June 2026

Future HCC Meetings and Events

Future Membership Gatherings

No July Meeting
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, June 24th, 8:30 - 9:30am at the United Way of Champaign County, 5 Dunlap Ct, Savoy
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 some 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.

Building a Stronger and Safer Champaign Together - The City of Champaign Equity and Engagement Department invites community members to help shape a healthier, safer future by participating in the Blueprint Community Health Needs Assessment Survey. The survey is part of a larger study focused on understanding the conditions that impact community health, well-being, and safety in Champaign. Community feedback will help guide future programs, support services, and violence prevention efforts across the city. The study, titled *Evaluating the Impact of the Community Gun Violence Reduction Blueprint on Community Health and Safety* in Champaign, IL, aims to better understand how local programs and community efforts help people feel safe and supported. The SU Institute of Health, Education, Evaluation, Assessment and Research (HEEAR) serves as the City's evaluation team and is seeking input from community members to learn more about neighborhood needs, community strengths, and opportunities to improve resources for youth and families. The confidential and anonymous survey takes about 8–10 minutes to complete. Participants may also have the opportunity to join one-on-one or small group conversations to share additional feedback about community needs and safety. The survey is HERE.

Urbana Park District Strategic Plan - Over the past five years, the 2020 Strategic Plan has guided the Urbana Park District. UPD is now preparing for the 2027-2031 Strategic Plan. Nearly 1,000 community members contributed towards our 2020 Strategic Plan through filling out questionnaires, answering whiteboard questions at events, attending focus groups, or participating in stakeholder meetings. This positively impacted our outcome, so we would like to follow our same pattern by engaging with the community and stakeholders. Learn more about the Strategic Planning Process HERE and respond to their questionnaire HERE. FLYER

SNAP Listening Sessions across Illinois - The University of Illinois Extension and Illinois Commission to End Hunger are hosting a series of SNAP Listening Sessions across Illinois to better understand how recent SNAP changes are impacting community members and the organizations that support them. These sessions are part of a statewide effort to gather input and learn how SNAP changes are affecting Illinoisans. There is a FLYER for dates, times, locations (both in-person and virtual), and other details. There are different dates for community partners/agencies and for community members. Please share the community members flyer with your patrons and guests. UPDATE: Additional slots have been made available for community participation. Please use this UPDATED URL to register.

Charitable Trust Hunger Relief Grants - The Illinois State Treasurer's Office is offering a new dedicated grant opportunity through the Charitable Trust Hunger Relief Grants to support volunteer-driven nonprofits that provide hunger relief in Illinois. Through the Food Security Program, 10 grants of $5,000 each will be awarded to eligible organizations. Grant funds must be used exclusively to purchase food for people in need. Eligible organizations are encouraged to review the requirements and apply online during the application period.

This grant opportunity is open to volunteer-driven organizations that provide food assistance to Illinois residents, including: Food pantries, Soup kitchens, Community meal programs, and other nonprofit programs that provide food to people in need. To qualify, organizations must:

- Be an established Illinois-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
- Provide services exclusively in Illinois
- Operate without a full-time employee
- Use all grant funds exclusively for food

Applications will be accepted through July 31, 2026. For more information and to apply go HERE.

Birth to Five Illinois - Attend a Virtual Lunch on June 24th from 12:00 -1:00pm. Hosted by your local Birth to Five Illinois: Region 9 Team. Learn more about progress being made to support parents, caregivers, and children in Champaign and Ford Counties, as well as across the State, and how you can get involved. Lunch and Learn FLYER and to learn more FLYER.

Volunteer at the Champaign Farmers Market! - Do you like helping food and farm businesses? Do you like talking to people about local food? Do you like packing 100 portions for meal kits going to straight to kids and/or handing out those kits? Well, you're not going to believe this, but we can make all of those dreams come true. Sign up to volunteer HERE or send an email to market@thelandconnection.org to get started.

Back-to-School Health Fair - Promise Healthcare is hosting Back-to-School Health Fair to help families prepare for a healthy and successful school year. Families are invited to receive school supplies, connect with community resources, and learn about affordable healthcare services available for children and adults. Services include medical care, behavioral health, dental care, and assistance with insurance and Medicaid enrollment. Fairs will be held in Urbana FLYER and Rantoul FLYER.

CLU-W Hygiene Pantry - The first and only full hygiene pantry in Central Illinois! Since opening in March 2026, the Pantry has served more than 250 families by providing free hygiene products that are not covered by SNAP benefits, including soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, menstrual products, diapers, and other essential personal care items. To help spread awareness and support our mission, attached are flyers with information about the CLU-W Hygiene Pantry, check out the volunteer recruitment FLYER, and board member recruitment. FLYER Please share these materials through your newsletters, email lists, social media channels, or partner networks. Increased awareness helps ensure that individuals and families in our community know where to access these important resources and provides opportunities for others to get involved.

