

# THE DISH



SUMMER 2023

## LEGISLATION AFFECTS THE FOOD BANK'S MISSION

Right now—as the demand for food assistance continues to rise—food insecurity remains an extremely important issue. While every pound of food, volunteer hour, and monetary donation is vital—your advocacy is just as important. Legislative decisions have a significant impact on the Food Bank's mission and how neighbors receive access to healthy food.

### SSB 494 (previously SSB 1105) Iowa

Unfortunately, the Iowa Senate advanced this bill on March 22. This bill restricts access to SNAP (The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), which provides a critical lifeline for the thousands of Iowans facing hunger. The legislation—effective July 1—will be one of the most restrictive in the country. Less access to SNAP will force Iowans to turn to mobile pantries and meal providers across the Heartland—creating an additional strain on our Network Partners and the Food Bank, during a heightened time of need.



Michaela Kumke, Food Bank of Lincoln President & CEO and Brian Barks, FBFH President & CEO, testifying in favor of LB 763.

### LB 84 (amended into LB 277) Nebraska

In Nebraska, efforts have been made to address the "cliff effect," which occurs when a pay raise triggers a disproportionate loss of government assistance. The bill will help Nebraskans keep food on their tables as they advance in the workplace. The amendment included gross income eligibility to stay at 165%, rather than reverting to 130% of poverty and a new sunset of two years (2025). For a family of four, the first criteria to qualify for SNAP would be income at 165% of poverty—\$49,500 or less.

The bill allows over 10,000 Nebraskans to maintain SNAP benefits, encourages workers to continue striving for self-sufficiency, and provides a pathway beyond government assistance. We appreciate Senator Jen Day's efforts on prioritizing this bill.

### LB 763 (amended into LB 814 and LB 818) Nebraska

To replace the food we no longer receive through USDA TEFAP, the Food Bank worked with Nebraska Senators DeBoer and McDonnell to introduce the *Adopt the Emergency Food Assistance Act*. Although the bill did not move from committee, the need for food assistance was recognized by Appropriations Committee members. Amendments introduced to the mainline budget bills would appropriate \$10 million to DHHS from the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) federal block grant program. DHHS would distribute these funds to nonprofits that provide food in 10 or more counties in Nebraska and qualify for TEFAP by the USDA.

**Everyone deserves the right to healthy food. We need your voice—now more than ever—to advocate for hunger relief efforts.** Learn how you can make your voice heard by scanning the QR code.



## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

For many, summer is typically a time for rest and relaxation. But for the Food Bank, and thousands of our neighbors, summer brings one of the highest times of need, which is why I'm asking for your continued support. The demand for food assistance has exceeded even the darkest days of the pandemic.



And with kids home from school this summer, we're expecting these numbers to increase.

This is caused by a variety of factors. Government programs created during the pandemic, such as increased SNAP benefits, stimulus checks, and child tax credits, have ended. Inflation is another major factor. Consumers continue to face the largest increase in food prices since the 1980s. While prices generally increased about 2% in prior years, they increased 8.5% from March of 2022 to March of 2023.

To make matters more challenging, the Food Bank has seen a drastic decrease in USDA food availability. Compared to last year, the USDA provided 2.1 million fewer pounds of food to the Food Bank, creating a ripple effect on our operations and negatively impacting our Network Partners.

Overcoming these hardships is a testament to your compassion. Every day, I see our mission in action. Whether it's volunteers packing food, students raising funds, or community leaders educating senators—each of these acts brings us one step forward in alleviating hunger.

As you think about your summer plans, remember those making unthinkable decisions as they face the uncertainty of not having enough food. Thank you for helping us give Heartland neighbors the summer they deserve.



Brian Barks  
President & CEO

## CHILDREN TAKE A STAND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

Thousands of children have joined the Food Bank to help fight hunger. In April, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) held their annual "Scouting for Food" collection drive in Omaha and collected 29,041 pounds of non-perishable food in just two weeks. Their efforts will provide more than 24,200 meals to neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Thanks to United Way of the Midlands, Werner Enterprises, area Target stores, and Baker's locations for partnering with BSA to help Heartland neighbors in need. We appreciate the efforts of the Scouts and our community partners!



