



State Investment in Choose Iowa Connects Iowa Farms to Iowa Families; Northeast Iowa Food Bank Reacts

WATERLOO, IA (May 8, 2026) – Iowa policymakers approved \$200,000 to continue the state’s Choose Iowa initiative, an investment that will help food bank partners purchase Iowa-grown foods while creating additional market opportunities for local farmers. Food banks provide matching funds to double the impact of the state investment. This year, the Choose Iowa program expanded to include schools.

Choose Iowa connects Iowa’s six food banks with local farmers. These purchases enable Iowa-grown foods, such as fruits, vegetables, meat, and cheese, to be distributed through food pantries.

The program benefits farmers, families, and food banks alike. In 2025, the six food banks in the Iowa Food Bank Association distributed 54 million meals. Despite generous donations, the food banks collectively spent an additional \$9 million in 2025 compared to 2024. Choose Iowa provides added resources so food banks can purchase more fresh, local foods for Iowa families.

“Iowans want to help each other, and Choose Iowa is a program that supports families, farmers, and food banks,” said Katie Sorrell, Executive Director of the Iowa Food Bank Association. “A recent survey found that more than 80% of Iowa voters want to expand Choose Iowa.”

“The Choose Iowa program helps us provide more fresh, nutritious Iowa-grown food to families across northeast Iowa while also supporting local farmers and producers,” said Barbara Prather, Executive Director of the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. “At a time when demand continues to rise, this investment gives food banks additional tools to meet the growing need and strengthens the connection between Iowa agriculture and Iowa communities.”

“The Choose Iowa Food Bank Program continues to be a successful program because it connects agriculture directly to Iowa families. It gives the community the opportunity to plant, produce, and donate food locally. The food banks’ dollar-for-dollar match doubles the impact. I’m proud to continue this funding in our budget and add new funding this year for schools to be in the Choose Iowa Program,” said Rep. Mommsen, chair of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee.

To learn more, please visit neifb.org and iowafba.org.

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About the Iowa Food Bank Association: The Iowa Food Bank Association supports six Feeding America food banks that serve Iowa to ensure sufficient food is accessible to all. Formed in 2009, the Iowa Food Bank Association was created as a way to foster collaboration and make hunger relief more effective and efficient within the state of Iowa. The association helps Feeding America food banks through advocacy, food and fund procurement, disaster relief, food assistance outreach and operations. The six Feeding America food banks that comprise the Iowa Food Bank Association include Food Bank of Siouxland, Inc., Food Bank for the Heartland, Food Bank of Iowa, Northeast Iowa Food Bank, River Bend Food Bank and Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP) Food Reservoir. Find out more at iowafba.org.

About NEIFB: The Northeast Iowa Food Bank (NEIFB) is a proud member of Feeding America® and the Iowa Food Bank Association. We believe food is a basic human right and work every day to help ensure people have access to the nourishment they need. NEIFB distributes nutritious food and grocery products to more than 140 nonprofit organizations and programs serving individuals and families across northeast Iowa. Last year, the Food Bank distributed more than 8.6 million meals across its 16-county service area: Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Fayette, Floyd, Grundy, Howard, Mitchell, Poweshiek, Tama, and Winneshiek counties. For 45 years, the Food Bank has helped alleviate hunger and provide 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. NEIFB is working toward its bold aspiration: Every Meal. Every Day. Everyone. Please visit neifb.org and follow us on social media.