July 2026

Future HCC Meetings and Events

Future Membership Gatherings

Wednesday, August 5th, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign
Wednesday, September 2nd, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign
Wednesday, October 7th, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign

Member Social Gathering

Wednesday, August 5th, 4:00 - 6:00pm, Cloud Mountain Kombucha, 208 West Griggs St, Urbana FLYER

Next Board Meetings

Wednesday, July 29th at 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
Wednesday, August 26th at 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
Zoom Access for Board Meetings is HERE.

Coming Events and Opportunities with Participating Organizations

Editor's Note: Given the number of events and announcements, and to experiment with the newsletter format, flyers promoting events have been collected and stored on Google Drive. If an event has such a flyer, you will find a hyperlinked FILE next to the announcement that will take you to the specific flyer or announcement.

Help Wanted - HCC could use assistance with video editing tasks. We have material from the Food Summit we would like to prepare for placement on YouTube and other platforms. Can you help us? Send a note to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com

Feeding Champaign County Food Summit - The summary report for the 2026 Feeding Champaign County Food Summit has been released. The report is full of details and ideas from the 2026 Food Summit. You can download your copy HERE.

City of Champaign to Partner with C-UPHD to Support Food Access Specialist Role - The Champaign City Council will consider a staff recommendation to dedicate resources to supporting the Food Access Specialist functions at CUPHD. Feeding Champaign County Food Summit participants will recall the need for a central hob for information and collaborations has been a part of the conversation for four years. This is a major step forward that comes from those conversations. You can read the Council Resolution HERE. And if inclined, you can learn how to share your thoughts about the idea with Champaign City Council Members HERE.

The **Eagles Nest** - The Rantoul High School Student Food Pantry in partnership with Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County offers all students access to their pantry on Thursdays. FLYER

Family Fun Day and Back to School Health & Resource Fair -The Community Health Partnership of Illinois and Champaign Urbana Public Health District invite partners to join them for this 5th annual "Family Health and Resource Fair" on Saturday, July 25th from 12:00pm-4:00pm at C-UPHD 201 W Kenyon Road in Champaign. FLYER.

World Food Safety Day - Farmers Markets are a great place to access fresh, safe food grown by people that you can directly ask about their safe practices. Not sure how to shop local safely? The Land Connection has a set of awesome resources that share simple tips to safely make the most of local food! Check out our Buying Local Safely resources HERE. FLYER

Interactive Food Resources Map - Looking to find food pantries across Champaign County? Check out CUPHD's interactive food resources map. Information is available in English, French, Chinese, Dari, Korean, and Pashto. You can find hot meals, sack lunches, Little Free Pantries, Mobile Markets, and UIUC based resources listed HERE.

Feeding Our Neighbors: Gathering Partners to Share and Listen - A community conversation for food pantry leaders is being organized by the First Presbyterian Church of Champaign. The organizers hope the gathering results in an exchange of practical ideas, effective strategies, and lessons learned by those operating food pantries. They see this as a first step in identifying opportunities for partnership, shared problem solving, and collaboration. Learn more HERE.

Summer Meal Programs - C-UPHD and Urbana School District #116 are offering free meals to children ages 18 and younger this summer. Children do not have to be enrolled in summer school or attend Urbana schools to receive a meal. Individuals 18 or older with a state defined mental or physical disability can also receive free meals. Meals must be eaten on site. More details are HERE and FLYER

Food and Nutrition Newsletter - UI Extension serving Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion Counties has renamed their monthly newsletter. Still packed with great resources and ideas. You can subscribe to the *FOOD AND NUTRITION* newsletter HERE.

Illinois Household Food Waste Survey - You can help address food waste in Illinois. Take a 10-minute survey about meal planning, grocery shopping, cooking, and what happens to food at home. Share what works well and what is challenging. Your insights will help guide food waste prevention education across the state that support cost savings, stronger communities, and a healthier environment. FLYER

Champaign-Urbana Farmers Markets - If you want to stay on top of all that the Champaign-Urbana farmers market and local food scene has to offer make sure to sign up for their newsletter *The CUrrant* and follow Champaign-Urbana Farmers Markets on Facebook and Instagram for regular updates, as well as other farmers markets in Champaign County, all year long.

