expected to contain more drastic cuts to SNAP in the range of \$14 – 15 billion. This does not include any amendments to try to restrict access or change eligibility requirements. It is important for members to reach out to their representatives to ask them to protect SNAP from harmful cuts.

#### **VI. New Business – Partner Updates, Kate Maehr, Co-Chair**

- Commissioners were encouraged to share any updates with the committee:
  - Barb Karacic of Holy Family Food Pantry shared participation rates for her summer food program. Three years ago daily participation was 45 children; this week 215 children participated in one day. The need continues to increase each year.
  - Kate Maehr shared a Sun-Times editorial taking a strong position on not cutting SNAP. The editorial was the result of an editorial board meeting from the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Additionally, the Food Depositories annual hunger walk occurred on Saturday June 23<sup>rd</sup> with almost 12,000 walkers and 1200 personal statements from individuals.

- Mark Ishaug mentioned the NY Times article regarding attitudes toward SNAP and Medicaid among those who would qualify but won't use the programs.
- Laura Kessel, Lt. Governor's office, notified everyone that Illinois was granted \$182,000 to implement wireless access for EBT cards at farmers markets in select areas throughout the state. The Lt. Governor's office is currently looking for farmers markets that meet the requirements so she asked that Commissioners pass the information along to their contacts.
- Ahlam Jbara, Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, announced the Council will be opening a food pantry and are looking for other areas considered food deserts to open more that their membership will support.

#### **V. Next Meeting Date – November**

- The next meeting for the full Commission meeting will be November 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 – 11:30am