



The Need Remains: Northeast Iowa Food Bank Calls for Continued Support Following End of Government Shutdown

WATERLOO, Iowa (November 14, 2025) — With the recent end of the federal government shutdown and the resumption of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, the Northeast Iowa Food Bank (NEIFB) is grateful for this progress but is urging the community to understand one critical reality: the need remains.

During the shutdown, the Food Bank saw a surge in demand for food assistance as individuals and families faced uncertainty about their benefits and overall financial stability. That demand has not subsided. At the same time, NEIFB continues to experience a shortage of both funds and food and anticipates this strain will continue into the foreseeable future.

"We are relieved the government shutdown has come to an end, but the truth is the need has not," said Barbara Prather, Executive Director of the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. "Many individuals and families are still trying to recover from weeks of uncertainty and added strain on their household budgets. We are doing everything we can to source and distribute food, but we cannot keep up with this demand without the ongoing support of our community."

SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program in the country, helping eligible low-income individuals and families buy groceries each month. When that support is disrupted, reduced, or simply not enough to meet the cost of living, families often turn to food banks and pantries to fill the gap. NEIFB serves 16 counties in northeast Iowa. More than 45,000 people in the area we serve face food insecurity every day, including 1 in 6 children. Local data shows just how essential SNAP and community support are:

- In northeast Iowa, more than 14,000 households are on SNAP, with an estimated economic impact of more than \$7 million.
- SNAP is the safety net. For every 1 meal food banks provide, SNAP provides 9. Food banks and food pantries cannot fill the void left when SNAP is reduced or unavailable.
- Northeast Iowa food pantries saw a 51 percent increase in visits during the first 12 days of this month compared to the same timeframe in October.
- Nearly 10 percent of those visits came from households that had not visited a food pantry before.

As NEIFB approaches the holiday season, requests for assistance are expected to remain high. The Food Bank serves 16 counties across northeast Iowa through programs such as the Cedar Valley Food Pantry, Mobile Food Pantries, the Backpack Program, School Markets, and partnerships with more than 127 agencies.

"We believe food is a basic human right," Prather added. "Every dollar and every donation helps us get nutritious food to children, seniors, and families who are simply trying to make it through the month. Your support truly makes a difference."

The Northeast Iowa Food Bank is asking individuals, businesses, congregations, and community groups to continue giving in any way they can through financial donations, food drives, or volunteering.

To make a financial gift, visit neifb.org or mail a donation to:

Northeast Iowa Food Bank
1605 Lafayette Street
Waterloo, IA 50703

For more information about how to help, please call the Food Bank at 319-235-0507 or visit neifb.org.

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About NEIFB: The Northeast Iowa Food Bank (NEIFB) is a proud member of Feeding America® and the Iowa Food Bank Association. NEIFB distributes nutritious food and grocery products to over 140 nonprofit organizations and programs that help families and individuals facing food insecurity. Last year, the Food Bank distributed over 8.4 million meals within its 16-county service area. For over 40 years, the Food Bank has alleviated hunger and provided nutrition education through its eight programs: Agency Distribution, Backpack, Cedar Valley Food Pantry, Kids Café, Mobile Food Pantry, School Market, Senior Nutrition, and Summer Feeding. To learn more, visit neifb.org and follow us on social media.