HCC Partners in the News

Rural Health Disadvantages in the United States - UIUC and USDA Economic Research Service researchers have published a study that helps explain the rural mortality by combining a place-based analysis with health biomarkers from over 66,000 people across a 20-year span. They found that chronic stress, nicotine use, obesity, and diet are major factors likely contributing to the growth of the rural-urban mortality gap. Study author Sarah Low, professor and head of the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, part of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at Illinois reports the study found that the rural-urban mortality gaps are really disparities associated with place, rather than as causal effects of rural residence. Read more HERE.

Pesticide Problems, A Legislative History - Following a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, Monsanto Co. v. Durnell (No. 24–1068). UIUC *FarmDocDaily* has introduced a series of articles exploring the evolution of legislation governing the use of pesticides in the USA. "The legislative history shows (and Durnell confirms) that a pesticide label provides a shield for the pesticide industry and allows the industry to redirect blame for harm caused by pesticides to the user: the farmer or applicator. In other words, under our “label is the law” structure, if someone is harmed by a pesticide, the manufacturer may escape responsibility or accountability by claiming that the harm was the fault of the person using or applying the pesticide, that whoever was using the pesticide must not have been using it according to the label. Read more HERE.

Improving the Public Health Accreditation Process - University of Illinois computer engineering major Aman Sajia, a 2026 Community-Academic Scholar, is collaborating with campus and community partners to explore how large language models (LLMs) can streamline the development of evidence-based accreditation documents for the public health sector. The project investigates how artificial intelligence can assist organizations in drafting accreditation materials by consuming large collections of supporting evidence, parsing out relevant excerpts, and producing well-documented draft reports. Findings from the project will help determine how LLMs can be thoughtfully incorporated into public health administration, reducing the burden of time-intensive documentation processes while also ensuring the reports remain grounded in verifiable evidence. Learn more about Aman and the CAS program HERE.

2026 Community-Academic Scholars Poster Session & Celebration - Speaking of the Community Academic Scholars program, organized by HCC partners at the UIUC Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute, there will be a 2026 Community-Academic Scholars (CAS) poster session on Wednesday, Aug. 5, at 10 a.m. at the I Hotel & Illinois Conference Center. For 10 weeks this summer, 19 Community-Academic Scholars and nine I-SUMMER Scholars from disciplines across campus are working with academic mentors and a mentor from a community organization to address critical community issues in Champaign County and beyond. The poster session is an in-person, free, open-house style event that is open to the public. We hope that you can join us as these dedicated and passionate scholars showcase their work to make a difference in the local community. Let them know you are interested HERE.

Illinois Launches Online Resources for Households on Federal Food Assistance - Illinois has launched two new websites aimed at providing work, training, and volunteer hours to households who may be impacted. An estimated 150,000 Illinois households could lose access to SNAP because of the time limits. Learn more HERE.

News from Around the World

An Idea and An Invitation - Folks who make it this far in our monthly newsletter might be the kinds of folks looking for new ideas, exploring provocative questions, and simply wishing to stay informed about active living and food security happenings beyond Champaign County. If this is you, and you would like to find community with fellow traveler, send an email to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com. A couple of folks have suggested it might be a good idea to have an informal reading group that might explore some of these ideas in more depth. If there are enough folks - we can make some magic happen!

When You Buy Food, Where Does Your Money Go? - The Land Connection has pointed out a new guide from the National Farmers Union paints a stark picture of the funding available to farmers to support their families, responsibly steward their land, and reinvest in their communities. When you shop at your local farmers market, you support local farmers who are using growing practices you can directly ask about, employing people & feeding people in your community, and buying from other local businesses. What we buy and when is pretty complicated with a lot of different factors. If you've ever tried to change any habit you know it takes small changes to build up from where you are now. What community do we want to build together? Maybe we'll see you at the market making small steps towards that goal. Check out the guide HERE.

