August 2026
Future HCC Meetings and Events

Future Membership Gatherings

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
Wednesday, November4th, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign
Wednesday, December 2nd, 12:00 Noon - 1:00pm. Martens Center, 1515 N. Market St., Champaign

Next Board Meetings

Wednesday, August 26th, 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
Wednesday, September 30th, 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
Wednesday, October 28th, 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
No November Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 9th, 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.

HCC Board Member Openings - Is it time for you to consider stepping up to a leadership role in HCC? If you have been coming to meetings and find the work we are doing interesting, or even fun, perhaps you might give the idea of joining the Board of Directors for a two year term of office. More about the roles and duties of board members is HERE. And of course you can also ask any of the current board members.

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. And, make a note that the 2027 Feeding Champaign Food Summit will be March 31st!

Morrissey Park parkrun - Saturdays at 9:00 a.m. at Morrissey Park, 1209 Harrington Dr., Champaign. Parkrun is a fun and friendly 5K event. Walk, jog, run, roll, volunteer, or come to cheer on participants. Parkrun is free, but please REGISTER before you first come along. Volunteers are encouraged, send an email to morrisseypark@parkrun.com to learn more.

HCC Reading Circle - Interested in joining an informal group that would meet occasionally to review and discuss new books, research, and opinion essays? Several folks have suggested that articles in our ***News From Around the World*** section (below), and other sources, warrant further consideration and engagement by like-minded folks, If you would be interested in such an activity, send an email to HealthyChampaignCounty2016@gmail.com and we will get you connected.

Revitalize the Farm to School Program in our Community - Help Sola Gratia Farm revitalize the CU Farm to School! The Urbana School District no longer has the capacity to facilitate the Farm to School program that Sola Gratia

Farm helped start in 2020. Sola and Farm to School need your help. In order to ensure its continued existence and service to the youth of our community, the farm is adopting this valued program. In a time of uncertainty and increasing challenges facing school personnel and students alike, this program helps kids develop healthy life skills, engage socially, and make real-world connections with their learning. Please consider donating today. More information about the program and ways you can donate to support this great offering can be found HERE.

Strengthen Farm to School in Just 7 Minutes - The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and University of Illinois Extension are conducting a statewide survey to better understand current Farm to School efforts and identify opportunities for growth. By sharing your experiences, you'll help them learn what's working, what challenges schools face, and how to strengthen connections between schools and local food producers. Your input will shape future programs, resources, and support for schools (and farms!) across Illinois. the survey is HERE.

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.

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.

Breast Feeding Supplies Drive - The C-UPHD Breast Feeding Peer Counselor Program is holding a collection drive seeking breast feeding supplies for participants enrolled in their WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program to help them achieve their breast/chestfeeding goals. Needed items include: nursing pads, milk storage bags, nursing pillows, breast pumps, nursing covers, and self-care items. All donated items must be NEW and SEALED in their original packaging. Donations can be dropped off in-person at the WIC window at C-UPHD. Additional options and more information are HERE.

Adult Recess - Who says recess is just for kids? Enjoy fun, friendly, and active sports activities for adults! The Champaign Park District invites you to find what works for your schedule by registering for the whole program or just drop-in activities! Learn more and register HERE.

The Active Aging Resource Fair: Call for Vendors - Aging Services of Champaign County and the Urbana Park District invite organizations to join them as vendors at the Active Aging Resource Fair 2026 during Active Aging Week! This is a fantastic opportunity to connect with older adults, caregivers, and families from across Champaign County! Friday, October 9, 2026, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (Vendor setup begins at 10:00 AM). Crystal Lake Park Large Pavilion 206 W. Park St., Urbana. No registration fee. Vendors are asked to bring own tent, table and chairs, resources to share, and a bingo prize donation valued at $25+. To register, contact Carrie Wennerdahl at carriew3@illinois.edu. FLYER

