

FIGHTING HUNGER FEEDING HOPE

WINTER 2026 NEWSLETTER

WE ARE HACAP – HAWKEYE AREA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

HACAP Food Reservoir: A Year of Impact and Community Support

2025 was a truly remarkable year for HACAP Food Reservoir, and it's all thanks to the incredible generosity of donors and the dedication of nearly 300 community partners. Together, we made a significant difference in the lives of our neighbors across East Central Iowa, proving that when a community unites around a shared mission, **extraordinary things happen.**

Through your support, we distributed 11,800,000 pounds of food, providing an astounding 14,160,000 meals to individuals and families facing food insecurity. Every meal represents more than just nourishment, it represents **hope, health, and the power of community.** Behind each number is a story: a child who didn't go to bed hungry, a senior who could stretch their budget a little further, and a family who felt supported during a difficult time.

Key Highlights of 2025

- 168 Mobile Pantries brought food directly to neighborhoods, distributing 952,313 meals to those who needed them most. These mobile units were a lifeline for rural communities and families without reliable transportation.
- Our Backpack Program ensured that school-aged children had access to nutritious meals and snacks on weekends, delivering 53,000 meals throughout the year. For many kids, these backpacks meant returning to school on Monday, ready to learn.
- Through our innovative Food as Medicine program, we partnered with clinics across our service area to screen 43,733 neighbors for food insecurity. Those identified received a box of healthy, nonperishable items and resources to connect them with additional support. This program is helping bridge the gap between health and hunger, showing that good nutrition is essential for overall well-being.



FEED

Provide our neighbors facing food insecurity with reliable access to enough food.

Every time you choose to support HACAP Food Reservoir, you are helping to build a stronger, healthier community. Your contributions don't just fill plates, they change lives. They create moments of relief, dignity, and hope for thousands of families who might otherwise go without. **As 2025 came to a close, we said a heartfelt thank you and bittersweet goodbye to our outgoing CEO, Jane Drapeaux and welcomed our incoming CEO, Matt Majeski.**

As we look ahead to 2026, the need remains great, but so does our determination. Together, we can continue to fight hunger and ensure that every neighbor has access to the food they need to thrive.

Thank you for standing with us in this mission. Your generosity and compassion are the heartbeat of HACAP Food Reservoir. Let's keep making an impact that matters.



MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**





NOURISH

Support neighbors in making healthy choices and improving diet quality.

Healthy Kids Iowa: Impact Across Our Communities

This summer, the six Feeding America food banks in Iowa came together for a powerful statewide initiative: **Healthy Kids Iowa**, created by Governor Reynolds to ensure children ages 4 — 18 had access to nutritious meals during the summer months when school is out, and food insecurity often rises.

For HACAP Food Reservoir, this effort was nothing short of extraordinary. With the support of **48 dedicated community partners**, we were able to distribute an additional **558,790 pounds of food** across our service area. These distributions focused on child and family-friendly items: ground chicken, pork, beef, cheese sticks, chicken nuggets, and fresh produce, foods that not only nourish but bring comfort to families during challenging times.

What made Healthy Kids Iowa truly impactful was not just the food itself, but the **network of partner agencies and volunteers** who made it possible. Our pantry partners, hospitals, schools, and local organizations stepped up in remarkable ways, often taking on extra workloads to ensure families were served.

- In Benton County, Virginia Gay Hospital, Vinton Shellsburg, and Benton Community School Districts joined forces to reach families in need.
- In rural Jones and Iowa counties, mobile distributions brought food directly to neighbors who might otherwise struggle to access resources.
- In Johnson County, a coalition of partners worked hand-in-hand to coordinate efforts, ensuring no child was left behind.

These are just a few examples of the work that took place this summer. Every one of our partners was a lifeline, a direct connection to our neighbors. Their commitment transformed Healthy Kids Iowa from an initiative into a movement of compassion.

At times, the work of fighting hunger can feel overwhelming. The need is immense, and resources can feel stretched thin. Yet, this summer reminded us of something profound: when communities come together, the impact multiplies.

We witnessed volunteers working longer hours, agencies making sacrifices, and countless individuals stepping forward simply because they cared. Their actions lit up what could have been a dark and difficult summer for many families.

As Mr. Rogers once said, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” This summer, we didn’t have to look far, the helpers were everywhere. They were stocking shelves, loading trucks, handing out boxes of food, and smiling at neighbors who needed encouragement.

HACAP Food Reservoir is deeply grateful for every partner agency, volunteer, and supporter who made Healthy Kids Iowa possible. You are the bridge between us and our neighbors, the hands and hearts that carry hope into homes. We’re thrilled and grateful that Governor Reynolds has chosen to participate in Sun Buck (Summer EBT) for 2026 and know it will be beneficial for our neighbors and community.



The Vital Role of SNAP in Supporting Iowa Families and Strengthening the Charitable Food Network

When we talk about fighting hunger in Iowa, one program stands out as a cornerstone of food security: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). While food banks and pantries provide essential relief, SNAP is the largest and most effective anti-hunger program in the United States, and its impact on Iowa families and on the charitable food system cannot be overstated.

What is SNAP and Why Does It Matter?

