

**National Commission on Hunger
Conference Call**

Monday, August 18, 2014

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1. Executive Summary

Mr. Doar kicked off the August conference call with a brief explanation of the agenda and goals for the meeting. Dr. Anater then presented an overview of the RTI report, including

- background and objectives,
- methods, current and prospective scopes of food insecurity,
- key determinants of food insecurity,
- programmatic and policy responses to food insecurity, and
- RTI-developed recommendations on ways to improve food security.

Only one motion (the approval of the previous minutes) was proposed during the meeting, and the motion passed unanimously. Other operational components included an update on Commission travel funding and discussion of how to secure travel funding; dialogue about the selection of metrics that the Commission would focus on (very low food secure vs. others); and a brainstorming of potential topics and presenters for the September face-to-face meeting. The Commission determined that the primary objectives for the September meeting are to (1) gather information from guest speakers (e.g., ERS, FNS) that can help the Commission better understand certain programs and available research, (2) select metrics (e.g., very low food security) that will shape the Commission's work over the next 16 months, and (3) identify, if possible, next steps that could be developed into specific support activities that RTI can conduct to support the Commission's work. In addition to these primary goals, secondary objectives included following up with nominating committee members on travel funding for the Commission and discussing the communication strategy (e.g., social media) and website with RTI.

Action items from this call are included in Section 3; the agenda for the conference call is included in **Annex 1**. Slides from Dr. Anater's review of the RTI report are included in **Annex 2**.

2. Attendees

Name	Type
Mariana Chilton	Co-chair
Robert Doar	Co-chair
Ricki Barlow	Commission Member
Jeremy Everett	Commission Member
Susan Finn	Commission Member
Deborah Frank	Commission Member
Cherie Jamason	Commission Member
Billy Shore	Commission Member
Russell Sykes	Commission Member
Joe Mitchell	Deputy for Commission Member Ricki Barlow
Scott Carter	Contracting Officer Representative
Steve Beaulieu	Project Director (RTI)
Andrea Anater	Technical Lead (RTI)
Coleen Northeim	F2F Meeting Facilitator (RTI)
Jennifer Richkus	Meeting Scribe (RTI)

Not in attendance: Spencer Coates, Commission Member

3. Action Items

Action items will be retained for the current and previous meeting, as well as any “older” action items that have not yet been completed. The table below reflects the status of all items as of September 5, 2014.

Time Frame	Request Date	Action Item	Responsible Party	Status	Send to Commission
Immediate	August 18, 2014	RTI will address questions on the Hunger and Food Security report to the President	RTI	Complete	
Immediate	August 18, 2014	Mr. Carter will send the USDA travel funds decision letter to the Commission	FNS (Carter)	Complete	
Immediate	August 18, 2014	Mr. Carter and Commission members will reach out to the nominating parties to invite them to the next meeting	FNS (Carter), Commission, & RTI	In progress	
Immediate	August 18, 2014	Mr. Carter will reach out to his contacts on the Hill to secure a meeting room and relevant instructions	FNS (Carter) & RTI	Complete	
Immediate	August 18, 2014	Commission will send around suggestions for high-level research-based presentations and possible experts to present	Commission	Complete	
Immediate	August 18, 2014	Ms. Finn will compile a list of private-sector individuals or topics for the Commission to review	Commission (Finn)	Unknown	
Immediate	August 18, 2014	Mr. Carter and Mr. Sykes will contact Elaine Waxman and Lisa Davis for potential Feeding America presentation	FNS (Carter) & Commission (Sykes)	Complete	
Within 2 weeks	August 18, 2014	Commission will develop list of questions for proposed presenters at the September F2F	Commission	Complete	
Within 2 weeks	August 18, 2014	Develop and send out meeting minutes	RTI	Complete	
Within 2 weeks	August 18, 2014	Dr. Frank will send articles and expert names regarding moderate food insecurity and adverse health effects in children	Commission (Frank)	Complete	
For Sept. F2F meeting	July 21, 2014	Develop a Commission activities calendar that will include the Commission Report due date	RTI	In progress	09/07/14
For Sept. F2F meeting	July 21, 2014	Draft a Commission communications framework including website and social media mock-up, suggestions for effective field visits and public hearings, and general responsibilities to the public	RTI	In progress	09/08/14

Time Frame	Request Date	Action Item	Responsible Party	Status	Send to Commission
For Sept. F2F meeting	July 21, 2014	Provide Commission with example reports to Congress	RTI	In progress	09/07/14
After Sept. F2F meeting	June 24, 2014	Send Doodle for conference calls in October and November and F2F meeting in December	RTI	In progress	09/12/14
For Sept. F2F meeting	June 24, 2014	Develop website mockup	RTI	In progress	09/08/14
Ongoing	June 24, 2014	Provide ideas to RTI on research needs or areas where RTI could support the Commissioners	Commission	Ongoing	-

4. Operational Components of the Commission

In this meeting, operational components included votes on the meeting minutes, updates on travel and the website, and a discussion regarding the upcoming face-to-face meeting. Mr. Doar had proxy for Mr. Coates for today's call.