Market Research on a Community Problem - Have an idea to address a challenge in your community, but not sure if it's the right solution or which community partnerships already exist to address it? Understanding the problem you're trying to solve is the first step toward building something that actually works. Join this session of CFECI's Incubating Impact Series, featuring Tricia D. Teague, CEO & Founder of The Trep School® and Founder of Soar Space Business Center. Tricia is a certified business and personal development coach, speaker, and consultant who has spent years helping entrepreneurs and community leaders turn ideas into sustainable ventures. In this hands-on session, Tricia will walk participants through practical approaches to conducting market research on a community problem, helping emerging nonprofit leaders and social entrepreneurs validate their ideas, understand the needs of the people they hope to serve, and build a stronger foundation before launching a new initiative. The workshop will be held at the Champaign Public Library, Wednesday, August 26 • 4 PM - 5:30 PM. More details and registration information is HERE.

It's Time to Share - Do you have tons of tomatoes? Piles of peppers? Zillions of zucchinis? Oodles of onions? If you have excess fresh produce or herbs, there are nonprofit organizations that would be thrilled to accept your donations and distribute to those in need. There are several places in Champaign County that accept fresh produce. If you have

something to donate, find a pantry near you, call first, preferably before you harvest, to verify when they can accept your produce, and let them know what you have to offer. Illinois extension has a list of the commonly donated garden vegetables and how to clean and prepare them for donation. Don't let excess produce rot in the garden or get tossed in the trash. Put it to good use by donating it!

Vote by Mail Applications Coming Soon - As required by Illinois election statute, the Champaign County Clerk's Office will be mailing vote by mail applications to all registered voters who are not already on our vote by mail list. The following options are available to voters:

- Apply for vote by mail for ALL future Elections
- Apply for vote by mail for future General Elections ONLY
- Apply for vote by mail for just the upcoming election
- opt out of future application mailings

Vote by mail ballots will not be mailed until September 24, 2026. Voters in Champaign County should not accept any election mail that is not addressed to them. If you receive mail not addressed to you, please write "NOT AT THIS ADDRESS" on the unopened mail and place it back in your mailbox. This will allow the Clerk's office to update our records. You can apply to receive a vote by mail ballot at any time online HERE. You can confirm your registration status HERE.

Beginner Foraging Course - Illinois Extension Family and Consumer Sciences and Natural Resources, Environment, and Energy departments bring to you a seasonal beginner foraging course. Each session will have three parts:

1. Classroom-style presentation (1 hr): foraged food safety, laws and regulations, storage, preservation, and identification of common foraged species.
2. Field experience (1.5 hr): Hike with Master Naturalist Chandler Womack and Educator Karla Griesbaum to explore edible wild food, how to harvest, and ethical practices.
3. Cooking class (1.5 hr): Use common foraged foods to create some delicious and healthy recipes with Educator Rachel Mannen, then have a communal lunch with our delicious meal.

Learn more and register HERE. FLYER

Top Soil Community Garden by First Followers - Join the First Followers Reentry Gardening Program! They can help folks needing volunteer hours for SNAP or community service. If you want to help others by growing organic veggies and by being in solidarity with those bringing healthy foods into our community, contact Janice Walker at topsoil@firstfollowersreentry.com. FLYER

HCC Partners in the News

CUPHD's Free Market initiative Earns NACCHO Promising Practice Award - Staff from CUPHD recently attended the National Association of County and City Health Officials NACCHO360 conference in Louisville, KY, where they accepted a NACCHO Promising Practice award for CUPHD's Free Market initiative. The program was selected through a rigorous peer-review process and recognized as an innovative and replicable approach to addressing a local public health need. This recognition reflects the dedication of the many staff and interns across CUPHD who help make the Free Markets possible. It also recognizes the strength of our partnerships with Sola Gratia Farm, the Housing Authority of Champaign County, Illinois, Niemanns - Champaign grocery store, and Cornerstone Fellowship, whose collaboration has helped expand access to healthy food and supportive resources throughout our community. **Congratulations to everyone whose hard work and collaboration have made this initiative such a success!**

Illinois Launches FRESH Program - The State of Illinois is launching the Families Receiving Emergency Support for Hunger (FRESH) program to help eligible Illinoisans who lost Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits due to work requirement changes from the federal government. The FRESH program seeks to support Illinoisans who lost SNAP benefits on or after May 1, 2026, because of the federal budget bill. Benefits are anticipated for up to 175,000 customers. Through FRESH, recipients will receive a one-time $400 benefit from the state, per eligible household member. There is no paperwork or application required to receive the FRESH benefit payment, eligible households have one or more members who lost benefits and did not regain eligibility, due to neither meeting

nor being exempt from new, broadened work requirements. A notice will be mailed to eligible households who will receive these benefits. Additional information is available HERE.

