



FEEDING FUTURES

Capacity Campaign Announced to Expand and Renovate NEIFB

SUMMER 2025



NORTHEAST IOWA
FOOD BANK

From the Director

Over the past few months, I've had the opportunity to speak with many of you about the work the Northeast Iowa Food Bank is doing across our region. Recently, our conversations have focused on three key areas: our Capacity Campaign, proposed government cutbacks, and general education about food bank programs.

The Capacity Campaign is essential to ensuring long-term food access across northeast Iowa. By expanding cold storage and our clean room, we'll be able to accept more perishable food, often the most nutritious, and avoid turning away valuable product. When the Food Bank began, most of the food we distributed was non-perishable. Today, the need for fresh food continues to grow, and we must be ready to meet it.

A larger Cedar Valley Food Pantry will allow us to serve families with greater dignity. A remodeled volunteer area will help us attract more volunteers, and improve their experience. At its core, this campaign is about having the space and resources to meet growing demand, now and in the future.

We also need to raise our voices against proposed government cuts that would harm those most in need, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities. The proposed "Big Beautiful Bill" would slash SNAP funding by \$300 billion, and shift major costs to states, requiring Iowa to contribute at least \$40 million just to maintain the program. This comes as the state has already borrowed more than \$900 million to balance its budget.

The bill also proposes redefining "dependents," which could require parents of second graders to meet stricter work requirements, just to keep food on the table. These changes would increase the number of people turning to us for help. Senators Grassley and Ernst need to hear from you, so please reach out and urge them to oppose these harmful cuts to SNAP.

At the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, we are committed to fighting food insecurity every day. But we can't do it alone. To keep meeting the rising need, we must be equipped to accept food, manage resources wisely, and advocate for those we serve. Please continue to support our work, whether by donating, volunteering, or speaking out, so we can continue supporting the most vulnerable in our community.

Thank you for standing with us.



Our Board

Emily Girsch, Michelle Swanson, Louise Scott, Meagan Miller, Bailey Dudley, Cheryl Erb, Chris Schwartz, Corey Lorenzen, Doug Wiering, Felicia Smith-Nalls, Houston Campbell, Jeanne Miller, Jennifer Peters, Jordan Kettner, Ken Cutts, Kirsten Juhl, Kristy Bata, Kyle Baker, Leonard Hanson, Linda Laylin, Matt Wolcott, Nate Lewandoski, Nikki Kuhn, Reggie Schmitt, Rob Victor, Ryan Rand, Susan Hauber, Timi-Brown Powers

Our Leadership

Barbara Prather, Alisha Rulapaugh, Shannon Bass, Ashley Christensen, Abby Turpin, Mike Weiss

Our Staff

Julie Bergstrom, Jeff Bowman, Nick Cutsforth, Cristian Del Carmen, Jennifer Diehl, Kyle Duggan, Jeff Eastman, Josie Finder, JoDee Flockhart, Jim Flood, Carlin French, Craig Gorman, Kayti Grable, Tia Gutierrez, Elizabeth Hill, Katrina Hogan, Queen Holmes, Rebecca Huber, Amanda James, Brandon Lambert, Lisa Levendusky, Rhonda McBride, Raechel Miller, Taleia Moore, Amber Moreland, Kendall Renken, Tyson Roberts, Bridgit Sassaman, Lisa Spitler, Kirsten Spurgin, Katelyn Steen, Joshua Stevens, Shirlene Stigler, Tom Swalin, Alyson Walker, Freddie Williams, Karissa Wright

In Case You Missed It

Empty Bowls

We're excited to share that this year's Empty Bowls fundraising event was our most successful in over five years, with 379 tickets sold! Thanks to the incredible support of our community, this event not only raised vital funds to support our mission but also gave us the honor of announcing our Capacity Campaign to expand and renovate our building. This much-needed project will allow us to better serve the growing number of individuals and families facing food insecurity in northeast Iowa. To everyone who attended, donated, volunteered, or bid on our auctions, thank you.



STAMP OUT HUNGER

For the 33rd year, the National Association of Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive took place, acting as the largest one-day food drive in the nation. This year, Cedar Falls and Waterloo collected over 19,000 pounds of food to be redistributed to NEIFB's 16-county service area. We thank everyone who contributed to making this event successful.



Spring Sack Lunch

Our annual Spring Sack Lunch event is always a massive hit as an easy way to support NEIFB by purchasing a \$10 sack lunch. This year, there were over 1,276 sack lunches purchased by community members and local businesses, making it one of our most successful to date. Thank you to everyone who purchased a sack lunch!



Coming Up!

Personal Care Drive

NEIFB's annual Personal Care Drive will take place from July 1st to August 2nd where we encourage community members to donate personal care items such as soap, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, feminine hygiene products, toothpaste/toothbrushes, diapers, etc. For a list of drop off sites, visit our website at neifb.org.



