



Gov. Pritzker Announces Roadmap To Address Hunger And Poverty Across The State

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CHICAGO— Governor JB Pritzker today announced a new plan for ending food insecurity across the state put forward by the Illinois Commission to End Hunger. The new plan, titled “From Food Insecurity to Food Equity: A Roadmap to End Hunger,” advances a three-part strategy for connecting residents in need to nutrition assistance programs while simultaneously promoting equitable access to food. The plan was compiled with input from various state agencies and stakeholders located across the state and will guide the administration’s work to achieve meaningful progress towards ending hunger in the coming years. To view the complete plan, click [here](#).

“The people of Illinois deserve good public schools, early childhood education, mental health services, quality healthcare, family supports, substance abuse treatment, affordable housing and more. We must take an integrative, holistic approach to addressing hunger and poverty,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “This new report by the Illinois Commission to End Hunger is an encouraging step towards a future where food insecurity in Illinois is a thing of the past. I look forward to continuing to work with the Commission and partners in the private and public sectors to help Illinois families meet their basic needs and lead better lives.”

Strategies outlined in the plan include:

- Leveraging technology to make it easier for people to apply for nutrition programs.
- Harnessing innovation to improve access to nutrition programs and food retail.
- Strengthening collaboration across state agencies and community partners to help enroll people in programs.

“Illinois residents face significant hurdles in the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Hunger was prevalent in Illinois before COVID-19, but the pandemic made hunger and the fragility of many working families more visible,” said Sol Flores, Deputy Governor and Co-Chair of the Illinois Commission to End Hunger. “People of color are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity, unequal access to healthcare that leads to chronic disease, and historical systemic racial injustice.”

“This roadmap is not only a blueprint for ending hunger in our state, it is a call to action for individuals, organizations, and policymakers to work on this solvable issue,” said Grace Hou, Secretary, Illinois Department of Human Services. “We have outlined an ambitious strategy to respond to the increased need for food assistance as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and advance solutions that make the system stronger than ever.”

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, 1.6 million Illinoisans were participating in SNAP. During the initial months of the pandemic, SNAP applications soared to over 35,000 applications a week, up from an average of 9,000 weekly. In April of 2020, food insecurity doubled in the population overall and tripled for Illinois households with kids. In addition, Illinois has seen a 60% increase in food insecurity for older adults during the pandemic.

“Never in our organization’s 42-year history have we seen such a dramatic increase in need,” said Kate Maehr, Executive Director and CEO of the Greater Chicago Food Depository and Co-chair of the Commission. “This roadmap outlines meaningful steps toward helping the hundreds of thousands of Illinois residents facing hunger every day, particularly Black and Brown communities that are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. We must address racial disparities in order to end hunger.”

“This road map identifies a three-pronged strategy that is critically needed to address the food insecurities that far too many Illinoisans face every day,” said Sen. Sue Rezin (R-Morris). “I look forward to working with the other members of the Commission to End Hunger as we continue our efforts to ensure that no one in Illinois has to face hunger ever again.”

“Too many were struggling from food insecurity and lack of access to nourishment even before the pandemic,” said Sen. Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago). “Lack of nourishment is linked to a plethora of health problems and must be put to an end. Everyone deserves access to healthy food, regardless of race, region, or income. I am happy to support this initiative and see these disparities eradicated in Illinois.”

The Commission to End Hunger is a public-private partnership composed of stakeholders from across the state dedicated to the belief that no one in Illinois should ever face hunger. The Commission includes [Illinois Department of Human Services](#), [Illinois Department of Health and Family Services](#), [Illinois Department of Aging](#), [Illinois State Board of Education](#), [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#), and the [Illinois Department of Agriculture](#).

To view the complete report from the Commission, go to <https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CityRoadmap.pdf>. For more information on ending hunger in Illinois, please visit www.endhungerillinois.org.