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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Food Bank of Lincoln Connects a Record 13.2 Million Meals to Southeast Nebraskans in Fiscal Year 2021

LINCOLN, Neb.—In its most recent fiscal year, the Food Bank of Lincoln connected neighbors in Southeast Nebraska to more meals than ever before in the organization’s 39-year history. Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, the Food Bank connected 13,216,958 meals to children and families, individuals, veterans and seniors living in its 16-county service area. Meals connected include pounds of food distributed through all Food Bank programs and partnerships as well as meals connected through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a meal as 1.2 pounds of food.

Of the total pounds of food distributed in fiscal year 2021, 38.5 percent was fresh produce.

A network of more than 50 community and nonprofit partners, generous supporters, donors and volunteers, and assistance from an AmeriCorps team enabled the Food Bank to surpass its previous record of 11,572,946 total meals connected set the previous fiscal year. In the three years prior to the pandemic, the Food Bank averaged 10 million meals connected per year.

“Our annual meals connected record is not one we delight in breaking,” said Food Bank President and CEO Michaella Kumke. “It reflects a reality about hunger in counties and communities in our immediate area and across the country. Generous and compassionate donor support allowed the Food Bank to respond to the astonishing need. Federal, state and city/county funds were also key. Increased USDA food purchases provided some of the best product mix, including fresh produce, dairy and protein, we have ever been able to offer. These foods are expensive but essential for the physical and mental wellbeing of our neighbors.”

The increased activity aligned with the rising demand for food assistance influenced by the pandemic and its lasting effects. According to Feeding America, 55,940 people in Southeast Nebraska were food insecure in 2019; a number they estimate increased to 62,320 in 2020, and projects will remain at nearly 58,000 in 2021.

Even before the pandemic disproportionately impacted kids and families and folks who are struggling, Southeast Nebraska’s needs had outgrown the Food Bank’s present facility. The pandemic magnified this reality. The Food Bank of Lincoln is closing in on a \$10 million capital campaign goal to pay for a new

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facility in northwest Lincoln. The “Raising Our Response” campaign commitments include getting more food to more people, increasing access to healthy foods, and shortening food lines through education and community stability. With around \$1 million left to raise, the Food Bank invites the public to join in reaching this goal by donating online at www.lincolnfoodbank.org/raiseourresponse or in person at 4840 Doris Bair Circle, Ste. A, during regular business hours.

The Food Bank of Lincoln remains committed to feeding neighbors facing hunger. For a complete list of food distribution schedules, information about the Raising Our Response to Hunger capital campaign, or to donate, visit www.lincolnfoodbank.org.

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About Food Bank of Lincoln

Since 1982, the mission of Food Bank of Lincoln has been to alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska. Nearly 60,000 people in the Food Bank of Lincoln’s 16-county service area are food insecure; of that number, nearly one-third are children. To learn more, visit www.lincolnfoodbank.org.