Grow a Row

With our upcoming Capacity Campaign construction, we're anticipating a 30% cut of our NEIFB Community Garden during each year of the building process. To fill that gap, we're asking community members to Grow a Row! To join our Grow a Row movement, add an extra row (or even just a pot) to your garden, grow your produce like usual, harvest, and donate to NEIFB. Every row counts! Contact our Food Sourcing Manager, Becca Huber, at bhuber@neifb.org to get involved.



WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! With the launch of the state's Healthy Kids Iowa program, NEIFB is in urgent need of volunteers to help support local children this summer.

IF INTERESTED CONTACT RMILLER@NEIFB.ORG

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON ALL
THINGS NEIFB!



CAPACITY CAMPAIGN

From Hunger to Hope: Building a Secure Tomorrow

The Northeast Iowa Food Bank is proud to announce the launch of its \$14 million Capacity Campaign, themed From Hunger to Hope: Building a Secure Tomorrow. This renovation and expansion project will upgrade the Food Bank's facility, enhance critical infrastructure, and strengthen operations to meet the growing need for food assistance across northeast Iowa.

Founded in 1981 during the Farm Crisis, the Northeast Iowa Food Bank has spent more than 40 years providing food and hope to families throughout the region. Today, food insecurity is at an all-time high. As we serve more people than ever before, we've outgrown our current space and urgently need to expand.

More than 40,850 people in northeast Iowa are facing food insecurity, including over 13,780 children. Just one year ago, that number was 29,270. In response to this increasing demand, the Capacity Campaign will allow us to expand and renovate our facility to serve more people and strengthen NEIFB programs across our 16-county service area.

"The need in our community is greater than ever," said Barbara Prather, Executive Director of the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. "Every day, we hear from families, seniors, and children who are struggling to put food on the table. We've reached a point where our current facilities and resources simply can't keep up. This expansion isn't about growth for growth's sake. It's about ensuring no one is turned away because we lack the space or tools to meet the need."

Though based in the Cedar Valley, the Food Bank's reach is wide, serving more than 140 partner agencies and school markets across northeast Iowa. But we are nearing capacity.

"People often forget it's not just Waterloo and Cedar Falls," said Ron Steele, Capacity Campaign Spokesperson. "The Northeast Iowa Food Bank serves 16 counties, and trucks head out early every morning, sometimes driving two or three hours to reach families in need."

The From Hunger to Hope: Building a Secure Tomorrow campaign will fund strategic improvements to better serve those who rely on us, including:

- Expanded freezer and cooler space to increase food storage and reduce waste.
- Dedicated volunteer areas to enhance safety and maximize impact.
- Improved emergency preparedness to respond swiftly to crises.
- Modern equipment and technology to streamline distribution.
- Community education spaces for nutrition education, meal preparation, and gardening.

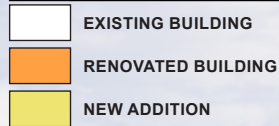


ELECTRONIC PLEDGE FORM

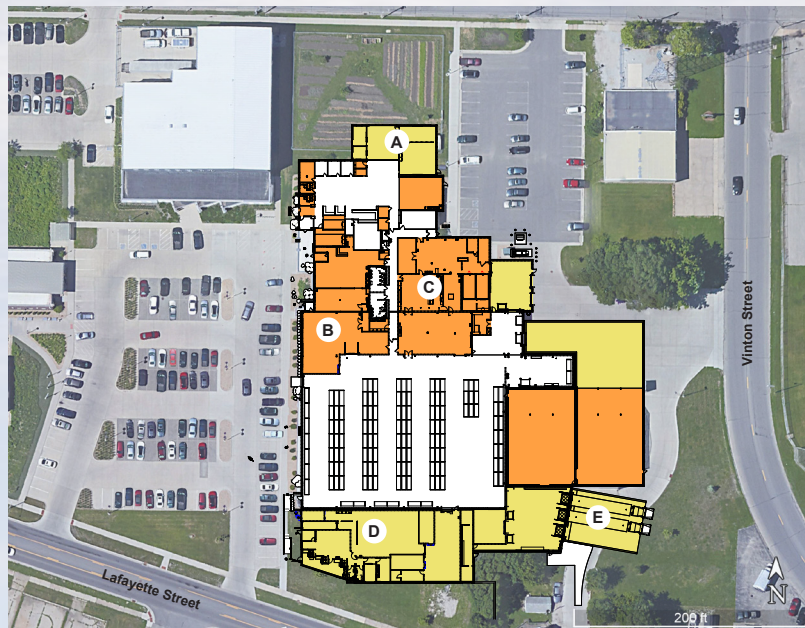


ONLINE DONATION

LEGEND



- A. Office Addition
- B. Renovated Volunteer Area
- C. Renovated Kitchen
- D. New Pantry
- E. New Loading Dock



“When we built this facility, I was on the Board at the time, and I thought it would last us 50 or 60 years,” said Ken Cutts, Honorary Co-Chair of the Capacity Campaign. “But the need has grown far faster than we imagined. People want to help, and we have the support, but only if we have the space to take it.”

