



Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, January 23, 2026

Time: 11:00-12:00 PM CT

Location: Executive Conference Room 3rd floor, 100 South Grand Avenue Springfield, IL

Virtual Meeting: Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83846093456?from=addon>

Roll Call & Quorum Check

Kate Maehr conducted roll call to establish quorum and noted Jonathan Lavin resigned.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Kate Maehr called for the approval the July 29, 2025 meeting minutes. Steve Erickson motioned to approve and Deputy Governor Grace Hou seconded the motion. The motion passed.

HR1 Impacts on SNAP

John Schomberg, IDHS, presented major changes including cost sharing reductions, expanded ABAWD work requirements, and risks to SNAP program continuity.

HR1 introduces sweeping and severe changes to SNAP, including dramatic cost-shifting from the federal government to the states and significantly expanded work requirements. Illinois may face up to \$700 million annually in new state obligations and the risk of losing federal SNAP funding entirely if these costs cannot be met. At the same time, the expansion of “able-bodied adults without dependents”—now including individuals ages 55–64 and redefining dependents—means a far larger share of SNAP participants must meet work requirements or risk losing benefits for most of a three-year period. These changes threaten to push hundreds of thousands of Illinois residents off SNAP and create major operational, financial, and humanitarian challenges for the state.

Communications & Partner Engagement

Discussion emphasized clear public messaging and collaboration with community organizations to reduce confusion around HR1 changes.

Executive Order Overview

Deputy Governor Hou outlined in response to the federal shutdown and looming HR1 impacts, the Governor issued an Executive Order directing urgent statewide action to protect food access. This includes deploying \$20 million in state funds through the Illinois Department of Human Services and the FY26 bridge fund to support food banks; ordering agencies to expand research into food insecurity; assessing the impacts of HR1



on retailers such as pharmacies, grocers, and small businesses; and launching a broad food access education and communications campaign. The order also explicitly calls for collaboration with the Illinois Commission to End Hunger to conduct statewide listening sessions and develop recommendations to mitigate harm to SNAP recipients.

Listening Sessions Planning

Commission will conduct virtual and in-person sessions statewide; members asked to recommend locations and co-host partners.

Commission Report Review

Nolan Downey, Greater Chicago Food Depository, highlighted the risks from HR1 in the Annual Commission Report; draft recommendations will be distributed. The Commission's draft report outlines the urgent landscape created by HR1, emphasizing that hunger levels in Illinois remain unacceptably high while SNAP faces unprecedented federal cuts and restrictions. It synthesizes the anticipated fallout—including widespread benefit losses due to new work requirements, immigrant eligibility restrictions, and federal defunding of SNAP education—while highlighting recent SNAP disruptions during the federal shutdown as a warning of what may come. The report calls for developing state-level strategies to absorb massive new financial pressures and support residents who may lose benefits, setting the stage for recommendations the Commission will finalize and deliver to state leaders.

Public Comments

Clarified that volunteer organizations do not need state registration for SNAP work requirement compliance.

Commission Membership

Members asked to confirm continued service by January 30.

Adjournment

Kate Maehr call to adjourn the meeting. Deputy Governor Hou approved the motion and Rob Karr seconded. Roll-call vote completed the meeting.



ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER

Roll Call

Appointee	Organization	Present	Absent
Representative Elizabeth Hernandez			X
Representative Charles Meier			X
Senator Mattie Hunter		VIRTUAL	
Senator Sue Rezin			X
Grace Hou (Co-Chair)		VIRTUAL	
Robert Baren	Senior Advisor to the Lt. Governor	VIRTUAL	
Katherine Maehr (Co-Chair)	Greater Chicago Food Depository	VIRTUAL	
Steve Ericson	Feeding Illinois	VIRTUAL	
Robert Biekman	Evangelical Mission	VIRTUAL	
Gina Kristi Cleggs	Catholic Charities	VIRTUAL	
April Janney	Illinois Action for Children	VIRTUAL	
VACANT	Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging		
Carolyn Ross	All Chicago	VIRTUAL	
John Herring	Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living	VIRTUAL	
Luvia Quinones	Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	VIRTUAL	
Robert Eastern III	City of East St. Louis, Mayor	VIRTUAL	
Joshua Gibb	Galesburg Community Foundations	VIRTUAL	
Robert Karr	Illinois Retail Merchants Association	VIRTUAL	
EX-OFFICIOS			
Dulce Quintero			X
Tony Sanders		VIRTUAL	
Lizzy Whitehorn			X
Heidi Mueller			X
Mary Killough			X
Jeramie Strickland			X
Dakarai Howard			X



ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER

July 29, 2025 Meeting Minute Approval Vote

Appointee	Organization	For	Against	Abstain/ Absent
Representative Elizabeth Hernandez				ABSENT
Representative Charles Meier				ABSENT
Senator Mattie Hunter		X		
Senator Sue Rezin				ABSENT
Grace Hou (Co-Chair)		X		
Robert Baren	Senior Advisor to the Lt. Governor	X		
Katherine Maehr (Co-Chair)	Greater Chicago Food Depository	X		
Steve Ericson	Feeding Illinois	X		
Robert Biekman	Evangelical Mission	X		
Gina Kristi Cleggs	Catholic Charities	X		
April Janney	Illinois Action for Children	X		
Carolyn Ross	All Chicago	X		
John Herring	Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living	X		
Luvia Quinones	Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	X		
Robert Eastern III	City of East St. Louis, Mayor	X		
Joshua Gibb	Galesburg Community Foundations	X		
Robert Karr	Illinois Retail Merchants Association	X		



ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER

Adjourn Meeting Vote

Appointee	Organization	For	Against	Abstain/ Absent
Representative Elizabeth Hernandez				ABSENT
Representative Charles Meier				ABSENT
Senator Mattie Hunter		X		
Senator Sue Rezin				ABSENT
Grace Hou (Co-Chair)		X		
Robert Baren	Senior Advisor to the Lt. Governor	X		
Katherine Maehr (Co-Chair)	Greater Chicago Food Depository	X		
Steve Ericson	Feeding Illinois	X		
Robert Biekman	Evangelical Mission	X		
Gina Kristi Cleggs	Catholic Charities	X		
April Janney	Illinois Action for Children	X		
Carolyn Ross	All Chicago	X		
John Herring	Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living	X		
Luvia Quinones	Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	X		
Robert Eastern III	City of East St. Louis, Mayor	X		
Joshua Gibb	Galesburg Community Foundations		X	
Robert Karr	Illinois Retail Merchants Association	X		