Motions and Votes

Minutes from the previous call were approved.

Communications Strategy

RTI will demonstrate the proposed website with functional requirements and some mocked up screens for the Commission at the September F2F meeting.

Update on Travel

Mr. Carter will send the USDA letter to the Commission stating that Commission travel funds have not been made available and are necessary for the Commission to do its work. The next step is for Congress to investigate flexibility in providing funding authority. Mr. Carter indicated that the next possible vehicle for funding is the Continuing Resolution, which must be passed by September 30. Senator Reid's office is investigating and plans to reach out to Representative Wolf's office.

The Commission will also contact their individual nominators to see if they can help address the travel funding issues. Mr. Everett recommended that the Commission invite all of the nominating parties to the F2F meeting to discuss the funding. Mr. Carter will invite the nominating parties to the September meeting with RTI's support as needed.

Mr. Doar suggested that the Commission convene at the September meeting but consider postponing future meetings until funding is resolved.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for September 8 from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm EST and will be located at the Capitol building. RTI will send logistical information the week before the meeting.

The following agencies, organizations, and individuals were proposed as presenters for the September meeting to assist the Commission in exploring aspects of programs and research that will inform Commission deliberations on appropriate metrics and focus of their work:

- **USDA Economic Research Service** to present on the food security measure, Current Population Survey (CPS) data, and research involving the food security measure.
- **USDA Food and Nutrition Service** to give an overview of demonstration studies and child hunger studies recently funded. Mr. Carter will contact Rich Lucas, Associate Administrator of Operations Policy Support.
- **USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion** to present on the Thrifty Food Plan. Mr. Carter will work with RTI to contact Angela Tagtow or Jackie Hagan.

- **Feeding America** to present on the recently released Hunger in America study about their network of food providers and the clients they serve. Mr. Carter and Mr. Sykes will reach out to Elaine Waxman and Lisa Davis.

Commission members will send around suggestions for questions for the presenters that will be covered at the September meeting. Ms. Norheim suggested that the Co-chairs pull together input from the Commission on these questions and provide them to the presenters the week before the meeting. The Co-chairs agreed to compile questions representing feedback from the Commission.

5. Commission Content Discussions

The conference call included discussions on the RTI report and future topics for further investigation.

Assignments for RTI

This subsection has been included as a placeholder for future assignments and discussions of assignments. Mr. Carter is developing a work order that will include (1) develop communication strategy and website and (2) provide meeting support to the Commission (e.g., setting up calls, identifying venue, logistical support, meeting notes). As additional work orders are developed (based on direction from the Commission), this section will summarize those assignments and work products.

RTI Report Status

Mr. Beaulieu stated that the RTI report is complete and that no revisions to the report are planned under the contract with FNS; however, the Commission can request additional information or clarifications, based on their review of the report. Mr. Carter noted that, as of this call, limited feedback has been provided from external parties. Mr. Carter will check to determine whether there are any other ways that the report will be used.

The Commission discussed the methods used in the CPS, such as conducting randomly selected telephone surveys, as well as the underlying assumptions and uncertainties, such as the underreporting of those without registered addresses or published phone numbers. Upon request from the Commission (codified in a work order from FNS), RTI will evaluate the information collected in the CPS survey regarding people who participate in SNAP and food programs, and report back to the Commission. Mr. Doar pointed out an inconsistent use of the term “hunger” in Section 2 of the report.

Dr. Frank stated that the current scope of food security in children is somewhat difficult to determine because the data are gleaned through surveys of adults rather than through direct interviews of children (e.g., adults may tend to underreport food insecurity due to the fear of social services involvement). Mr. Doar asked about the term “nutritional adequacy” and how that corresponds to food insecurity. Mr. Doar continued this line of thought, asking whether there were sufficient data to state that food insecurity increases susceptibility of diseases. Dr. Anater pointed out that the report noted that there is research indicating that food insecurity can be associated with susceptibility of diseases. Mr. Doar then asked if each one of the innovative strategies listed in the presentation was associated with a change in food insecurity, to which Dr. Anater responded that changes in food insecurity were measured, but not all studies observed an improvement.

