



# FOODBANK OF IOWA

SUMMER 2020

A FOOD BANK OF IOWA NEWSLETTER

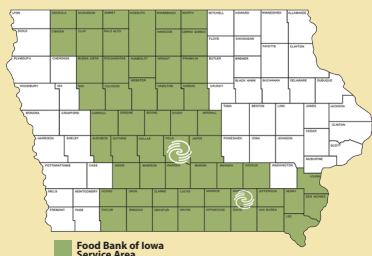
## Mission

*We provide food for Iowa children, families, and seniors to lead full and active lives, strengthening the communities where they live.*

## Vision

*A hunger-free Iowa.*

## Our Service Area



*Food Bank of Iowa distributes to approximately 175,000 Iowans via more than 625 partners in 55 counties.*

## Perishable Distributors of Iowa

*Every Friday we have a standing appointment at Perishable Distributors of Iowa. That means every week we can rely on donations of items like juice, yogurt, produce, and protein. In addition to receiving over 65,000 pounds of product so far this year, PDI goes above and beyond to help with transportation and storage whenever they can!*



## FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS FEED THOUSANDS

Overnight, COVID-19 uprooted the fabric of our economy and altered many aspects of how we go about our daily life. We have been forced to change the way we shop, greet friends, and work. Iowans have lost jobs, students are displaced, and seniors remain fearful. And for many, rent is due, medical bills need to be paid and cupboards are empty.

**With your help, Food Bank of Iowa has been able to respond quickly to help those in need.**

One way of helping is called a Mobile Pantry. A Mobile Pantry serves clients in areas of high food insecurity, where existing boots-on-the-ground human services organizations are unable to meet the demand completely. During a Mobile Pantry, food from a Food Bank of Iowa distribution center is trucked into a community and loaded into clients' vehicles in pre-packed boxes, often directly from the back of a Food Bank of Iowa truck.

In March, April, and May, Food Bank of Iowa distributed 711,602 pounds of food via 107 Mobile Pantry distributions. We hosted Mobile Pantries in communities across our service area — all the way from Storm Lake, to Eagle Grove, to Perry, to Keokuk.

The largest Mobile Pantry distributions ever conducted by Food Bank of Iowa took place in April and May when we handed food to neighbors in need in Des Moines and Ottumwa.

In Des Moines, Food Bank of Iowa employees and National Guard soldiers loaded nearly 55,000 pounds of protein-rich food, into 1,900 vehicles (and a few bicycles) to help 5,300 individuals with their next meals. In Ottumwa, Food Bank of

Iowa employees and volunteers loaded out more than 28,000 pounds of food, serving over 3,000 individuals.

**These will forever be historic days for Food Bank of Iowa.**

"These unique and necessary day-long distribution efforts required precision planning and marshaled every resource at our disposal, including passionate staff, dedicated volunteers and board directors, and caring community law enforcement," Michelle Book, president and CEO, said. **"I'm grateful for the Iowa National Guard, Grand View University in Des Moines and Quincy Place Mall in Ottumwa which made it possible to help these folks in need."**

Over the last few months, many of our Mobile Pantries have included high quality foods donated by corporate partners, for whom we are very grateful. Casey's General Store donated deli meat and eggs. Michael Foods provided frozen potatoes. Smithfield Foods added pork. Tyson Foods supplied chicken fritters. Versova contributed eggs. In addition to consistent retail store food donations, our good friends at Walmart provided massive quantities of industrial food safe sanitizer which allowed us to stay open to fill these Mobile Pantry orders.

"Because of my health problems, I can't go in the grocery store and buy food," said a Food Bank of Iowa client at the Mobile Pantry in Ottumwa. "Being able to attend the drive-thru mobile pantry has been a big help since I can stay in my car."



**The passionate hunger fighting team at Food Bank of Iowa is working hard to ensure no one has to worry about their next meal. Visit [give.foodbankiowa.org/ge/donate](https://give.foodbankiowa.org/ge/donate) to join the team and make a difference today.**

# A Note From Our CEO

## Dear Friends,

My world changed significantly on March 13th. I am pretty sure yours did as well.