Find Food Illinois - The Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Public Health Institute, Experimental Station, Illinois Farmers Market Association, University of Illinois Extension, and Jackson County Health Department are piloting a process to keep eaters up to date with the latest redemption locations for WIC FMNP, Senior FMNP, or Link Match. The pilot has two parts.

First, a reminder that you can use the Find Food Illinois map to create a list of redemption locations and times for WIC FMNP, Senior FMNP, and Link Match. Follow the steps below to create a list. You can also use the templates available in a Google Drive folder to create fliers and social media posts! Download a copy and use it any time. First, a reminder that you can use the Find Food Illinois map to create a list of redemption locations and times for WIC FMNP, Senior FMNP, and Link Match. Follow the steps below to create a list. You can also use the templates available in a Google Drive folder to create fliers and social media posts! Download a copy and use it any time.

Second, we need your help telling FMNP and Link Match participating farmers to update their location and time information as the season progresses. To keep redemption strong through the last voucher, eaters need to know where they can use them if options change. Please share the reminder below with the markets or vendors you work with throughout the season. We will also include it in reminder emails. If at any time you, a market, or a farmer in your area is interested in coordinating to pilot a new Link Match, WIC FMNP, or Senior FMNP redemption location, assistance is available through the Illinois Public Health Institute. Please reach out to trevor.johnson@IPHIonline.org with any requests. If needed, we can also coordinate assistance requests with the appropriate partners.

Campus-Community Compact Awards Nearly $100,000 Through Building Beyond the Barriers Grant Program - The UIUC Campus-Community Compact has awarded $94,000 through the 2026 Building Beyond the Barriers Grant Program to support collaborative projects addressing community-identified needs across Champaign County. Included in the group is the C-UPHD – Food Access Alliance Capacity Building Project. This project strengthens countywide coordination to address food insecurity by building the data and evaluation capacity of the Champaign County Food Access Alliance. The initiative will improve how organizations track impact, coordinate services, and align food access efforts.

Facilitated by the Compact through the Office of Public Engagement, the program supports partnerships between university and community organizations working together. This year's funding cycle drew strong interest from campus and community partners, with proposals representing a wide range of initiatives focused on health, education, workforce development, language access, food systems, and community engagement. The selected projects reflect collaborative approaches that connect university expertise and resources with the knowledge and leadership of local organizations and residents. Learn more about the other Compact Awardees HERE.

The Housing Shortage: How We Got Here and What To Do About It - What can we do about the housing shortage in Illinois? Housing expert Lore Baker will join us to review the gap between what people earn and what they have to pay for housing; explain the sources and consequences of restrictive zoning and building policies; and evaluate current efforts to reduce the shortage and make a greater variety of housing available to more people. She will also review specific Illinois efforts, including the Governor's "Missing Middle" housing package and the extension of the Affordable Housing Planning and Appeals Act. Join this August 25 Zoom m event organized by the League of Women Voters of Illinois. Details for registration are HERE.

CU Bike Month - Save these dates for excellent community rider events. More information will be HERE.

- Wednesday, September 16th, 7:00 - 10:00am Bike to Work Day
- Tuesday, September 22, 4:00 - 7:00pm Light the Night

Black Mental Health and Wellness Conference - The Black Mental Health and Wellness Conference is back for its fourth powerful year, and registration will open soon. Hosted by the Champaign County Community Coalition, this free

conference will take place on Saturday, September 26, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Parkland College. This year's conference promises to build on the momentum of previous years by offering meaningful conversations, interactive sessions, and practical strategies to support Black mental health and wellness.

