

AN ACT in relation to health and nutrition.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
Nutrition Outreach and Public Education Act.

Section 5. Legislative findings. The General Assembly
finds a definite correlation between proper health and
adequate diet and nutrition and hereby recognizes the
importance of federal food and nutrition assistance programs
in minimizing the incidence of hunger and nutrition related
health problems for those who participate in such programs.

The General Assembly also finds that a significant
portion of otherwise eligible residents of Illinois do not
participate in existing federal food assistance programs such
as the food stamp program, school lunch and breakfast
programs, child care food programs, summer food programs, the
special supplemental program for women, infants and children,
congregate meal programs, and home-delivered meal programs.
That lack of participation is, in the General Assembly's
view, due predominantly to a lack of adequate program
information as to eligibility and application procedures, a
lack of access to and in many instances availability of
benefits under those federal food assistance programs, and
the unavailability of federal funding specifically for
outreach efforts to expand program coverage and participation
among eligible persons.

The General Assembly believes that it is in the interest
of the public health of the economically vulnerable residents
of Illinois to establish a program of community-based
nutrition outreach to enroll eligible targeted populations in
federal food and nutrition assistance programs designed for

them and to promote the fuller implementation and utilization of federal food assistance programs in unserved or underserved areas.

Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act, unless the context requires otherwise:

"At-risk populations" means populations including but not limited to families with children receiving aid under Article IV of the Illinois Public Aid Code, households receiving federal supplemental security income payments, households with incomes at or below 185% of the poverty guidelines updated annually in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under authority of Section 673(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, recipients of emergency food, elderly or disabled persons, homeless persons, unemployed persons, and families and persons residing in rural households who are at risk of nutritional deficiencies.

"Secretary" means the Secretary of Human Services.

"Food assistance programs" means programs including but not limited to the food stamp program, school breakfast and lunch programs, child care food programs, summer food service programs, the special supplemental programs for women, infants and children, congregate meal programs, and home-delivered meal programs.

"High-risk area" means any county or urban area where a significant percentage or number of those potentially eligible for food assistance programs are not participating in such programs.

Section 15. Program established. The Department of Human Services shall establish a nutrition outreach and public education program, to be administered by that Department in cooperation with the Department on Aging and

the State Superintendent of Education. The program shall be established to ensure maximum participation by eligible persons in federal and State food assistance programs. The program shall be structured so as to increase participation statewide but with particular attention to high-risk areas with a focus on certain at-risk populations.

Section 20. Program features. Directly or through contract, the Secretary shall administer a program of nutrition outreach that shall include but shall not be limited to the following features:

(1) Statewide coordination.

(2) Coordination of efforts among State and local agencies, including but not limited to the Department of Human Services, the Department on Aging, the State Superintendent of Education, and community agencies involved in food assistance programs.

(3) Compilation of statistical data from State and local agencies and dissemination to community organizations.

(4) Provision of information as to the availability of, eligibility criteria for, and application procedures for food assistance programs.

(5) Nutrition education.

Section 25. Grants to community organizations. The Secretary shall make grants from moneys appropriated for that purpose to community-based organizations or consortia of community-based organizations in high-risk areas for outreach activities. The outreach activities shall include but shall not be limited to the following:

(1) Identifying barriers to participation in food assistance programs, including the unavailability of such programs.

(2) Identifying at-risk populations and individuals within the at-risk populations who are not participating.

(3) Disseminating information to and conducting training sessions for local groups.

(4) Disseminating information as to program availability, individual or household eligibility, and application procedures.

(5) Providing nutrition education for at-risk populations.

(6) Assisting families and individuals in meeting eligibility requirements.

Section 30. Criteria for high-risk areas. In determining whether a particular geographic area is a high-risk area and eligible for a grant, the Secretary may consider factors including but not limited to the following:

(1) Whether 50% or more of those potentially eligible are not participating in the food stamp program, or whether a significant number of the potentially eligible population, particularly the working poor and the elderly, are not participating.

(2) Whether 25% or more of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals in the school lunch program.

(3) Infant mortality or morbidity rates.

(4) Economic indicators including but not limited to the unemployment rate, prevailing wages, and recent loss of job base.

(5) A high concentration of at-risk populations.

(6) The unavailability of food assistance programs in the area because of lack of provider participation or lack of knowledge about the existence of such programs.

Section 35. Reports. The Secretary shall report on or

before January 1 of each year to the Governor and the General Assembly concerning the implementation of this Act. The report shall include information as to community organizations funded through grants, the effects of the nutrition outreach and public education program on participation in food assistance programs, and recommendations regarding expansion of the nutrition outreach and public education program.

Section 40. Performance contingent on funding. The performance of activities required by this Act is contingent on the appropriation of funds for the purpose of nutrition outreach and public education.