



Children and Families at Risk Working Group

Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2011, 10:00am – 12:00pm

Voices for Illinois Children, Suite 1490, 208 South La Salle Street, Chicago, IL

Action Items:

1. Voice for Illinois Children will share the ICAM model with Mark Haller.
2. Voice for Illinois Children will share progress of Human Service Commission with the working group.
3. Carissa Gomez will send Listening Tour findings to Dawn Melchiorre to distribute to the Commission on Budgeting for Results.
4. Dawn Melchiorre and Carissa Gomez will coordinate with Nicole Robinson for Kraft Foods breakfast pilot program visit.

Minutes:

1. **Attendance:** *Tom Browning (Illinois Action for Children), Carissa Gomez (Feeding Illinois), Mark Haller (ISBE), Barb Karacic (Holy Family Food Pantry), Dawn Melchiorre (Voices for Illinois Children), Julie Mikkelson (USDA), Barbara Rose (Angelic Organics), Kathy Ryg (Voices for Illinois Children)*

On the phone: *Allison Forrer (Feeding Illinois), Nicole Robinson (Kraft Foods Foundation), Tracy Smith (Feeding Illinois)*

Absent: *Kate Maehr (Greater Chicago Food Depository), John Egan (DCFS), Cristal Thomas (Governor's Office), Melissa Roy (Share Our Strength), Penny Roth (IDHS)*

2. **Illinois State Board of Education Program Administration: Mark Haller**

- **Purpose:** To better understand the coordination of child nutrition programs that are overseen by the USDA and administered through ISBE.
- **Programs:**
 - National School Lunch Program
 - School Breakfast Program
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
 - Food Distribution/USDA Commodity Program
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program (administers child portion to centers in IL)
 - Family Daycare Homes (licensed parents who run in home daycare)

- Summer Food Service Program
- **Data Uses/Collection:**
 - **Direct Certification:**
 - School lunch uses TANF data and receives data monthly from DHS on children 0-18 and if they qualify. Uses it to immediately sign people up to receive benefits. Then turns that data over to schools to automatically qualify them for free/reduced lunch.
 - Schools are required by Oct. 15 to provide enrollment data. Currently just for public schools.
 - Roughly 750,000 children in their file. Matches that against data from school and puts it into a database that schools can directly draw from. The system is actually working quite well. Provides good data but now the issue is getting school's to utilize that data.
 - Schools are now required to use data system three times a year even though data is uploaded monthly.
 - **Community Eligibility Option (CEO):**
 - One of three states that utilizes it. Takes direct certification data for schools with 40% and directly certifies them to receive free breakfast and lunch. Schools still has to claim them. About 64% will be claimed free. If your school is 62.5% you will auto qualify for 100% free breakfast/lunch.
 - About 200 schools are currently utilizing it. New program that was rolled out over the summer and many couldn't adjust to it in time for this school year.
 - This simplifies the process by removing the application for families to fill out.
 - Benefits families that are on the fringe who typically might not qualify for free/reduced price lunch.
 - Use free and reduced lunch to figure out waivers. This data is critical for other program administrations. CEO will eventually be available to all states. So still need to find a mechanism to collect this data. At some point families will have to fill out a supplemental income form so socio-economic data can be collected.
 - Districts are struggling with this new data system. USDA is only allowing verification of 3% of applications through f/r lunch.

- There are currently no incentive programs from the state to utilize programs. New system though is an incentive to schools to reduce direct applications.

- **Other Issues:**

- Currently there is not a direct connection between utilizing free/reduced and then connecting families to SNAP, etc. CPS does this fairly well.
- COE can be used for summer food service program (40%). Unless closed enrolled site – needs at least 50%.
- Falling through the cracks are kids in the summer whose community might not qualify as an open site. CEO helps to pick up who those families are.
- Levels of data utilized: ISBE, Census, Individual applications
- Could there be coordination between ISBE and DHS in regards to both data and administration?