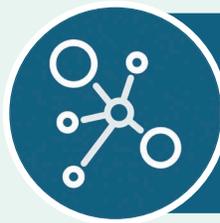
SNAP provides monthly benefits to low-income individuals and families, enabling them to purchase nutritious food at grocery stores, farmers' markets, and even select online retailers. These benefits are delivered through an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, giving families the dignity and flexibility to choose the foods that best meet their needs. In Iowa, SNAP is a lifeline for tens of thousands of households, helping them maintain health and stability during times of economic uncertainty.

The Scale of SNAP in Iowa

Currently, nearly 37,000 neighbors in HACAP's service area alone rely on SNAP benefits to put food on the table. Statewide, the numbers are even more significant, reflecting the program's reach across rural and urban communities. For every single meal provided by HACAP Food Reservoir, SNAP delivers nine more, a staggering multiplier effect that underscores its importance. Without SNAP, the charitable food system would be overwhelmed, unable to meet the demand for assistance.

Reducing Hunger and Improving Health

Studies show that SNAP can reduce food insecurity by up to 30%, making it one of the most effective tools for combating hunger. Beyond filling plates, SNAP improves



EMPOWER

Connect neighbors with community resources to address the root causes of food insecurity.

health outcomes by enabling families to purchase fresh produce, lean proteins, and other nutritious foods. This connection between nutrition and well-being is critical, especially for children, seniors, and individuals managing chronic health conditions.

Economic Impact: More Than Just Meals

SNAP doesn't just fight hunger, it fuels local economies. Every dollar spent through SNAP generates approximately \$1.70 in economic activity, supporting grocery stores, farmers, and retailers across Iowa. This ripple effect strengthens communities, creating jobs and sustaining businesses while ensuring families have access to food.

Why SNAP is Essential to the Charitable Food System

Food banks and pantries are vital safety nets, but they cannot replace SNAP. Instead, they work hand-in-hand. When SNAP benefits are robust, charitable organizations can focus on filling gaps by providing emergency assistance, specialized programs like Backpack for Kids, and fresh produce through mobile pantries. When SNAP benefits are reduced or restricted, demand at food banks surges, stretching resources thin and making it harder to serve everyone in need.

Looking Ahead: Protecting and Promoting SNAP

As we move into 2026, supporting SNAP is more important than ever. Advocacy for strong SNAP funding and accessibility ensures that families can maintain stability and that charitable food systems can continue to serve effectively. Together, SNAP and food banks form a powerful partnership, one that uplifts communities, reduces hunger, and builds a healthier Iowa.

To learn more about HACAP Food Reservoir's Advocacy efforts, contact Aron Brecht at abrecht@Hacap.org.

Celebrating the Strength of Our Community

At HACAP Food Reservoir, gratitude is the foundation of our mission. The incredible generosity of donors and the unwavering dedication of volunteers make it possible for us to serve as a lifeline for thousands of neighbors. Your support is more than a gift; it is a powerful statement of hope, dignity, and resilience. Every hour volunteered, every dollar donated, and every partnership formed strengthens the safety net that keeps our communities thriving.

As we reflect on the past year, the impact is undeniable: together, we have transformed challenges into opportunities and uncertainty into stability. Behind every success story



UNITE

Inspire people and partners to take action to advance food security in Iowa.

is a network of caring individuals and organizations who choose to stand with us in the fight against hunger. From packing emergency boxes to funding critical programs, your commitment ensures that no neighbor is left behind. Thank you for being the heartbeat of HACAP Food Reservoir, your compassion fuels our mission and lights the path forward.

Sign up today to join our Volunteer Team
www.hacap.org/volunteer.

Volunteer Spotlight: The Power of People

Volunteers are the backbone of everything we do, and their strength inspires us daily. In 2025, 1,102 volunteers contributed an incredible 7,385 hours to HACAP Food Reservoir. These hours weren't just tasks completed — they were acts of kindness that created real change. Volunteers packed Backpack bags for children, pulled agency orders, sorted bakery items, and assembled emergency response boxes. **Every action taken by a volunteer is a ripple of hope that reaches families across East Central Iowa.**

Meet Gail Reiger: A Champion for Community

Gail Reiger embodies what it means to lead with heart. Since joining us in August of 2023, Gail, a retired school teacher, has given **86 hours of her time in 2025 alone.** Her willingness to guide new volunteers and her consistent presence at every shift makes her a true mentor and friend. Gail brings not only her skills, but her positivity and encouragement, reminding us that leadership is about lifting others up. **Thank you, Gail, for being a shining example of service and strength.**



Corporate Donor Spotlight: Partners Who Make a Difference

Our corporate partners are proof that when businesses invest in their communities, everyone wins. In 2025, two organizations stood out for their extraordinary contributions:

Alliant Energy earned the title of HACAP Food Reservoir's 2025 Hunger HERO, donating **60 volunteer hours**, and providing **781,391 meals** to neighbors in need.



Kiwanis Club of Cedar Rapids was named HACAP Food Reservoir's 2025 Hunger Fighter, contributing **218 volunteer hours** and providing **15,912 meals** to families across our region.



These partnerships demonstrate the strength of collaboration; when we unite resources, time, and compassion, we create a lasting impact.

Spread the Love

Support HACAP Food Reservoir by donating much needed peanut butter as a part of our Spread the Love Campaign all February long!

You can help us meet the need in our community by donating protein-packed peanut butter!

Donations can be dropped off now through February 28th at our corporate office located at 1515 Hawkeye Dr. Hiawatha, IA 52233



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