News from Around the World

How exactly did cyclospora infiltrate our food supply? - Food safety experts say contaminated water in farm fields is a likely culprit. But questions still remain about the current outbreak. Public health officials are still investigating how an outbreak of cyclospora, a parasite spread through human feces, ended up in the public food supply. In an ongoing investigation, officials have linked part of the outbreak to Taylor Farms iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico. The product is sold at retail stores and restaurants, but the company issued a voluntary recall earlier this month. Typically, cyclospora reaches the food supply through contaminated water. Listen to this Illinois Harvest News story for a deeper dive into what is known, and what is still to be determined.

SNAP: An Evidence-Based Program to Improve Food Security, Health, and Well-Being - The evidence is clear: SNAP is more than an anti-hunger program. It is a powerful investment in health and well-being. Decades of research show that SNAP reduces food insecurity, improves nutrition, supports cognitive, mental, and physical health, and lowers health care costs. A new report from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) brings together the evidence demonstrating how SNAP helps individuals and families thrive while strengthening communities and reducing broader societal costs.Read the report HERE.

The Unfinished Farm Bill Remains Unfinished- On Thursday, August 6, 2026, the Committee failed to report legislation that committee chairman John Boozman (R-AR) has called "Farm Bill 2.0". While Congress has adjourned for the August recess, the Chairman indicated that the committee may try again in the abbreviated and busy month of September. This failure to report legislation to finish the Farm Bill should send a clear warning, however. The negotiations on the Farm Bill are of specific interest given that SNAP is a critical program in the negotiating mix. Read more at Illinois farmdoc daily.

Study Connects Gun Violence Exposure to Racial Health Disparities - A new study from Rutgers University in New Jersey has found that higher exposure to gun violence among Black and Hispanic Americans may partly explain the persistent racial health disparities facing these populations. Using data from a nationally representative survey of 7,066 Black, Hispanic, and White adults in 2024, the authors analyzed socioeconomic and health disadvantages alongside lifelong exposure to gun violence. Across all participants, greater exposure to gun violence was associated with poorer self-rated health and more chronic health challenges. Notably, Black and Hispanic adults reported significantly higher gun violence exposure than White participants. However, when the authors simulated reducing gun violence exposure among Black and Hispanic adults to the levels of White adults, there was a major decline in health disparities, suggesting gun violence is a direct contributor to disadvantaged communities' long-term health.

How to Choose the Appropriate Tools to Evaluate Local Food Systems - Local food systems are increasingly recognized as key drivers of more sustainable and equitable food systems, a process often referred to as a socio-ecological transition. They are expected to address complex challenges, including food insecurity, malnutrition, environmental degradation, and social inequalities. Yet evaluating whether transformative processes are occurring in practice remains complex. A wide range of tools exists, differing in scope, approach, and level of detail, making it difficult for practitioners and researchers to select the most appropriate option. A new study published in JAFSCD, reviews criteria for selecting assessment tools for local food systems in the context of socio-ecological transitions review 22 holistic assessment tools to examine how they are designed and used. The study identifies key gaps and levers in existing tools and proposes seven criteria to support a more informed selection of assessment tools adapted to local contexts and priorities, as well as better capture the deeper structural changes that shape long-term transformation.Check it out HERE.

Do Farmers Markets Build Community? - A recent article by Project for Public Spaces, "*The Impacts of Market Cities: How Markets Promote Social Connection & Wellbeing*," told the story of three communities where farmers

markets became more than a place to shop, they were hubs for connection. These stories demonstrate how farmers markets benefit our communities beyond connecting people to local farmers and nutritious food. Thanks to The Land Connection for sharing this great article - it is available HERE.

Most Americans Lack Confidence in Government's Oversight of Food Safety - A majority of American voters do not have confidence in the government's oversight of food safety, according to a new Quinnipiac University national poll released this week. Self-identified registered voters were asked how much confidence they have in government oversight of food safety in the U.S., and the results were not good: 55 percent of voters say they do not have much confidence, or no confidence, in government oversight of food safety.

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.