This campaign aims to increase annual meal distribution from 8.4 million to 10.5 million meals over the next five years and enhance support for core programs serving children, seniors, and families.

The Northeast Iowa Food Bank invites individuals, businesses, and community groups to join this vital mission. Every donation, no matter the size, helps build a future where no one in northeast Iowa goes hungry.

To support the Capacity Campaign, visit neifb.org/capacity or call (319) 235-0507.

OUR CAMPAIGN AMBASSADORS



Ken and Patty Cutts
Honorary Campaign Chairs



Ron Steele
Spokesperson



Michelle and Chad Swanson
Campaign Chairs

“This campaign is about more than food, it’s about people,” said Michelle Swanson, Capacity Campaign Co-Chair. “Any one of us could be just one paycheck or life event away from needing help. Most people don’t realize how much food the Food Bank distributes every single day across 16 counties. This campaign gives us the chance to meet that need and ensure families across northeast Iowa have access to the support they deserve, today and into the future.”

Barb and Lola: The Heart of Empty Bowls

As we celebrate the incredible success of this year's Empty Bowls fundraiser – our most successful in over five years - we also pause to recognize two remarkable volunteers who are retiring from our Empty Bowls Committee: Barb Brainard and Lola Kapaun.

Barb and Lola have been instrumental in the success of Empty Bowls since 2016. Their journey began when they helped serve bread at the UAW Hall. "Barb Prather asked if our golf group, Queens of the Greens, would help serve bread," Lola recalls. "The next year, we helped distribute the baskets to the winning bidders, and we were hooked!"

When the event moved to the Waterloo Convention Center, they officially joined the committee and took on new roles, including assembling and organizing the beloved silent auction. "Seeing the room filled with donations is incredible," says Barb. "Setting up the silent auction on event day is rewarding, and we've received praise for its presentation."

Both women are deeply committed to the cause. "It is a vital event as I know how food insecurity affects children's learning," Barb adds. "The community's generosity always impresses me."

Though they'll each be stepping back to spend more time with their grandchildren, their impact will be felt for years to come. Their dedication, energy, and heart have helped shape Empty Bowls into the event it is today.

Thank you to Barb and Lola for everything. You will be missed!

Interested in joining our Empty Bowls Committee? Please email rmiller@neifb.org for more information.

School Market Program Expansion

The Northeast Iowa Food Bank is pleased to announce the expansion of its School Market Program, which provides access to nutritious food for students and families facing food insecurity. With the help of a generous donation from Dr. Jitu & Harshida Kothari Family, the School Market Program is making an even greater impact across our 16-county service area in the Waterloo Community School District.

The initiative placing pantry-style markets into schools and universities first started with the University of Northern Iowa's Panther Pantry in 2019, followed by Wartburg College, Hawkeye Community College, and Upper Iowa University obtaining their own pantries.

To formalize and expand the School Market Program, the Kothari Family generously sponsored the onboarding of the Waterloo Community School District, reaching 19 school sites. This donation was vital in stocking shelves with nutritious foods across Waterloo Schools. In just the first three months of 2025, the School Market Program has supported 1,346 visits, 635 households, 1,138 individuals, and over 5,300 pounds of food distributed in the Waterloo Community School District. One standout site is West High School which had 256 visits in January, 296 visits in February, and 338 visits in March. That's nearly 900 visits in just three months, with a total of 1,218 pounds of food distributed at that one school alone.

"We are grateful for the Kothari Family donation to help formalize our program and assist the Waterloo Community School District in meeting the basic needs of their students. We look forward to serving more schools, colleges, and universities in our 16 counties," said Shannon Bass, Director of Programs at NEIFB.

The School Market Program's expansion provides an essential resource for students, ensuring they have the food they need to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. By alleviating the burden of food insecurity, the program allows schools to focus on what matters most: the education and well-being of their students.

