

The Feeding Frontline

Winter 2026
lincolnfoodbank.org



Mother-Daughter Duo 'Hungry for More'

Wendi and her daughter Tiffini took a leap of faith when signing up for a 10-week Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin'-By-World workshop three years ago.

"Let's really try this out and see what happens," they recall thinking. "The worst-case scenario? We walk away with some money, meals and a break from all the kids."

But after just a few weeks with their fellow Investigators and skilled facilitators, both realized the workshop—focused on building stability and writing a personal future story—would exceed their expectations.

"It was an amazing experience, and it kept us coming back," Wendi explained. "We were hungry for more."

Within three months, this dynamic duo went from first-time Investigators to workshop graduates and trained facilitators—equipped to lead Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin'-By-World and Getting Ahead While Getting Out, a workshop for individuals experiencing incarceration.

"When we had our orientation with all the other facilitators, we knew we were where we needed to be," Tiffini shared.

Five co-facilitated workshops later, that sense of belonging shapes their approach. Wendi and Tiffini bring equal parts honesty, authenticity and quirkiness—and

their own lived experience—into every session they lead.

It's why they ensure calming music is playing when Investigators arrive. Create homemade fidget toys (pictured above) to help settle nervous energy. Design t-shirts for the cohort around their shared inside jokes. And are upfront about covering difficult topics.

"That's what's amazing about this program; it's not a cookie-cutter program. You work with what you have, and you grow with it," Wendi explained.

For Tiffini, it was the chance to build connections alongside her then 3-month-old child, who joined her for workshop. Her classmates celebrated when her daughter started crawling. Three years later, Tiffini's offer on her first home was accepted while she was facilitating—reaching a milestone identified in her future story.

For Wendi, it was growth in social capital. "I don't think I could have imagined the confidence and connections I've made," she shared.

Together, it all helps make the vision of a future story more attainable.

"You cannot plan for or care about tomorrow if you don't have a reason to," Tiffini said. "Find your reason to keep going. When we answer why, then we can answer how."

Save the Date for the Empty Bowls Luncheon on May 26, 2026.
Tickets go on sale March 9. See page 4 for details.

Mission

To alleviate hunger in Southeast Nebraska.

Vision

Nourishing our communities to end hunger.

Values

Collaboration,
Compassion, Diversity,
Education, Responsibility

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A Letter from The President & CEO



*Households with children make up 49% of Nebraska's SNAP recipients. The average SNAP benefit per person per day in Nebraska is less than \$6.

Imagine shopping on a budget that's already stretched thin. I don't mean trading brand name for store brand. I mean deciding if you have enough money to get four bananas so each member of your household can have one, or only buying two and sharing.

Imagine making it to the checkout to learn the SNAP funds you thought were going to help put food on the table had been fraudulently drained from your account. There's nothing that can be done to restore them.

Stigma around SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is as old as the program itself. Recent reports of SNAP skimming theft add insult to injury. The process of applying for SNAP benefits is cumbersome. Yet, the opportunities to be violated in having them are frequent and immediate.

In 2025, Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) reported about 300 total cases of SNAP EBT card skimming. In the first week of 2026, DHHS already knew of dozens. Around the same time, Nebraska enacted a waiver restricting the purchase of soda and energy drinks with SNAP benefits—a move that, while well-intentioned, limits food choices. Meanwhile, other foods that would be beneficial for families, such as rotisserie chicken or prepared soups, haven't been added to the list of SNAP-eligible options.

Is this "justice for all?"

This year at the Food Bank, we celebrate our 10th year of presenting the Bridges Out of Poverty initiative. **While SNAP helps to put food on the table, Bridges Out of Poverty ensures it happens with dignity. Together, both reduce barriers, build trust and create pathways to lasting food security.** It allows space to honestly and compassionately focus on creating new future stories where neighbors succeed and communities thrive.

Because research shows participation by choice has higher long-term success than forced participation, we believe focusing on options—not limiting access—is a healthy way forward.

With gratitude,

Michaela J. Kumke

*Source: Food Research & Action Center

Planning for the Future

How might we, in this moment of rising demand and shifting resources, ensure neighbors across our 16 counties have dignified, equitable access to nutritious food?

This fundamental question is the basis for the Food Bank of Lincoln's new Strategic Plan—a framework that will guide our organizational practices, priorities and response for the next three fiscal years. Neighbors are at the heart of our mission, and our Strategic Plan is no different. Guided by a neighbor-centered approach and support from friends like you, we look forward to finalizing our vision for the future—and getting to work.

Stay tuned for more details on our next Strategic Plan, coming this summer.