Kids Kits at the Champaign Farmers Market - Looking for something fun to do with your kids this summer? Pick up a Kids Kit at the Champaign Farmers Market on the last Tuesday of each month! Kids Kits is a free monthly program of The Land Connection . Each kit contains a kid-friendly recipe PLUS all of the ingredients needed to make a nutritious and delicious snack at home. With generous support from our 2026 Kids Kits sponsor, Meridian of Illinois, this program encourages kids to develop culinary skills and try new, local foods. Available for kids of all ages, while supplies last!

Kids Kits will be available on the following market days:

- June 30th
- July 28th
- August 25th
- September 29th
- October 27th

Check out their previous Kids Kits recipes HERE.

Illinois Housing Blueprint East Central Listening Session - The City of Champaign is working with the Illinois Housing Development Authority to host the Illinois Housing Blueprint East Central Listening Session. The Blueprint is a statewide effort led by the Illinois Housing Development Authority to better understand housing needs across communities and help shape the future of housing in Illinois. It is built on input from residents, community leaders, and organizations across the state. You can provide input on the Blueprint by completing the Blueprint Survey and joining the discussion on June 25th. Register HERE: East Central Listening Session FLYER

Carle Mobile Clinic Back to School Events - Several Back-to-School events are planned for Champaign and Mclean County. Dates and locations are below. All visits are walk-in only, no appointments.

- June 9th at Danville High School
- July 31st at Urbana Middle School
- August 1st at Danville Boys and Girls Club
- August 7th and 8th Western Avenue in Normal IL
- August 29th and 30th Marten Center in Champaign

View the full Champaign County Mobile Health Clinic schedule HERE.

Feeding Our Hearts and Souls - In many families, food is how love gets expressed — a home-cooked meal, a packed lunch, time together preparing dishes for family gatherings. From the meals we remember from our childhood to the meals we provide for our own families today, food carries deep meaning, and feeding others can be an act of love. This June 22nd webinar explores the rich, complicated role food plays across generations: childhood memories, the passing down of traditional family recipes, and what it means when food becomes one of the primary languages of care. Webinar includes live Spanish language translation and captioning. Learn more and register HERE.

HCC Partners in the News

CUSR Accessible Playground - Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation recently broke ground on two new projects that aim to provide recreation programs and opportunities to people with disabilities. One of the projects is an accessible playground, called the All-Abilities Activity Hub, by the special recreation center in Centennial Park, which will be enclosed. It's designed to support participation from individuals of all ages and abilities, addressing safety concerns for families with young children and accommodating participants with varying abilities. Read the IPM News story HERE.

UIUC ACES Symposium Talks Global Food Security - Students, faculty, and other stakeholders from the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES) gathered in April to strengthen the college's focus on interdisciplinary work towards global food security. The event on April 15-16 included a series of thematic panels spanning multiple disciplines, opportunities for students to showcase their work, and concluded with a participatory workshop for stakeholders to help shape the mission, vision, and priorities for future interdisciplinary work in global food security. Learn more HERE.

Beyond Growing Food:Sola Gratia Farm - Featured in a Experience CU publication, Sola Gratia Farm began in 2012 on the grounds of Saint Matthew's Lutheran Church in Urbana. For years, the church had rented its six acres to a commodity grain farmer and donated the proceeds to international hunger relief efforts. But after conversations with Rev. Brian Sauder, president of Faith in Place—an environmental justice nonprofit organization—about local food insecurity, the congregation realized they had an opportunity to make an impact much closer to home. Read the story HERE.

"It's not just about groceries" - Food insecurity remains a pressing issue in historically Black neighborhoods in West Charlotte NC, where supermarket redlining and decades of disinvestment have limited access to affordable and culturally relevant foods. In a new JAFSCD article,"It's not just about groceries": Understanding perspectives on a planned food co-op in West Charlotte, North Carolina, the authors share findings from a community-engaged study conducted in partnership with a neighborhood coalition to understand local views on planned community-owned food cooperative. Read the story HERE.

Champaign Neighborhood Network Conference - The May 1st gathering featured a workshop on addressing food security issues in Champaign County. Presenters included including Healthy Champaign County (Ric Weibl), Eastern Illinois Foodbank (Lynnetee White-McIntyre), and UIUC Department of Health and Kinesiology (Minakshi Raj) focused on Addressing Food Insecurities. The recordings are posted on the City's Video on Demand Service.

2026 Illinois State Budge Recap - The Illinois General Assembly adjourned for the year in the wee hours of the morning on June 1st. The session delivered important investments in local food systems, conservation programs, and hunger relief. At the same time, lawmakers fell short on several priorities that would have strengthened support for emerging farmers, expanded land access, protected soil and water, and built a more resilient food system. The Illinois Stewardship Alliance has a recap HERE.