Honorariums & Memorials

Honorariums

Al & Dianne Schneider
By Barbara & Jim Prather
Bernice Watson
By Shirley Sizer
Cora Waterloo Super Target
By Ashley Heck
Griffin Searfoss
By Stanley & Donna Engel
Janet McClure
By Karlos McClure
Janis Hennings
By Steven & Janis Hennings
Jim Kriegel
By Gary & Jeannie Sieck
Lawrence Seery
By Nancy Seery
Leah and Co
By Shirley Merner
Marilyn Gibson
By Leanna Whitcome
Pastor Solvig Zamzo & Pastor David Shafer
By Darrel & Dixie Kramer
Purim
By Cheryl Staton
Sammy & Ty'arie
By James & Theresa Mahoney
Sgt. Joseph Morgan
By William & Sharlene Morgan

Memorials

Angela Smith, Dan Marth, Mike Downey
By Charlotte & Galen Greenzweig
Arnold Averhoff
By Karen Averhoff
Brian
By Debra Lee
Bud, Louise, Larry Lauer
By Cheryl Lauer
Caroll Berg
By Barbara & Jim Prather
Charles Trask
By Anne Usher
Cindy Brown
By Denise Brown
Darren Uhlenhopp
By Erika Uhlenhopp
David Chilcote
By Suzanne Bembridge
Deborah Willig
By Denise Willig
Dennis Gaede
By Marilyn Gaede
Dick Loughren
By Reggie & Suzan Schmitt
Don Hayes
By Mary Averhoff
Don Mc Ginnis
By Carolyn & Allen Nyhus
By Larry & Sharon Petersen
Don Novak
By Dorothy Novak
Doris McCready
By Grade Brietzke
Doris Slaikou
By Richard & Marcia Bechthold
Dorothy Knudson
By Debra & James Knudson
Dr. John & Bernadette McCoy
By John & Margaret McCoy
Dr. VDP Maguire
By Terence McCann
Forrest, Donna, & Warren Timmerman
By Barry Timmerman
Gene & Carmen Condon
By Debbie & Walter Broten
George Beran
By David & Sue Feltman
George Cavanaugh
By Kenneth Cavanaugh
Gertrude Lembke
By Fred Lembke
Ivan Averhoff
By Mary Averhoff

Jan Allen Schmidt
By Mary Twomey
Jerry Hancock
By David & Sue Feltman
Jim Busta
By Leroy & Shirley Bohr
Jo Everly
By S.A. Frahm
Joann Karns
By Kathryn Gillihan
Judith A. Cutler
By Charlene White
Judy Chelle
By Jon & Wendy Foote
Kent Ruby
By Brenda & Daniel Buseman
By Clint & Ann Wrede
By Jane Mertesdorf
By John Bouslog
By Jon & Jeanne Wiesley
By Michael & Vivikka Christiason
Larry Lee
By David & Sue Feltman
Lee Rempe
By Kathy Rempe
Lynda Carr
By Geraldine Mahnke
Ma & Pa
By Charles & Cindy Huber
Mark Keltner
By Pam Dohrn
Marlys Miller
By Kenneth Cavanaugh
Marry Ann Hesse
By David & Helen Duncan
By Kevin Halpin
By Brian Jensen
By Roy Baili
Maxine Morrison
By Donna Percy
By Jill Asbury
By Jill Myers
By Linda & John Ourada
By Susan Morrison
By David Coughlin
By Marcia & John Milner-Brage
Maynard & Edna Ruroden
By Nancy Ruroden
Melvin Such
By Friends & Family
By Cheryl Erb
By Ken & Cindy Losch
Monsignor Dean Walz
By Mike & Patty Weiss
Nettie Cahen & Mom
By John Cashen
Paul Wood
By Gretta Berghammer
By Becky & Jeff Etten

Paul Drew
By Lorraine Drew
Pope Francis 1
By David & Barbara Hennessey
Ralph Potratz
By Russell Potratz
Randy Harrison
By Jerry & Pamela Hamlyn
Ric Watson
By Jennifer Christiason
Richard Wuest
By Anthony & Colette Kuhn
Robert Kent Ruby
By Janet, Jeff, Angie, Matt, & Tonya Wagner & Family
Roger Wood
By Lyle & Carol Rasmussen
Ron LaVelle
By Robert LaVelle
Rupert Caballero
By Mathis Field Services LLC
Ruth Millar
By Carolyn Young
Ruth Peterson
By James Peterson
Scott Gibson
By Minetta Jones
Shirley Howard
By Jim Young
Shirley Williams
By Bruce & Suzanne Gettman
By Douglas Williams
By Janet Erpelding
By Julie Ritland
By Larry & Jacqueline Leutzinger
By Mark & Virginia Fienup
By Maynard & Mary Jean Murch
By Sheryl & William Paterson
By Kent Williams
By Douglas Brown
By Jamie Langner
By Joanna Ramsden-Meier
By Mary Zengue
Stan & Josephine Dostal
By James & Mary Jo Michael
Thomas Weissenfluh
By Dorothy & Wesley Weissenfluh
Virginia A. Holder
By James & Kirstin Ostrander
By Sharon Porter
Wesley G. Lage
By Audrey Lage
Will Hublla
By Bryan & Denise Sheehy



THANK YOU!
FOR SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

GRANTS

Caesars Foundation
Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa
Community Foundation of Grundy County
Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation
John Deere Foundation
Leighty Family Fund
Otto Schoitz Foundation
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Tama Co. Community Foundation
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