In another inspiring example, all five Elkhorn, Nebraska middle schools recently worked together to raise funds for the Food Bank's Backpack Program. In one week, students raised more than \$26,000, and collected 652 pounds of food! With a generous match from Woodhouse Auto Family, their fundraising efforts will be doubled—allowing the Food Bank to provide nutritious food to 317 students in our Backpack Program every weekend during the school year.

The Food Bank is grateful for these students and Scouts for making a lasting impact on Heartland children and families.



## GET INVOLVED AND JOIN THE FOODIES

Founded in 2013, the Foodies is a guild dedicated to supporting the Food Bank through volunteerism, fundraising, and the promotion of community awareness. In FY 22, this dedicated group of individuals raised more than \$70,000 for the Food Bank—providing more than 280,000 nutritious meals to Heartland neighbors in need. In addition to making a direct impact on our mission, a Foodies membership offers special volunteer options, networking opportunities, and involvement in Food Bank special events. Scan the QR code to complete the Membership application today!



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I had two requirements for this group. It had to be fun, and it had to be engaging for members. Whether it's an online fundraiser, an event, or our annual Peanut Butter and Jelly Drive, we want people to know their money is going to something important, because it is, it's feeding people.

— Jayne Timmerman, Foodies Founder



## THE FOOD BANK IS ON THE MOVE

Look for our newly designed Food Bank trucks driving in a community near you to pick up and deliver food across Nebraska and western Iowa. The Food Bank fleet—which consists of 9 trucks—

traveled nearly 300,000 miles last year, throughout our 78,000 square-mile service area, to deliver hope and nutritious food to Heartland communities in need.



# DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT. BECOME A MONTHLY MEAL MAKER TODAY!

The Food Bank will serve nearly 1.8 million individuals this fiscal year—the most in our history. With grocery prices on the rise and more mouths to feed this summer, we're expecting the demand to increase. But we still have hope—thanks to our monthly Meal Makers.

**By becoming a monthly Meal Maker, you'll provide critical and nutritional resources to Heartland neighbors through a recurring monthly gift—delivering consistent food support as they navigate economic hardships caused by inflation.**

With the growing need and huge gap to fill, we need your assistance this summer. From now until August 31, help us grow our incredible community of monthly donors—our safety net. Regardless of your gift amount, you'll be part of our dedicated community of monthly donors, creating a tremendous impact this summer and beyond.

Help in the fight against hunger by becoming a new monthly Meal Maker today. **Plus, your monthly gift will be matched for the FIRST 12 MONTHS, thanks to a \$10,000 matching gift from Diane Duren and Drew Collier.**



## NEW VOLUNTEER SHIFT OPPORTUNITY

The Food Bank is offering another convenient option to serve our neighbors. **A new Monday afternoon volunteer shift has been added from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. to better meet our mission.**

Adding this new shift has allowed the Food Bank to accommodate 50 additional volunteers per week. Increased volunteers mean more food repacked for distribution, added space in our warehouse for incoming products, and additional nutritious food in the hands of our Heartland neighbors.



Scan the QR code or visit the volunteer page on our website to register for any of our volunteer shifts.

We look forward to seeing you in our Volunteer Center!



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It's an easy place to volunteer and have a hands-on experience. And the staff is so welcoming. If you're a first timer, you never feel intimidated or lost. Everything is very organized and purposeful. Plus, you get to see the results of your labor.

— Patty Suarez, Food Bank Volunteer



## EXECUTIVE TEAM

**Brian Barks**  
President & CEO

**Donna Naimoli**  
Senior Executive Assistant

**Michael Keays**  
VP, Finance & Accounting

**Kelly Ptacek**  
VP, External Affairs

**Ericka Smrcka**  
VP, Operations

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**Marjory Jack**  
Senior Director of Human Resources

**Joanne Kampinen**  
Director of Development

**Manuel Macapinlac**  
Controller

**Jason Moucka**  
Director of Food Procurement & Processing

**Michelle Sause**  
Director of Network Relations

## DONOR BILL OF RIGHTS

To assure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public, and that donors have full confidence in not-for-profit organizations and causes they are asked to support, the Association Fundraising Professionals created the Donor Bill of Rights. The Food Bank adheres to these tenets. Scan the QR code to review the Donor Bill of Rights on our website.