- **CACFP Program/Child Care Funds:**

- Doing direct certification for childcare centers. Allow access to the data based on the children they have enrolled (operates the same way private schools do). Benefit doesn't necessarily go to the family but benefits the child's nutrition. Can be included for four meals
- Two types of facilities may use the fund:
 - Licensed by DCFS
 - Non-Licensed (license exempt homes):
 - State will help to subsidize the cost of childcare for up to three children that are not their own kids.
 - 17,000 cases in Cook County, only about 300-350 are on the child and adult care food program. Staff checks in on these sites three times a year. Available but very difficult to provide to very low income communities because of the other issues that are involved (relocation, drugs, etc.)
 - No data collected on families.
 - Benefits cannot be administered to locations where the children live in the same home as the caregiver.
 - Issue is people drop on and off the program constantly.

- One of the challenges is figuring out how to keep people on the books even when there are missteps.

3. Possible Areas for Recommendations

- Need better coordination between agencies and program administration
- Need to think about integrating services so that families are served, not just a certain population
- Congregant sites do not work in rural communities
- Issues with schools that are closed during holidays and summer that can no longer be a site for serving meals.
 - i. USDA is looking at a backpack and mobile programs as demonstrations
 - ii. Demonstration projects:
 1. State must first apply to participate. Often lead to changes nationally.
 2. MI is testing EBT card provides extra benefits to feed children in the summer. Could be good for rural and below 50% communities.
 3. Backpack is being demonstrated.
 4. Transportation is more focused on bringing meals to child rather than the other way around.
 5. Ones that work will likely be included in the next reauthorization.
 6. IL Mandate: If there is summer learning and they are 40/50% they must provide meals. Issue is the education funding is cut so the feeding program disappears.
- Need better education on what it takes to apply and administer SFSP. Only get paid for meals served. This is why open programs can be so difficult to operate.
- There is a lot of potential for back packs because it works for rural areas with less transportation issues.
- Another potential thing that came up is coming up with toolkits for application processes. ISBE is working to put these together and is available to coordinate workshops for sites that would like to see them happen – one, four to six training. Could be great to connect with food bank service provider training. Maybe even do something like this at the Feeding Illinois Annual Anti-Hunger Conference.
- Make a map of service providers and how programs get administered. As well as community structures to coordinate communication (Schools, libraries)

- Need to replicate structures in other communities with coordination for SFSP and how orgs can fill in gaps.
- ISBE has mapping of summer food programs. Need to still display data in a much more usable method. Should consider ICAM model.

4. Debrief of Listening Tour events

- **Previous events:**
 - Childhood Hunger: The Private Response (Peoria)
 - The Hidden Face of Hunger (Kane and DuPage Counties)
 - Hunger in Rural Communities (Cairo)
- **Upcoming events:**
 - September 19: East Saint Louis
 - October 6: Rockford
 - October 19: Marion
 - October 28: Chicago

5. Discuss areas of focus

- Coordination of services - currently there is no collection of data for the administration of backpack programs
- Increased participation in programs
 - i. Coordination for SFSP to connect communities to the program when schools are not participating.
 - ii. Communicating about child care funding meal reimbursement.
 - iii. Need to communicate to existing networks how to navigate programs. Need more coordination.
 - iv. Need to establish a continuum of options.
- Access to program data

6. Next Steps:

- What pilot projects might need to be formed or replicated from other states?
- How do we target populations with these services?
- Better utilizing existing programs. Biggest opportunity is around high school. Kraft Foods is piloting a program with FRAC and CPS that can be visited by the working group.

- Human Service Commission is continuing to meet. They are interested in hearing what our tour has uncovered and ultimately feeding this to the Commission on Budgeting for Results (does not include any direct service providers). Send them written results of the listening tours. Voices for Illinois Children can help disseminate information – will send to Carissa.

7. Set future meeting dates: Dawn and Carissa will work with Nicole Robinson to schedule meeting based on visit to Kraft Foods breakfast pilot program in schools.