

Illinois Hunger Coalition Community Quality Councils

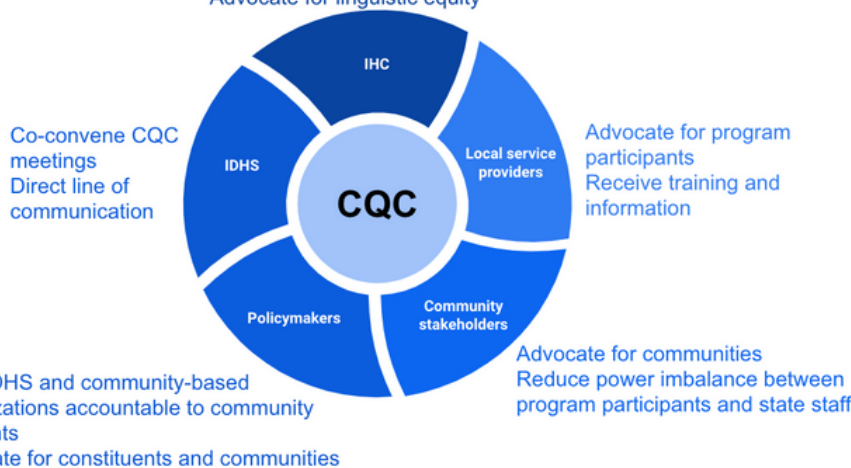


Best Practice Model

Since 2004, IHC has been co-convening Community Quality Council meetings (CQC) with the management of local Illinois Department of Human Service (IDHS) offices where 3 million low-income households access SNAP, TANF, and medical programs, in order to engage public and private service providers and community stakeholders in a collaborative partnership that is built on mutual trust and respect and that acknowledges that collaboration and integration will bring better outcomes for low-income communities of color. CQC meetings are organized at 16 IDHS offices in Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Kane Counties and four offices covering seven counties downstate in order to address the full spectrum of needs for all those who experience hunger and poverty.



- Co-convene CQC meetings
- Establish relationships
- Educate on best practices
- Inform on critical state and national legislation
- Advocate for linguistic equity



Through CQC's, IHC is able to better educate the public about policy changes impacting Illinois' most vulnerable. CQC's are critical for ensuring that low-income communities of color have access to health and nutrition programs that promote their well-being and bring in millions of federal dollars into those communities. By establishing collaborative relationships between IDHS staff, local service providers, community stakeholders and policymakers, the power imbalance between participants is eliminated. The collaborative policymaking IHC has developed through CQC's was key to averting drastic cuts to federal programs proposed by Congress and the Administration, and the communication channels facilitated by CQCs have been essential for troubleshooting issues with Illinois' new technology and for disseminating information during the recent government shutdown.

CQC attendance has grown, increasing the organizational membership to 400 community partners and elected officials and their staff. Members include: WIC agencies; community development corporations; early childhood development; senior programs; job training and employment programs; immigrant and refugee services; youth and family services; food banks and pantries; programs serving persons with disabilities; organizations serving ethnic populations; organizations serving returning citizens; legal aid programs; neighborhood associations; health centers and hospitals (including FQHC); organizations serving the LGBTQ population; veteran services; LIHEAP, domestic violence programs; homeless shelters; and township, city, and county leadership, health and human service departments, and senior services programs.