Dr. Everett recommended that the Commission consider investigating examples where public and private collaborations have been successful, not only in food insecurity but other social issues, to help inform the Commission.

Other

For future meetings, the Commission noted the following areas to explore:

- How to reach/learn about groups that are really struggling (e.g., individuals with disabilities, tribes).
- Moderate food security as the threshold for adverse health effects in children. Dr. Frank noted that it may not be realistic to aim for improvements in moderate food security in children but emphasized that addressing very low food security is only the start and not the finish. Dr. Frank planned to send around articles, but in person presentations may help.
- Data from the private sector on topics such as WIC and food packages. Ms. Finn will compile a list of individuals or sectors for the Commission to review.

Annex 1: Meeting Agenda

Monthly Meeting
Monday, August 18, 2014 (2:00–4:00 pm ET)
(Robert to facilitate call)

United States: 1-877-309-2073
Participant Code: 432-971-570

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 2:00 pm–2:05 pm | Welcome and roll call (Robert, Mariana, and RTI) |
| 2:10 pm–2:30 pm | Review/approve July 21 meeting notes (Robert) |
| 2:10 pm–2:30 pm | Report on hunger and food security (RTI—Andrea Anater) |
| 2:30 pm–3:00 pm | Q&A from Commission on report (all) |
| 3:00 pm–3:20 pm | Discussion on September F2F meeting agenda items (Robert) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ERS briefing• Other experts from USDA• Other possible experts |
| 3:20 pm–3:40 pm | Discussion on very low food insecurity (Robert) |
| 3:45 pm–3:55 pm | Administrative issues (Robert) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status of funding for travel (Scott)• Website (RTI)• Site visits (Robert) |
| 3:55 pm–4:00 pm | Summary—Action items (RTI and Co-chairs) |

Annex 2 –Presentation on the RTI Report


RTI International

Agenda

National Commission on Hunger
Teleconference Call
Monday, August 18, 2014 (2:00 – 4:00 PM EST)
Conference Call-in No: (877) 309-2073
Participant Code: 432-971-570

I.	Welcome and Roll Call (Robert, Mariana, and RTI)	2:00 – 2:05
II.	Review/Approve July 21 Meeting Notes (Robert)	2:05 – 2:10
III.	Report on Hunger and Food Security (RTI – Andrea Amstar)	2:10 – 2:30
IV.	Q&A from Commission on Report (all)	2:30 – 3:00
V.	Discussion on September F2F meeting Agenda Items (Robert)	3:00 – 3:20
	a. ERS briefing	
	b. Other experts from USDA	
	c. Other possible experts	
VI.	Discussion on Very Low Food Insecurity (Robert)	3:20 – 3:40
VII.	Administrative Issues (Robert)	3:45 – 3:55
	a. Status of funding for travel (Scott)	
	b. Website (RTI)	
	c. Site visits (Robert)	
VIII.	Summary – Action Items (RTI and Co-Chairs)	3:55 – 4:00

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RTI International



Current and Prospective Scope of Hunger and Food Security in America: A Review of Current Research (Report Overview)

Prepared by RTI International
National Commission on Hunger

August 18, 2014

RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

www.rti.org

Overview

- Background & Objectives
- Methods
- Report highlights
- Questions

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Background & objectives

- Address Section 743 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76)
- Conduct “an assessment of the existing (as of January 17, 2014) and prospective scope of domestic hunger and food insecurity. We anticipate that given time constraints this assessment will consist of a review of extant data and literature on domestic hunger and food insecurity.”
- Complete task within 11 weeks
- Provide “jumping off” point for the National Commission on Hunger and the President, Congress, and the public with a deeper understanding of food insecurity

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Methods

- Conducted “scoping” literature review and environmental scan (2008-present)
 - Encompassed peer-reviewed literature, government and non-profit organizations’ reports, and commissioned papers
 - Focused on capturing the state of science, particularly regarding what has and has not worked in food security interventions
- Utilized multiple search types
 - Electronic databases: Collaborated with technical expert panel and FNS to generate search parameters and databases likely to provide best information
 - Targeted Website and general Internet searches: Examined websites recommended by expert panel, FNS, and RTI experts and entered various configurations of search terms

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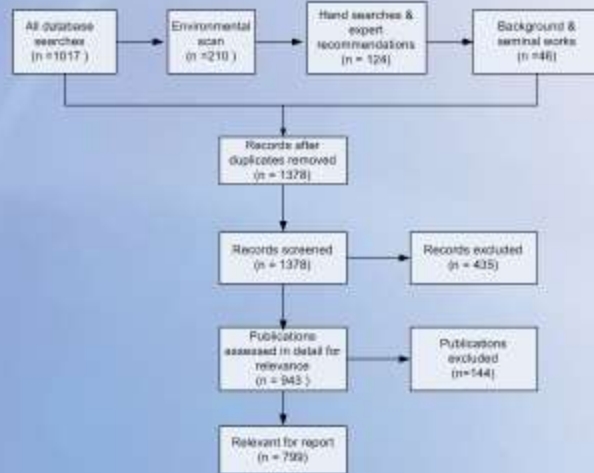
Methods (cont.)

