



*Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor*

Executive Order

NUMBER THIRTY FOUR (2014)

THE COMMONWEALTH COUNCIL ON BRIDGING THE NUTRITIONAL DIVIDE

Importance of the Initiative

The foundation for a new Virginia economy rests upon the pillars of a world-class education system, infrastructure, business climate, and workforce. In order to cultivate and sustain economic success, all Virginians, especially children and young adults, must have access to nutritious, affordable, and locally-sourced foods that will enable them to learn, grow, and thrive. We must work to bridge the nutritional divide in Virginia by pursuing these objectives with a cross-Secretariat, public-private approach, relying on the Commonwealth's vast resources and the vibrancy of our large agriculture sector.

Establishment of the Council

Accordingly, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor under Article V of the Constitution of Virginia and under the laws of the Commonwealth, and subject to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby establish the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide ("Council").

Initiative

The Council will seek to achieve three major objectives through partnerships across the Governor's Cabinet, with state agencies, national, regional, and local nonprofits, local governments, schools, and private businesses, and with increased data sharing and research:

1. Eliminate childhood hunger in Virginia by increasing participation in nutrition assistance programs:
 - Increase school division and community participation in a) the Community Eligibility Provision, b) the Summer Food Service Program, c) the Child and Adult Care Food Program, d) alternative breakfast models, and e) additional pathways to expand meal access as determined by the Council.
 - Increase eligible household participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
2. Promote Virginia’s leading industry – agriculture – and increase access to affordable, healthy, and local foods:
 - Improve food distribution systems to better serve a diversifying Virginia agricultural economy
 - Improve accessibility to farmers’ markets
 - Increase acceptance of SNAP/Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and WIC/EBT at farmers’ markets
 - Encourage the development of innovative and sustainable retail models to provide access to healthy foods in areas classified as food deserts
 - Increase farm-to-school and other farm-to-institution programs
3. Facilitate efficient and effective local initiatives related to community nutrition, food access, and health strategies and programs across the Commonwealth:
 - Support the development of regional agricultural councils, nutrition education programs, and additional community and learning gardens
 - Serve as a communications hub for initiatives and convener of partners, and recognize and promote innovative local programs, that align with the council’s mission

Composition of the Council

The Chair of the Council will be the First Lady of Virginia and consist of representatives of the Secretaries of Agriculture and Forestry, Commerce and Trade, Education, Health and Human Resources, Veterans and Defense Affairs, state and local agencies, the agriculture and business communities, leaders in education and health, and others with appropriate expertise, as appointed by the Governor.

Staffing

Staff support for the Council will be provided by the Office of the Governor, and any other agencies or offices as may be designated by the Governor. The Council will serve in an advisory role, in accordance with § 2.2-2100 of the *Code of Virginia*, and will meet upon the call of the Chair at least four times per year.

Accountability

The Council shall develop a three-year plan to achieve its objectives and shall regularly report to the Governor and the Children’s Cabinet. The plan shall include quantifiable metrics and associated goals for each objective, and progress toward achieving these goals shall be made available to the public via an online scorecard.

Effective Date of the Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective upon its signing and shall remain in force and effect until January 12, 2018, unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 20th day of November, 2014.



Terence R. McAuliffe, Governor

Attest: _____
Levar M. Stoney, Secretary of the Commonwealth