Could New SNAP Requirements Lead to a Hunger Crisis in Illinois? - The One Big Beautiful Bill Act that Congress passed last summer made changes to the SNAP program. Now, to be eligible for the benefits that were once known as food stamps, many people are required to work or volunteer for a minimum of 80 hours a month. It's estimated tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Illinoisans have either lost or could lose their benefits because of these changes. On top of that, there are more changes coming to how the states get money from the federal government for SNAP, and that's going to add millions of dollars in costs for Illinois state government. That said, this year's budget includes $70 million for one-time payments to people who lose at least part of their SNAP benefits. On June 3rd, The 21st Show hosted a conversation with Zach Hieronymous, executive director and CEO of one of the Tri-State Food Bank and Craig Norenburns a fourth-generation grocer who owns four independent stores in southern Illinois. Listen or read the transcript HERE.

Call for Research Participants - The UIUC Laboratory for Emotion and Stress Assessment is seeking participants for a maternal health research study. They are recruiting women between the ages of 18-45 with a planned cesarean delivery to assist them in the development and piloting of an 8-week mindfulness intervention to reduce post-cesarean delivery pain and prevent postpartum depression in Latina women. This study is led by Dr. Sandraluz Lara-Cinisomo, a researcher with expertise in the well-being of postpartum women. This FLYER includes information about the study, eligibility criteria, and contact information in Spanish and English.

News from Around the World

State Opportunities to Champion CACFP - The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) will host a free webinar on June 18 at 2:00pm CT offering examples and ideas for how states are working to strengthen and expand access to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) through innovative strategies, partnerships, and policy approaches. Register HERE.

Growing Farm to ECE in Head Start: What Successful Implementation and Support Look Like - Learn how Farm to Early Care and Education aligns and supports Head Start during the webinar, Wednesday, July 22nd from 2:00 – 3:00 PM CT Also, learn how state organizations can help support Head Start and how sites can integrate Farm to ECE into their busy days. Register HERE.

When More isn't Enough: A Case for Nutrition Standards in Emergency Food Legislation - In a new JAFSCD viewpoint the author argues that pending food donation legislation, while well-intentioned, misses a critical opportunity to improve the nutritional quality of emergency food. With 37% of Massachusetts households food insecure, and food pantry clients facing disproportionately high rates of diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease, the problem is not just how much food reaches families in need — it is what kind. Read the article HERE.

Defining Ultra-processed Foods - The administration's push to formally define ultra-processed foods (UPFs) is fueling a new level of anxiety in Washington. The FDA and USDA last summer asked the public for information to help the government come up with "a uniform definition" of ultra-processed foods. This might sound simple enough, but there's plenty of differing opinions in the space. The agencies received more than 5,000 comments. The definition matters a lot because it will inform future policy. The idea that a definition might be imminent has set off a scramble within the food industry, which has long argued that defining UPFs is too complicated and unfairly demonizes processing itself. There's also growing anxiety about how a U.S. government definition could be used to help plaintiffs' lawyers and even state attorneys general go after food makers in the future. While Kennedy and others are saying that this is imminent, industry forces are still trying to stop it. Read more from Food Fix HERE

How Food in America Lost Its Taste - "[Bill] Tracy has spent the last 40 years in the fields of Wisconsin as one of the US's leading sweetcorn breeders, tasting up to 300 ears a day in search of the perfect corn that might one day sizzle on barbecues across the country. Ten years ago, he came close with a variety that visibly captured his heart. 'The first time I bit into it I said: "Wow,"' Tracy recalls. 'Then I handed it to the person next to me and she said: "Wow." And I counted – the first 100 people who ate it,

the first thing they all said was: “Wow.”’ Tracy is understandably proud of his creation, but those lucky enough to taste it could fit inside a mid-sized restaurant,” writes Harry Holmes. “That corn has never made it into a single grocery store or farmers’ market. While packed with flavor, farmers tell him they cannot justify growing a crop with such fragility and low yield on the type of industrial farm that dominates modern America today. It is a typical dilemma for breeders like Tracy, who in many cases have dedicated their entire working lives to creating delicious food only to rub up against a system in which flavor is often devalued to the point of exclusion.” Read the story from The Guardian HERE.

Children, Older Adults, People With Disabilities the Majority of SNAP Participants - The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) annual SNAP Household Characteristics report released in May, provides data about fiscal year 2024 program participants that offers critical insights for lawmakers, advocates, and stakeholders to push back against false, harmful narratives that have been perpetuated about individuals and households on SNAP. Read more about the findings in a BLOG published by FRAC.

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.