While I grieve the loss of what I loved about my life before COVID-19, I am mindful to celebrate the new opportunities provided by this global pandemic: more time with family, take-out tenderloins, telemedicine, a new puppy, Zoom calls, old and new Netflix movies, and learning proper hand washing technique.

**During this time of uncertainty, Food Bank of Iowa is also embracing new opportunities.**

We are finding innovative ways to support loyal partner agencies as they strive to fill the growing demand. Where needed, we are distributing nutritious food in parking lots, bringing on new highly engaged partners, and implementing groundbreaking programs. We expanded the truck fleet and doubled our routes. We have been creative in redirecting food destined for restaurants to serve families in need. We are engaging hundreds of new volunteers safely - here at the food bank and from their homes. We are directing National Guard missions.

**If you have not "Liked" Food Bank of Iowa's Facebook page, I encourage you to do so. Please join us as we share these stories of help and hope. And join in the celebration of our accomplishments. None of this is possible without you.**

Food insecurity has long been a serious issue. Flashback to February 2020. Iowa's unemployment rate was 2.7%, while 11.6% of Iowa's population lived in poverty and struggled to put food on the table. Most of the people we served lived in a married household, had a roof over their head and a job, if not several. Most of the people we served were senior citizens, disabled folks, and people trying to make ends meet while working low wage jobs.

And then in March, our seemingly robust economy crumbled suddenly. Those already struggling were pushed further into fear and poverty and many who were

previously employed, but not able to accumulate enough savings for an emergency, joined them. With unemployment levels which have approached those of the Great Depression, chances are you know someone who lost their job due to COVID-19 and through no fault of their own.

Although the economy will eventually recover for many, it will be slow. And for some, recovery will be elusive. Thankfully, Iowans stand together during times of difficulty. I am heartened by and proud of the support we are receiving to help our neighbors in need during this difficult time. **We are all in this together and we will see it through together.** But it will not be easy.

Helping people through the recovery will be a marathon and not a sprint. What does that mean exactly? For those of you who have run a marathon, you know this will be hard. It will hurt. It will be a mental rollercoaster. Roadblocks are inevitable. Being prepared is important. A plan is critical. Proper nutrition, sleep, and mental health are paramount.

**The Food Bank of Iowa team has never been better prepared to meet a challenge of this magnitude. And with you standing by our side cheering us on, I know we will prevail.**

**Thank you for helping us help others.**

Be well,



Michelle Book  
Chief Executive Officer  
Food Bank of Iowa



**[www.foodbankiowa.org](http://www.foodbankiowa.org)**





# NOAH'S BIRTHDAY FOOD DRIVE

**Making sense of COVID-19 and the resulting personal losses and disappointments are topics which have challenged us.** Many parents are using the upheaval delivered by COVID-19 as an opportunity to help children learn about charity and the importance of reaching out to others in their time of need.

**Noah Beyer, who recently turned 11, decided to put his "birthday energy" into helping others this year.**

Instead of a traditional birthday party, Noah and his family sat on their front lawn while people drove by to drop off non-perishable food item donations. Noah also collected money through cash donations and his online virtual fundraising page.

**Learning to be a gracious giver starts early and can bring lifelong joy. Do you want to teach your children to be joyful givers? There are many imaginative ways for little ones to get involved.**

## *Helping neighbors:*

Encourage children to pull up an empty garbage can off the street, deliver to the door a newspaper which was tossed short of the porch, pick up sticks after a storm, or sweep the sidewalk.

## *Garbage Pickup:*

Plan a garbage pick-up day with a few other families and their children. You can incorporate a scavenger hunt list into the effort. Provide the bags and make it a contest. Spread out to canvas an area and remember to wear gloves.

## *Small job donations:*

Children can become super engaged when they work hard to earn money to put toward their charity of choice. Decorate a Charity Jar for this purpose. Setting a goal can be fun and you can easily turn this into a friendly, competitive game with friends.