Agriculturally integrated neighborhoods - As communities increasingly seek ways to support healthy living through neighborhood design, agriculturally integrated neighborhoods—or "agrihoods"—have emerged as an innovative model that combines homes with farms, green space, trails, and other shared amenities. Despite their growing popularity, little research has examined who is interested in living in these communities or what features prospective homebuyers value most. A new study, published in *The Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* , reports on a survey of adults interested in purchasing a home in a planned Texas agrihood to better understand the characteristics, health behaviors, and neighborhood preferences of prospective residents. The study offers one of the first insights into who is interested in living in agrihoods and what prospective homebuyers value most, providing evidence to inform future research, residential development, and community design strategies that support health and well-being. Read more HERE.

Can We Do This in Champaign County? - The objective of the Metro Chicago Good Food Purchasing Initiative (GFPI) Community Fund is to increase access to Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP)-aligned produce and food products in the Metro Chicago Region. This goal is achieved through providing both financial & technical

support for systemically marginalized, local farms and food businesses who are working on increasing community food access that builds local economies, sustainable practices, fair labor, animal welfare nutrition and advances the work of building equity in the Metro Chicago food system. Through flexible grants ranging from $40,000–$80,000, streamlined reporting, technical assistance, and networking opportunities, the fund is intentionally designed to reduce barriers and expand opportunities for local food producers and entrepreneurs. Learn more HERE.

New Homeland Security Rule Puts Fear Over Food Access - For more than two decades, U.S. immigration officials have explicitly reassured that participation in federal nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) would not affect the ability to become lawful permanent residents. Yet a new rule now reverses longstanding existing policy and practice meant to interpret the public charge law. As a result, families who are legally eligible for SNAP, WIC, and other nutrition programs are likely to forgo benefits out of fear. We know it leads to more food insecurity, which negatively impacts educational outcomes for children and increases economic hardship for families and local communities. Learn more HERE.

Public Engagement With Society Has Many Dimensions - A new Pew-Knight Initiative study finds that U.S. adults can be sorted into four distinct groups that reflect different patterns of civic participation: Mobilizers, Connectors, Spectators and Outsiders. These insights might be very helpful to our (HCC affiliated groups) efforts to build community engagement. Learn more HERE.

SNAP Participation Declines Exceed Initial Projections - Recently released USDA data show that SNAP participation has declined by approximately 5.8 million people since January 2025. About 800,000 of those declines occurred before H.R. 1 was enacted in July 2025, while roughly 5 million have occurred since the law took effect. The magnitude of these losses already exceeds the Congressional Budget Office's initial projections, underscoring the significant impact of recent policy changes on SNAP participation. Without congressional action to reverse these provisions or additional state efforts to help mitigate their effects, participation is expected to continue declining. The Food Research and Action Center has a complete report HERE.

Supporting Community Nutrition and Diverse Cultures - Better labels help food pantries choose more culturally meaningful foods. A bag of groceries can feed a family, but it may not always feel like home. New research led by the University of California finds that labeling foods that are meaningful to different cultures can help local pantries better serve the communities they support. Over three 45-day periods, researchers first observed agencies' usual ordering patterns, then added labels that identified culturally relevant foods in the online ordering system. The study analyzed 720 orders representing nearly 32,000 food items. Examples of culturally relevant foods included sauerkraut and canned beets for Eastern European communities, and cornmeal, tortilla flour and pigeon peas for Hispanic and Latinx communities. Key findings concluded that with labeling alone, agencies were two times more likely to order culturally relevant foods and adding more of those foods to the inventory increased selection even more, to 50% of agencies. Read the study HERE.

Newsletter Publication Schedule: We aspire to publish this newsletter on the 15th of every month. Send submissions, and corrections, to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com.

This information has been provided by **Healthy Champaign County** (HCC), a coalition of organizations and community members working to ensure opportunities for active living and accessible, nutritional food for all our neighbors in Champaign County.

Learn more about Health Champaign County

If you wish to be added or removed from this mailing list, send a message to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com.