Strengthening Partnerships to Alleviate Hunger

The Food Bank of Lincoln proudly partners with 69 nonprofit agencies to provide access to nutritious food for neighbors across our 16-county service area. In fiscal year 2025, these food pantries, hot meal sites and community organizations distributed **5.8 million pounds of food**, reaching around ***254,000 households** in Southeast Nebraska. These efforts represented **53% of the Food Bank of Lincoln's total pounds distributed** and nearly half of all households served last year.

To strengthen collaboration and further amplify the voices of these essential partners, we recently launched an Agency Advisory Council. The inaugural council includes six agencies, varying in size and representing both rural and urban communities. Together, council members offer valuable perspectives and insights into the needs and experiences of our partner agency network.

“This Council is a way to help show our partners they are valued, and what they experience every day through direct service to neighbors in Southeast Nebraska helps shape the decisions we make at the Food Bank of Lincoln,” said Sylvie Bonilla, Programs and Agency Relations Manager.

We are grateful to our partners and their ongoing commitment to alleviating hunger in Southeast Nebraska. Learn more about our partner agency network at lincolnfoodbank.org.

**Household number includes duplicate visits*

Agency Advisory Council Members



Blue Valley Community Action
9 Rural Counties



Bridging Our Community
David City



Carol Yoakum Family Resource Center
Lincoln



Center for People
Lincoln



Immanuel Bread of Life Pantry
Lincoln



Osage St. Paul Pantry
Cook

As we step into a new year full of possibilities, we asked some of our team members:

What are you most excited about in 2026?



Dan Shoemaker, Route Driver

“I’m excited to connect with new people and meet new neighbors through our Lincoln Fresh program this year!”



Ben Turner, Volunteer Coordinator

“I am excited about getting more food out to people in need and doing more advocacy to make SNAP more accessible for everyone!”



Nancy Becker, Food Bank Volunteer

“To continue to rally community support and to make sure no one gets left behind—we never know what’s going to happen, and the work the Food Bank does is so important for all 16 counties they serve.”



Ciara Dickson, Programs Coordinator

“Adding new sites to Lincoln Fresh and more schools to the Food Markets and Backpack Program so we can help more people!”



Erin Mundus, Finance & HR Specialist

“To find more funding opportunities so we can continue to provide support to our neighbors!”



We want to hear from you!

Follow us on social media for a chance to share what you’re looking forward to in 2026! Find us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn at [@foodbankoflincoln](https://www.facebook.com/foodbankoflincoln).

Going the Extra Mile

Vicki Fasnacht, the executive secretary at Randolph Elementary, has poured her heart into raising money for the Backpack Program through the Extra Mile Walk. For more than a decade, through an annual Trivia Night and other fundraising events, Vicki has helped the Food Bank fill thousands of food backpacks for Lincoln Public Schools' kids.

Her passion for this work is unmatched, which is why she was honored in 2025 as the Extra Mile Captain of the Year and was also recognized at a Husker men's basketball game earlier this season.

With the Acklie Charitable Foundation matching every dollar donated to the Extra Mile Walk (up to \$200,000), we are well on our way to our \$400,000 goal, thanks to friends like Vicki.

"I've seen firsthand the anxiety and sadness in the faces of kids who are afraid of the weekend and being hungry," she said. "The comfort a bag of food brings on Fridays is immeasurable. It makes a difference in the lives of so many children.

"You can make a difference."

Yes, you can, by supporting the 2026 Extra Mile Walk at 9:30 a.m. on April 25 at Northwest High School in UBT Stadium. For more information, visit lincolnfoodbank.org.



Spring Into Feeding

April

Every Tuesday: U-Stop Kicks It Back to the Community

Fuel up at any U-Stop location on Tuesdays in April, and 2 cents of every gallon of gas sold will be donated to the Food Bank of Lincoln.

Saturday, April 25: Extra Mile Walk

Go the distance to alleviate child hunger! Join us in Lincoln's UBT Stadium at Northwest High School for family-friendly activities and a mile walk together. The fun starts at 9:30 a.m. All are welcome!

May

Tuesday, May 26: Empty Bowls Luncheon

Select a unique, handcrafted stoneware bowl from Down Under Pottery Studio and sample delicious soups from Lincoln's talented chefs.

Tickets go on sale March 9 at lincolnfoodbank.org/empty-bowls-tickets.

Don't want to miss out on tickets? Scan the QR code to receive a reminder email! →



Thursday, May 28: Give to Lincoln Day

Show your support for Lincoln's nonprofits on this local day of giving! Early giving begins May 1.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.


Address


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Lincoln, NE 68521
lincolnfoodbank.org
402.466.8170


Hours

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

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