



FOODBANK
FOR THE HEARTLAND

FY 2023 SCHOOL-BASED MOBILE PANTRY PROGRAM REPORT

JULY 1, 2022–JUNE 30, 2023



You have helped me, and my family make a way out of no way. I was just bleak and wondering how I was going to make a meal for the night. Thank you so much.

—Michelle, Recipient at Wakonda Elementary’s School-Based Mobile

Program History

The mission of the School-Based Mobile Pantry Program is to help alleviate childhood hunger in the Heartland through the provision of food to children and their families at school. These mobile pantries—located in the parking lot of a school building—are intended to provide a more readily accessible source of food assistance to low-income students and their families. Sites are consistently in the same location as the school’s campus, have set distribution schedules and offer ongoing food assistance services.

Food Bank for the Heartland’s School-Based Mobile Pantry Program builds upon the success of our Backpack program, which partners with 252 area schools to provide weekend meals to children, and our Mobile Pantry Program, which serves communities that have a high need but limited food resources. Thanks to the generous support of our donors and partners, school-based mobile pantries also provide free, healthy food to children and their families who may otherwise not have access.

These one-day, recurring distributions can include fresh produce, dry and canned goods, and bakery items, allowing families to further stretch their budget and pay for other critical needs such as rent, utilities, childcare, and medicine. These pantries also increase engagement between parents and school staff, as many staff and student organizations typically volunteer at the distributions. Schools serve as a critical hub for distribution, providing a familiar environment that is typically located close to families in need.



The School-Based Mobile Pantry has been a game changer for the community. We love that we are putting healthy food choices in the hands of our families.

—Brandy Buscher, Student Services Director, North Platte Public Schools

Making a Direct Impact

1 IN 9 CHILDREN

IN OUR SERVICE AREA IS FACING FOOD INSECURITY. THAT’S 55,480 CHILDREN.

516,230 MEALS

DISTRIBUTED THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED MOBILE PANTRIES.

619,477 POUNDS OF FOOD

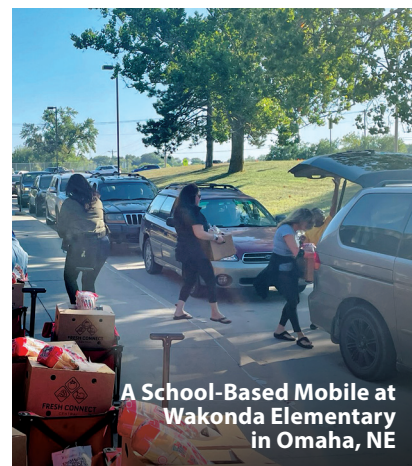
PROVIDED TO FAMILIES IN NEED THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED MOBILE PANTRIES.

12,455 HEARTLAND HOUSEHOLDS

RECEIVED NUTRITIOUS FOOD THROUGH THE SCHOOL-BASED MOBILE PANTRY PROGRAM.

93 DISTRIBUTIONS

DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR TO 10 SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS OUR SERVICE AREA.



Community Partners Providing Hope

In FY 2023, Food Bank for the Heartland partnered with ten participating schools/districts to serve 12,455 households through 93 distributions. Through our school-based mobiles, 619,477 lbs. of food were provided to Heartland families in need. **Our partners include:**

- Banner County Schools
- Bellevue Public Schools
- Council Bluffs Community School District
- DC West Community Schools
- Lewis Central Community Schools (Kreft Primary School)
- Millard Public Schools
- North Platte Public Schools
- Omaha Public Schools (Wakonda Elementary, Miller Park Elementary, Bancroft Elementary, Skinner Elementary)
- Ralston Public Schools
- Schuyler Community Schools



The Impact of Food Insecurity on Children

Providing consistent access to nutritious food is vital for children’s well-being. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, hunger’s effect on the body directly impacts school performance. Research shows children from families who are not sure where their next meal is coming from are more likely to have lower math scores and repeat a grade, among other challenges.

According to the USDA, there is also a strong connection between hunger and chronic diseases like high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. The more meals children miss, the more severe hunger affects their minds and bodies. Through your support, the Food Bank remains committed to providing healthy meals to at-risk children across the Heartland so they can focus on what matters most—learning, growing, and having fun.

Fighting Childhood Hunger in the Heartland

Thousands of children across Nebraska and western Iowa are forced to deal with the constant anxiety that can accompany not knowing where their next meal is coming from. To help mitigate the debilitating physical, mental, and emotional health risks caused by food insecurity, Food Bank for the Heartland’s School-Based Mobile Pantry Program reinforces the importance of nutritious options with a special emphasis on fresh produce. This program gives students the healthy resources they need to learn and grow at home, allowing them to devote time and energy to succeeding in school.

School-based mobile pantries are one of the many programs the Food Bank supports to fight childhood hunger, and is designed to make staple grocery items available to students and their families at no cost.

Conclusion

Thanks to you, the School-Based Mobile Pantry Program meets a critical need across the Food Bank’s 93-county service area. As Heartland families continue to navigate economic hardships, they need our support now more than ever. Through your continued generosity, we are making a significant impact in the overall well-being of children and their families—creating a healthier Heartland, one mobile pantry at a time.

