

Food Security Council

January 4, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Edward Simmer, director of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and chair of the Food Security Council (Council), welcomed members of the Council and the public. He provided a brief overview of the guiding proviso and charge of the Council. He also reminded individuals that the meeting would be recorded. A recording of the meeting is available at scdhec.gov/fsc.
- Council members in attendance included:
 - Dr. Ed Simmer, Council Chair
 - Dr. Rhea Bentley, South Carolina State University-Public Service Activities
 - Virgie Chambers, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)
 - Amber Gillum, South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS)
 - Rowan Goodrich, South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA)
 - Rhonda Matthews (in attendance for Dr. Tarana Khan), Clemson University-Public Service Activities
 - Dr. Kevin Wessinger, South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
 - Bentley White, DHEC
 - Chris Whitmire, South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA)

Progress Update

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Simmer gave an update on the progress of the Council and its work to finalize recommendations and draft a report to be presented to the General Assembly. He indicated the Council is on track to finalize and submit a report by the required deadline.

Review of Draft Report Outline

Kayla David

- Kayla presented the proposed outline of the draft report, highlighting the key components of content areas. The Council agreed to the outline, acknowledging that during their review period, revisions could be made as appropriate.

Discussion of Submitted Public Comments

All

- Dr. Simmer acknowledged that public comments had been received on the draft recommendations and distributed to the Council for their awareness and discussion. He asked if

the Council had any questions or specific comments they wished to discuss; the Council determined no discussion was needed.

Final Recommendations Discussion + Voting

All

- Dr. Simmer began the discussion by giving an overview of the previous meeting's recommendations and voting process. He then stated that the process for today's meeting would be to conduct final votes on the recommendations organized by overarching theme/category.
 - **Recommendations #1 (Funding Change SC Program Expansion) and #15 (Increase the Gross Income Limit for SNAP Benefits)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #2 (SC Food Policy Council Request for Partnership), #3 (SC Food Policy Council Funding), and #5 (Create or invest in a statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Food Security Council findings and recommendations)** – recommendations #2 and #3 were tabled during the December 19th Council meeting. Clarification was given by Clemson Extension regarding the purpose of the SC Food Policy Council and the funding request. Upon further discussion, the Council determined recommendations #2 and #3 should be removed as individual recommendations and combined with #5. The Council voted unanimously to include the amended recommendation in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #4 (Local communities and stakeholders must work collaboratively with the SCDE to increase promotion and awareness of Summer Program Food Service (Summer Break Café) opportunities, which can lead to additional viable sponsors and accessible sites for the program and #18 (Recommend implementation and funding of Summer EPT program in Summer 2025)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #6 (Establish a statewide web-based care coordination referral system that addresses food insecurity, among other social determinants of health), #10 (Explore the potential of a “no-wrong” door application and/or eligibility system to make it easier for the public to access public programs and services across agencies), and #12 (Create a centralized food resource map for combating food insecurity)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #8 (Expand community garden programs in the state), #9 (Increase the availability of fresh produce at variety stores), #13 (Promote farmers and farmers' market participation in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)), and #14 (Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report, with an amendment to #8 to include all stakeholders who expressed interest during the public comment period.
 - **Recommendations #16 (Increase Coordination between SNAP and WIC) and #17 (Barrier Removal Strategies)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.

- **Recommendations #7 (Address challenges facing food donation including liability protection and education) and #11 (Allow qualifying persons with a drug felony conviction to be eligible to receive SNAP benefits in South Carolina)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.

Wrap-up + Next Steps

All

- Dr. Simmer indicated that the draft report should be sent to Council members for review and comment by January 9th. Once comments are submitted to DHEC support staff by January 17th, the report will be finalized for the January 22nd meeting, where the Council will vote to submit as final.