



## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### Eastern Illinois Foodbank Announces Retirement of President and CEO

**URBANA, IL, (09/29/2020)** — Eastern Illinois Foodbank today announced that Jim Hires, President and CEO, has decided to retire after fifteen years of service with the organization. He will continue as President and CEO of Eastern Illinois Foodbank until the position is filled or his planned final day of April 2, 2021, allowing the Foodbank time for a successful transition.

Hires has served in his current role since May 2005. During his tenure as President and CEO, Hires achieved the following accomplishments:

- Increased the Foodbank's reach from 14 counties to 18
- Grew food distribution from 2.2 million pounds per year to nearly 11.5 million
- Increased the number of individuals served per month from 48,800 to 55,000
- Acquired the oversight of the Peoria Area Food Bank as a partner distribution organization for Feeding America
- Increased the number of Foodbank employees from ten to more than thirty

"Being able to lead the work of the Foodbank these past years is the most important, fulfilling and humbling thing I have done in my entire work life. I have felt honored and grateful every day to address alleviating hunger with an amazing and talented staff, who made this an extraordinary place to work each day," Hires said. "I have always been buoyed by the support and encouragement of our community, donors and our Boards of Directors. I was able to say daily that someone got to eat today because of what we did."

"We are pleased to congratulate Jim on reaching this milestone of retirement, and more specifically to congratulate him on the numerous long-term contributions he has made while at Eastern Illinois Foodbank," said EIF Board Chair Marc Bralts. "He leaves EIF equipped with the tools to identify future needs and act on them in support of the East / Central Region of Illinois. We thank him for his leadership and he will be missed by our local community, as well as his food bank colleagues across the country."

"I've known Jim now for more than twenty years, and although he may retire from his job, he won't from his involvement in meaningful projects and missions. It's in his DNA," said Steve Ericson, Executive Director of Feeding Illinois. "Jim has always been an example for all of us as we pass through the seasons of life to make the next one better than the last, leave each place better than you found it, and treat every person with understanding and respect."

Hires came to the Foodbank from Columbus, Ohio where he worked as an executive in the cable television industry for nearly 20 years. Prior to that, he worked as a school administrator in various Champaign County school systems for nearly fifteen years. Jim's experience in nonprofit organizations began in earnest after volunteering at Northern Illinois Foodbank in the mid-nineties, where he served on the Board of Directors. He has also been active in community service through the Urban League, various commissions and boards, and has volunteered within the anti-poverty and social justice sectors.

After leaving the Foodbank, Jim plans to remain active in various capacities addressing issues of food insecurity, poverty and social justice, as well as pursuing his interest in indigenous peoples worldwide.



Eastern Illinois  
**FOODBANK**

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### ***About Eastern Illinois Foodbank***

*Eastern Illinois Foodbank works to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois through cooperation with a network of food pantries, agencies and programs. The Foodbank distributes donated and discounted food throughout an 18-county service area in cooperation with 170 member agencies and programs. Through these agencies, the Foodbank provides food to more than 100,000 different men, women and children each year. Eastern Illinois Foodbank is a member of Feeding America Feeding Illinois and the United Way of Champaign County.*