

1 AN ACT in relation to health and nutrition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6 "At-risk populations" means populations including but not
7 limited to families with children receiving aid under Article
8 IV of the Illinois Public Aid Code, households receiving
9 federal supplemental security income payments, households
10 with incomes at or below 185% of the poverty guidelines
11 updated annually in the Federal Register by the U.S.
12 Department of Health and Human Services under authority of
13 Section 673(2) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of
14 1981, recipients of emergency food, elderly or disabled
15 persons, homeless persons, unemployed persons, and families
16 and persons residing in rural households who are at risk of
17 nutritional deficiencies.

18 "Director" means the Director of Human Services.

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

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

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

1 Departments of Children and Family Services, Commerce and
 2 Community Affairs, Employment Security, Labor, Public Health,
 3 Public Aid, and Veterans' Affairs, and the State
 4 Superintendent of Education. The program shall be
 5 established to ensure maximum participation by eligible
 6 persons in federal and State food assistance programs. The
 7 program shall be structured so as to increase participation
 8 statewide but with particular attention to high-risk areas
 9 with a focus on certain at-risk populations.

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

- 14 (1) Statewide coordination.
- 15 (2) Coordination of efforts among State and local
 16 agencies, including but not limited to the Departments of
 17 Public Aid and Public Health, the Department on Aging,
 18 the State Superintendent of Education, and community
 19 agencies involved in food assistance programs.
- 20 (3) Compilation of statistical data from State and
 21 local agencies and dissemination to community
 22 organizations.
- 23 (4) Provision of information as to the availability
 24 of, eligibility criteria for, and application procedures
 25 for food assistance programs.
- 26 (5) Nutrition education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

13 (6) Assisting families and individuals in meeting
14 eligibility requirements, including verification and
15 enrollment.

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

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

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

28 (3) Infant mortality or morbidity rates.

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

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

33 (6) The unavailability of food assistance programs

1 in the area because of lack of provider participation or
2 lack of knowledge about the existence of such programs.

3 Section 35. Reports. The Director shall report on or
4 before January 1 of each year to the Governor and the General
5 Assembly concerning the implementation of this Act. The
6 report shall include information as to community
7 organizations funded through grants, the effects of the
8 nutrition outreach and public education program on
9 participation in food assistance programs, and
10 recommendations regarding expansion of the nutrition outreach
11 and public education program.