FOODBANK FOR THE HEARTLAND

FY 2026 SNAP OUTREACH PROGRAM REPORT

JULY 1, 2025–JUNE 30, 2026



Recent SNAP Changes Impact the Scope of Hunger

Thousands of Nebraskans and Iowans are losing SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits after H.R. 1, otherwise known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," was signed into law on July 4, 2025. Eligibility changes, additional work requirements, and other changes have had a significant impact on Heartland neighbors and SNAP participation rates.

Since then, both Nebraska and Iowa have seen SNAP participation losses of more than 25,000 people. 50% of those losses have affected the most vulnerable populations: children and seniors. When programs like SNAP are disrupted, more neighbors turn to our pantry partners, creating a ripple effect and adding pressure on an already strained charitable food system. This comes at a time when food insecurity levels have never been higher, and neighbors are facing unthinkable decisions as they navigate the rising costs of everyday essentials.

> **My boys were going to bed hungry. SNAP gave me the ability to feed them!**
>
> **—Former SNAP benefit recipient**



For every 1 meal that Feeding America provides, SNAP provides 9

The Feeding America network of more than 200 food banks (which includes Food Bank for the Heartland) provides over 5.9 billion meals a year to help the 48 million people in the United States who face hunger. This effort alone won't solve food insecurity. SNAP is a critical piece of the social safety net and enables families with low income to have additional local resources to put nutritious food on the table.

Making a Direct Impact in the Heartland

719,450 INDIVIDUALS
ACROSS NEBRASKA AND IOWA ARE FACING HUNGER.

15,696 SNAP APPLICATIONS
SUBMITTED THROUGH OUR SNAP OUTREACH TEAMS AND THEIR PARTNERS.

192 COUNTIES IN 2 STATES
SERVED BY THE SNAP OUTREACH TEAM. FOOD BANK STAFF ASSISTS NEIGHBORS IN ALL 93 COUNTIES IN NEBRASKA AND ALL 99 COUNTIES IN IOWA.

124,299 QUALIFIED NEBRASKA INDIVIDUALS
ENROLLED IN SNAP.
(COMPARED TO 152,066 IN FY 2025 DUE TO H.R. 1)

247,907 QUALIFIED IOWA INDIVIDUALS
ENROLLED IN SNAP AS OF MAY 2026.
(COMPARED TO 259,300 IN FY 2025 DUE TO H.R. 1)

$1.53 BILLION
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY GENERATED BY SNAP SUPPORT AT LOCAL RETAILERS IN NEBRASKA AND IOWA.



How SNAP Works

SNAP is the largest anti-hunger program in the country, helping thousands of Nebraskans and Iowans afford quality food. It's intended to fill the gap between the funds a household has available to buy food and the cost of a "thrifty" food budget as set by the USDA.

The Food Bank's SNAP Outreach team assists families and individuals understand eligibility, navigate the application process, become familiar with program benefits, and get connected to other community resources.

SNAP reduces food insecurity by providing very low-income individuals and families targeted assistance to purchase food at local grocery stores, farmers' markets, and other regular commercial food outlets. This is accomplished through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system, in which SNAP funds are loaded monthly onto an EBT card, which is used like a debit card.

Recipients of these benefits can use their card at an authorized retail location to purchase nutritious foods such as:



- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, poultry, and fish
- Dairy products
- Bread and cereals
- Other food such as snacks and non-alcoholic beverages
- Food-producing seeds and plants

> **I live on a small social security check each month, and that barely covers my necessary bills. When I was receiving SNAP benefits it allowed me to eat something other than sandwiches for most of my meals. SNAP has allowed me to eat healthier meals each day.**
>
> **— Former SNAP benefit recipient**



Advocacy Efforts

Continued advocacy efforts are imperative to educate lawmakers about the scope of hunger and ensure Heartland neighbors can access the food they need to thrive. In FY 26, through our collaboration with the Iowa Food Bank Association (IFBA), the Iowa legislature appropriated $1 million in state funding for the Double Up Food Bucks program, which Governor Kim Reynolds signed into law to expand SNAP recipients' access to fresh produce.

