



Eastern Illinois
Foodbank

**HEARTLAND
ALLIANCE**
ENDING POVERTY

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Eastern Illinois Foodbank Co-Hosts Community Panel Discussion on Poverty & Violence

URBANA, Illinois – Eastern Illinois Foodbank, in coordination with the Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty, will host a speaker panel and community conversation about poverty and violence on Monday, June 12. The discussion will be held from 6:30-7:45pm at the CityView Banquet Center, inside the Illinois Terminal Building (45 E University Ave. Champaign).

The event is open to the public and members of the community are strongly encouraged to attend. The discussion will focus on [Cycle of Risk](#), Heartland Alliance's 2017 Report on Illinois Poverty, exploring the relationship between poverty, violence and trauma. Panelists include State Representative Carol Ammons, Tracy Parsons (Community Coalition of Champaign County), Victor Dickson (Safer Foundation) and Katie Buitrago (Heartland Alliance).

1.7 million Illinoisans, nearly 14% of the state's population, lives below the federal poverty line. Since the Commission's creation in 2008 there have been dramatic changes in the economy and the political landscape and the number of people experiencing poverty has continued to increase, necessitating a renewed commitment and focus from the Commission.

"Eastern Illinois Foodbank is pleased to partner with the Commission on the Elimination of Poverty in presenting this community conversation," said Jim Hires, President and CEO of the Foodbank. "This is one of the many tools the Commission uses to learn first-hand the effects of poverty on individuals & communities and what efforts they need to support to change things across our state."

Hires, along with Andy Kulczycki of Community Services Center of Northern Champaign County (CSCNCC), are local appointed members of the Commission. Also in attendance at this important community conversation will be Commissioners from across the state, representatives from various state agencies, the Governor's office, community leaders, private foundations, researchers, advocates and human services providers.

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Eastern Illinois Foodbank works to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois through cooperation with a network of food pantries, agencies and other programs. The Foodbank distributes donated and discounted food throughout a 17-county service area in cooperation with over 200 member agencies and programs. Through these agencies, the Foodbank provides meals to more than 116,000 men, women and children each year. The Eastern Illinois Foodbank is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Illinois, the United Way of Coles County, and the United Way of Champaign County. For more information, please visit www.eifoodbank.org.

The Commission on the Elimination of Poverty was created in 2008 with unanimous support from the General Assembly. The Poverty Commission is an independent body with members from the General Assembly, the Governor's Office and the public representing issues and constituencies relevant to addressing poverty. For more information, please visit the Commission's website at poverty.illinois.gov.

The Commission's charge is twofold:

- *To create and monitor a specific, substantive, measurable strategic plan for cutting extreme poverty in Illinois; and*
- *To offer advice and comment on state matters that may positively or negatively impact the state's goal of ending poverty.*