## *Helping another child:*

\$5 provides weekend food to one elementary student for one week or \$165 can support one child for an entire school year through our Backpack Program. The child can direct their support toward a specific school or community.

## *Sharing artistic talents:*

Children may create motivational artistic notes to be included in food distributions. A few cheery words and a delightful image can go a long way toward brightening a day for our food recipients.

## *Switch up the old lemonade stand:*

Help your child host a food drive in your front yard. Make signs, decorate boxes to collect shelf stable items, wear costumes, and stand outside to encourage drivers. Set a goal to create excitement.

## *Volunteer:*

Volunteer safely as a family using good hand washing technique, social distancing, masks and gloves at your local food pantry or Food Bank of Iowa in Des Moines or Ottumwa. Take a picture and tag Food Bank of Iowa on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

## *Start a group fundraiser:*

Help your child set up a fundraising campaign on Food Bank of Iowa's website. Show your child how to track the donations coming in. When school starts back up, your child can incorporate a classroom food drive.

**Recent challenges provide an opportune time to teach children about charity today. But what if parents want lessons about charity to be more than a one-time occurrence? What if they want the spirit of giving to be a way of life for their children? Now is the time to start.**



**Consider ways to involve your family in solving hunger in Iowa today. One way to make a difference is to host a food drive. Visit [www.foodbankiowa.org/make-a-difference/donate-food/food-drive](http://www.foodbankiowa.org/make-a-difference/donate-food/food-drive) to sign up today.**



# T-SHIRTS FOR TOTES

To minimize contact and promote social distancing, in-person pantry shopping experiences have migrated to grab & go prepacked food package distributions.

**As we mobilize to meet the increased need for food, we need bags to support this new, safe way to distribute food.**

Boxes cost \$1.10 each – money better put toward the purchase of peanut butter and pasta sauce.

Food Bank of Iowa has discovered that a cloth bag, easily constructed from a cotton or cotton blend T-shirt, holds food safely. Food Bank of Iowa needs new and gently used T-shirts and volunteers to sew these T-shirts into usable tote bags.

We are asking for your help. Please look through your closet for brand new or gently used T-shirts or host a T-shirt drive. Visit our website at [www.foodbankiowa.org/volunteer-remotely](http://www.foodbankiowa.org/volunteer-remotely) and find our “DIY T-shirt Tote Bags” section. Follow the instructions and deliver your completed T-shirt totes to Food Bank of Iowa.

We are asking for T-shirt bags instead of tote bags, because the t-shirt bags are easy to store and wash. They are environmentally safe, fun, and hold up to 50 pounds. T-shirt bags are a cost-effective way to get a lot of food safely to our neighbors in need.

Two of our committed volunteers, Holleen Lawrence and her husband Mike Roder, are committed to this effort, collecting and creating totes out of T-shirts.

“The best tools to succeed with a mass volume of sewing are a sharp rotary cutter, a large cutting mat, a good working sewing machine, a solid support system, and my cat Guffman,” Holleen Lawrence said. To date, Holleen and Mike have sewn 2,127 totes. These bags have carried food to families across our 55-county area. **We are grateful for Holleen and Mike for their passion and support.**

**Would you like to help with this effort?** Contact our Volunteer Training and Development Manager, Michaela Devaney, at [mdevaney@foodbankiowa.org](mailto:mdevaney@foodbankiowa.org).



## PLAN AHEAD FOR FOOD BANK OF IOWA

Summer is all about planning – vacations, the Fourth of July, and eventually back to school. Please remember Food Bank of Iowa when considering estate plans.

Visit [www.foodbankiowa.org/legacy](http://www.foodbankiowa.org/legacy) or contact Bergetta Beardsley at [bbeardsley@foodbankiowa.org](mailto:bbeardsley@foodbankiowa.org) to learn more about our planned giving program.



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[www.foodbankiowa.org](http://www.foodbankiowa.org)

PO Box 1517  
Des Moines, IA 50305  
515-564-0330

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