- Utilized multiple search types (cont.)
 - General searches: Allowed Google to search for examples beyond those organizations in targeted search
 - Manual searches: Employed “handsearches” to examine selective publications not discovered through electronic searches
- Developed eligibility criteria for inclusion
- Designed and used a structured data extraction form to synthesize data

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Disposition of references reviewed



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Measurement of food security

- Information collected since 1995 on Current Population Survey (CPS)
- Calculated based on responses to a series of questions
- Assessed over 12 months
- Measures prevalence and severity
- Levels:
 - **High**-No problems/anxiety; consistent access to enough food.
 - **Marginal**- Some problems/anxiety re: accessing adequate food, but the quality, variety, and quantity of their food intake were not substantially reduced.
 - **Low**-Reduced quality, variety, and desirability of diets, but quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns not substantially disrupted.
 - **Very low**-At times, eating patterns of >1 member disrupted and food intake reduced because lack money & other resources for food.

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Current scope of food insecurity (2013)

- 14.5% (17.6 mil) households (HHs) food insecure; 49 mil people
 - 8.8% (10.7 mil) HHs low food security (LFS)
 - 5.7% (7.0 mil) HHs very low food security (VLFS)
 - 12.4 mil adults in VLFS HHs
- 20% HHs with children food insecure
 - 10% adults only food insecure
 - 10% both children and adults food insecure (3.9 mil); 8.3 mil children
 - 1.2% (463,000 HHs), child VLFS; 977,000 children (1.3% of children)

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Prospective scope of food security

- Identified minimal research on topic
- Considered effects of three scenarios
 - Effects of aging population
 - Changes to race/ethnic composition of population
 - Shifts in working age population

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Select key determinants of food insecurity

- Individual and household characteristics
 - Incomes near or below the FPL (34%) vs. above (7%)
 - HHs with children (20%); children <6 (21%) headed single woman (35%) or man (24%) vs. married with children (13%)
 - Black (25%) and Hispanic (24%) vs. White (11%)
- Contextual factors
 - Economic hardships and income volatility
 - Disability/poor health
 - Increasing energy and food prices
 - Housing costs
 - Unemployment and underemployment

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Consequences of food insecurity

- Nutritional adequacy is single most important determinant of health
- Food insecurity increases susceptibility to diseases and affects quality of life
- Children suffer physical, intellectual, emotional developmental impairments
- Food insecurity is incompatible with social & economic sustainability:
 - Reduced skills, educational attainment & productivity;
 - Higher levels of un- and underemployment & welfare dependence

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Responses to food insecurity

1. Participating in public food & financial assistance programs ("safety net")
2. Obtaining food from non-governmental food providers
3. Using individually developed food acquisition coping strategies

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Federal nutrition assistance programs

- Employ innovative strategies in SNAP
 - Expanding eligibility
 - Increasing benefits
 - Revising asset rules
 - Performing outreach activities
- Employ innovative strategies in child-focused programs
 - Expanding eligibility in WIC
 - Simplifying application process for school meals
 - Expanding eligibility for school meals
 - Increasing availability of school breakfast
 - Offering universal-free breakfast
 - Enhancing summer food benefits

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Private food providers and food environment

- **Employ innovative strategies in the private food setting**
 - Create resource hubs to integrate services
 - Place food pantries in schools
- **Employ innovative strategies in the food environment**
 - Conduct community assessments
 - Promote CSAs
 - Locate supermarkets in low income neighborhoods
 - Provide nutrition and financial management education

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Recommendations

- **Strengthen household economic security**
 - Encourage employment opportunities and increased wages
 - Improve the affordability of housing
 - Improve the affordability of health insurance
 - Develop financial incentives targeted to low income residents
 - Support nutrition and financial management education

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Recommendations (cont.)

- **Maintain and strengthen federal food and nutrition assistance programs**
 - Ensure benefit adequacy of SNAP
 - Increase availability and participation in summer meals
 - Encourage Community Eligibility Options
- **Promote collaborations both among and within public and private service providers**
 - Strengthen The Emergency Food Assistance Program
 - Provide outreach to link clients to safety net programs
- **Strengthen the charitable system**
 - Incentivize charitable donations