

The Feeding Frontline



Spring 2025
lincolnfoodbank.org

An Increased Need Amid Changing Support

Food banking looks a lot different than when we opened our doors in 1982. It looks different from five years ago, and it looks different from just last year.

According to Feeding America's 2025 Map the Meal Gap report, released earlier this month, an estimated **69,750 neighbors** in Southeast Nebraska—including **21,390 children**—are food insecure. That's **1 in 7 people**, including **1 in 5 kids** who may not know where their next meal will come from.

The demand for food assistance in our 16-county service area has grown, and our programs and partners are serving about 153% more *households than we were just five years ago. As the elevated need outpaces available resources, we're doing more with less.

Meeting This Growing Need

Three main categories compose our food supply: donated goods, purchased products and government commodities. Each source contributes to the inventory made available to partner agencies and the menus we can distribute through our programs. For instance, at a recent mobile distribution, our food purchasing budget secured grapes, avocados and eggs; government support provided chicken, peanut butter and milk; and donated items completed the menu with breakfast bites and flour.

When dips in federal programs chip away at government support, or donated goods are unpredictable, we must make difficult adjustments. One of those decisions is to scale back the amount of food. Another is to reduce the variety of items we offer. Still another would be to reduce the number of program touch points. We're not there yet, but we must confront the possibility.



Sustained and enhanced government support is necessary to help us meet our neighbors' needs. This is why we engage with policymakers (more on page 4) and cultivate new relationships. Facts and focus lead to innovative solutions.

The Impact of Your Support

For every \$1 donated, we can provide about 2 meals. Purchasing power helps to ensure a well-rounded, nutritious inventory and helps close gaps when government support or donated products are uncertain.

It's harder to know for sure what the longer-term impact of decreased funding on basic needs services will be. What is certain is what happens when those needs aren't met. A foundational crumbling starts to occur. It eventually impacts every one of us.

*Households include duplicates.

Mission

To alleviate hunger in
Southeast Nebraska.

Vision

Nourishing our
communities to end hunger.

Values

Collaboration,
Compassion, Diversity,
Education, Responsibility

Board of Directors

Michelle Sitorius, President
Cline Williams Law Firm

Dennis Van Horn, Vice President
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Union Bank & Trust

Dr. Takako Olson
Lincoln Public Schools

A Letter from The President & CEO



For the 60-something-year-old fella whose life has been riddled with abuse and discontent, some peanut butter and jelly and a smile can sometimes feel like salvation.

For the single mother who's working overtime to juggle her sense of dignity and last nerve, a warm welcome at the emergency pantry is respite.

For the lifelong resident of a rural Nebraska town who can't imagine living away from her by-blood and by-choice relatives, the sight of the food-filled box truck is the winning lottery ticket.

At the Food Bank, we've come to understand that the givers are the receivers and vice versa.

Earlier this year, I reached out to a friend and Food Bank supporter to ask how he and his family were doing. I was hoping to offer him a bit of encouragement as I knew he was struggling to know how to be the best grandpa he could be for a grandchild who is enduring a difficult season of life. However, in our exchange, he offered this message to me:

"Life is full of lumps. Our job is to know if they are lumps in our oatmeal, lumps in our throat or a lump in the breast and worry accordingly."

Since our exchange, this bit of wisdom has been taped to my office desk. It's been a constant source of perspective for me.

The volatility of our politics, economy and civility are impacting nearly every aspect of life. They have impacted funding for food and our food supply. There are rising concerns about how we will respond to increasing need with decreasing support. The lumps are real.

This is when perspective matters most.

Thanks to your support, we can ease some of our neighbors' worries. When disruption is rampant, think about the neighbor with mental health issues, the mother with hungry children, the hometown proud senior citizen...

We may not be able to avoid life's lumps, but with grace, mercy and community, we can face them together.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michaela J. Kumke". The script is fluid and cursive.

Michaela Kumke
President & CEO



Full Plates, Grateful Hearts

Bridging the Gap

“We get SNAP and WIC benefits, but it really doesn't fill out the whole month, so this really helps. I always get the canned fruit, canned vegetables, the mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese. It really just helps fill out those last two weeks of the month that are really lean and thin, and my kids love it.”

- Jessica, LPS Emergency Pantry



Putting Healthy Food on the Table

“Fresh fruits and vegetables are very expensive and it has been challenging to afford them. We definitely eat healthier because of the Lincoln Fresh program. Thanks for all you do.”

- Elisha, Lincoln Fresh



When Inflation Meets Kindness

“I like the fact that it's [Hometown Fresh] here, and it helps us people that live just strictly on Social Security and with the price of everything going up...some of us couldn't make it to the end of the month without this place. And so, it's important.”

- Connie and Pat, Hometown Fresh



Delivering More Than Food

“I just wanted to thank Food Bank of Lincoln for helping elderly people like myself who cannot get out to get food. It takes me a while to answer my door when you deliver my food. I would like to thank you for your patience and for helping me. I truly appreciate what you are doing.”

- Anonymous, Home Delivery



Your support helps make these programs and meals possible. Learn more about how your Give to Lincoln Day gift can make an impact on page 4.

Increase Your Impact

Give to Lincoln is here!

Your Give to Lincoln Day support helps ensure our neighbors in Southeast Nebraska—like Jessica, Elisha, Connie, Pat and our anonymous neighbors (page 3)—don't have to choose between food and other necessities.

Give to Lincoln Day is May 29, but you don't have to wait to make an impact! Early giving is now open.

Every donation goes even further on Give to Lincoln Day because nonprofits get a proportional share of a \$650,000 match fund, thanks to the Lincoln Community Foundation and other generous sponsors. This means your generosity will help provide even more meals and relief when there's more month than money.

Giving Period: Now through May 29

How to Give: Learn more and donate at givetolincoln.com or scan the QR code

Have Questions? Contact John Mabry, jmabry@lincolnfoodbank.org or (402) 819-6861.



Advocating for Food Security

Local, state and federal policies play an important role in alleviating hunger. That's why our team remains committed to advocating for legislation that promotes food security.

State

During the 2025 Nebraska Legislative Session, we supported nutrition bills that would provide free meals for K-12 public school students and strengthen access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Additionally, we advocated in strong support of LB 505, which would continue a program that appropriates federal TANF funds to eligible hunger-relief organizations (like ours!) for food purchasing. *At the time of print, these bills were still being debated by the Nebraska legislature.*

Federal

In December 2024, Congress passed a second extension of the 2018 Farm Bill, pushing the deadline to reauthorize a new Farm Bill to Sept. 30, 2025. We continue to urge Nebraska's congressional delegation to support a bipartisan Farm Bill that strengthens nutrition programs and protects SNAP. In March, Food Bank of Lincoln President & CEO Michaela Kumke and Board of Directors President Michelle Sitorius, alongside advocates from Food Bank for the Heartland, met with Nebraska's federal representatives in Washington, D.C., to reiterate the importance of these programs in addressing rising food insecurity.



President & CEO Michaela Kumke and Food Bank for the Heartland President & CEO Brian Barks at the Nebraska State Capitol.



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Hours

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday

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