Double Up Food Bucks is a public-private partnership that gives SNAP recipients bonus dollars to use when they purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers and retailers—an initiative that benefits our communities, our farmers, and the health of our citizens. Fair Food Network, a national nonprofit, fuels Double Up Food Bucks and works to grow community health and wealth through food.

Community support has been instrumental to the Food Bank's SNAP Outreach Program and is needed as the Farm Bill is negotiated in Washington, D.C. We continue to closely monitor changes to SNAP at the state and federal levels and how those changes will impact the communities we serve. As thousands of families and individuals face unthinkable decisions, we are committed to working with our elected representatives on impactful legislation and strategies that create sustainable solutions.

> With my SNAP funds I buy milk, eggs, and fruit. Fruit has to be on sale. I try to be as frugal as I can.
>
> **—SNAP benefit recipient**

> By using SNAP benefits, I am able to use my cash for bills and utility payments.
>
> **—SNAP benefit recipient**

A Team of Experts

Navigating the process of applying for SNAP benefits and understanding the program qualifications can be time consuming and confusing. Our SNAP Outreach Team is extremely well-versed in eligibility requirements and the various benefits and programs offered. Every day, residents across Nebraska and Iowa call our team through a dedicated "Food Resource Hotline." Food Bank staff then provide the following services for individuals and families:



- Ease the overwhelming process by providing education and application assistance.
- Help families and individuals apply over the phone in as little as 15 minutes.
- Ensure applications are filled out correctly, decreasing the time it takes for recipients to qualify, receive federal benefits, and access food for their families.
- Access additional community resources.

Food Bank SNAP Outreach staff members also offer in-person application assistance at our facility at 84th & L Street in Omaha —and at community resource centers, shelters, and meal provider sites during the week. Our team frequently works alongside state and human services departments who can immediately interview applicants and enroll them for benefits. Training and compliance checks for agencies are also offered by the SNAP Outreach Team to those who partner with the Food Bank in this work. These partners can complete applications with their clients and stay up to date on policies and processes.

A Boost to the Economy



The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) estimates that $1 in SNAP support generates $1.80 in economic activity at local retailers. Once a household has qualified for the program and is in good standing with its compliance guidelines, SNAP funds are loaded onto to their EBT card each month.

- The total amount of benefits received in Nebraska for FY 2026, was $332,000,000, which equates to $597,600,000 generated by SNAP for Nebraska's economy.
- The total amount of benefits received in Iowa for FY 2026, was projected at $519,300,000, which equates to $934,740,000 generated by SNAP for Iowa's economy.

SNAP benefits are utilized by over 37 million people nationally, making it the largest program working to fight hunger in America. Because SNAP benefits are so urgently needed by families, they are spent quickly—94% of benefits are redeemed by the end of the month of issuance—thereby bolstering local economies.

The Effects of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is associated with an increased risk of adverse health outcomes, can complicate the management of illness, and is linked to higher health care costs. After adjusting for socioeconomic and demographic factors, research has found that people in food-insecure households spend roughly 45 percent more on health care annually—about $6,100 compared with $4,200 among people in food-secure households. Extensive research also demonstrates associations between food insecurity and chronic health conditions across the life course, including among children, working-age adults, and older adults.

Grateful for You

Food Bank for the Heartland is grateful for the dedicated partnership from our community to combat food insecurity. It is through this support that our SNAP Outreach Program helped submit 3,692 SNAP applications in Nebraska and 12,004 applications in Iowa in FY 2026. On behalf of our team and those we serve, thank you!

As we face unprecedented cuts to SNAP due to the passage of H.R. 1, your support is more vital than ever.





How Your Support Makes a Difference

SNAP—the nation's largest food assistance program, and one of the most effective and efficient—is the primary source of nutrition assistance for many of our neighbors in need.

County estimates indicate that, on average, 48% of individuals who live in food-insecure homes may be eligible for SNAP. The fact that not everyone who qualifies for SNAP is enrolled further underscores the importance of the Food Bank's SNAP Outreach Program to increase enrollment and support Heartland families.

Conclusion

The SNAP Outreach Program addresses a critical need across our two-state area. Through your continued generosity, the Food Bank can make significant strides in the fight against hunger, to ensure low-income neighbors have consistent access to the healthy food they need to grow, live, and thrive.

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