



FY 2024 SCHOOL-BASED MOBILE PANTRY PROGRAM REPORT

JULY 1, 2023–JUNE 30, 2024



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, NE

Program History

The School-Based Mobile Pantry Program helps 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.

A School-Based Mobile at Wakonda Elementary in Omaha, NE



The School-Based Mobile Pantry Program builds upon the success of the Food Bank's Mobile Pantry Program, which serves communities that have a high need but limited food resources—and our Backpack program, which partners with 245 area schools to provide weekend meals to children. 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. This is 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.

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. They also increase engagement between parents and school staff, as many staff and students typically volunteer at the distributions. Schools serve as a critical hub for distribution, providing a familiar environment located close to families in need.

Making a Direct Impact

1 IN 5 CHILDREN

IN OUR SERVICE AREA IS FACING HUNGER.
THAT'S 85,470 CHILDREN.

412,959 MEALS

DISTRIBUTED THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED MOBILE PANTRIES.

495,551 POUNDS OF FOOD

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

10,345 HEARTLAND HOUSEHOLDS

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

86 DISTRIBUTIONS

DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR TO 8 SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACROSS OUR SERVICE AREA.

Community Partners Providing Hope

In FY 2024, Food Bank for the Heartland partnered with eight participating schools/districts to serve 10,345 households through 86 distributions. Through our school-based mobiles, 495,551 lbs. of food were provided to Heartland families in need. **Our partners include:**

- 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)
- Ralston Public Schools



I look at what was given to us and base what I buy on groceries from there. It allows me to spend my money on other items like medicine and utilities.

—School-Based Mobile Pantry Recipient, Council Bluffs, IA



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 hunger affects their minds and bodies.

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, the Food Bank'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.



We have a large family. Even with us both working and picking up odd jobs on the side, we struggle to keep enough healthy food on hand.

—School-Based Mobile Pantry Recipient, North Platte, NE

Conclusion

Through your support, the Food Bank remains committed to providing healthy meals to Heartland children so they can focus on what matters most—learning, growing, and having fun.

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.



10525 J Street, Omaha, NE 68127
402.331.1213

FoodBankHeartland.org

