



Feeding Iowa



State Emergency Food Program:

Join the fight against hunger in Iowa

Need in Iowa

The Iowa Food Bank Association (IFBA) is requesting that Iowa follow the lead of 38 other states and launch a state emergency food program. Nearly 13% of Iowans (over 382,000) report that they are unable to afford the food they need - including many seniors and working parents whose budgets for food are squeezed by the ongoing economic crisis. One in five children in Iowa do not get enough food at home. Government at all levels, along with the charitable and private sector, must do more to meet the increasing need for food.

In October of 2011, the Des Moines Register stated that, "Iowa has set a record for the number of residents seeking some form of food assistance, including food stamps, every month for the past five years, reaching nearly 394,000 people in August, or one of every eight residents." Most food banks are reporting 30-50 percent increases in need, but in some individual programs requests for assistance have increased by 100 percent or greater over the previous year.

State Emergency Food Program Facts

38 states currently invest in state emergency food programs

9 states increased funding for emergency food in FY 09-10 while facing unprecedented budget deficits

5 states created emergency food programs in FY 10-11, while facing budget deficits

Iowa has over 382,000 food insecure individuals

Many States Are Investing in Emergency Food Programs

States that make the greatest investments provide between \$20 and \$50 per food insecure household annually.

States normally provide a percentage of the overall funds to meet the critical transportation, storage and infrastructure requirements of food banks. In addition, some states require that any funds used from a state emergency food program be spent on products grown or produced in state, which benefits the agriculture and food sectors of the state.

Peer State Investments in Emergency Food

State	Annual State Emergency Food Funding ¹	Food Insecure Households ²	Annual Expenditure Per Household
Massachusetts	\$13 million	278,000	\$47
New York	\$31 million	980,000	\$32
Pennsylvania	\$18 million	633,000	\$28
New Jersey	\$7 million	380,000	\$18
Ohio	\$12 million	756,000	\$16
Arizona	\$2 million	390,609	\$5
Oregon	\$1 million	207,281	\$5
Iowa	\$0	150,403	\$0

*States with similar legislation or food purchase programs

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The existing state programs are generally intended to help fill the unmet need left by the federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which can be unpredictable in both the amount and variety of food offered. For instance, due to strong agricultural markets, there are scant supplies of surplus agricultural products that USDA traditionally buys and distributes as bonus TEFAP commodities. The change in the amount of food available is inevitable, and can make it difficult for food banks to estimate the amount of product they will have each year.

States with Deficits Have Increased Emergency Food Funding

Several states increased their emergency food funding during their most recent budget process. Both New York and New Jersey have provided \$4.5 million and \$3 million, respectively, in supplemental funding for their emergency food programs in the last year while simultaneously confronting unprecedented budget deficits. Virginia and Arkansas have each funded programs for the first time with \$1 and \$2 million investments, respectively, during their most recent legislative sessions, while also confronting budget deficits. These states have recognized the strain the economic crisis has put on household budgets, especially those who live in working poor households who might not qualify for other forms of government assistance. Their response provides food for families in need, which allows the families precious dollars to create economic activity in communities hardest hit by fiscal crisis.

Help Farmers Feed Iowa

It is commonly stated that Iowa's farmers feed the world. If that is true, Iowa's farmers should definitely be able to feed the 382,000 Iowans who struggle against hunger. Included in the emergency food program legislation is a state income tax incentive for farmers who donate consumable products to food banks and food pantries. Furthermore, food purchases made through the program would have geographical preferences towards support of Iowa farmers.

Iowa Must Play a Role in Meeting Family Food and Nutrition Needs

An emergency food program would immediately increase the amount of food distributed and reduce the devastating impact of hunger on adults, children and seniors in the state. The Iowa Food Bank Association proposes that the State of Iowa pass legislation that provides the following:

- \$2 million for a State Emergency Food Program
 - \$1.7 million in nutritious food purchases
 - \$200,000 in administration, storage and distribution costs
 - \$100,000 in competitive nutrition education grant funds
- Tax incentives for farmers to provide edible products to emergency feeding programs

As Iowa attempts to become the healthiest state in the nation, we cannot ignore the nearly 13% of Iowans who are food insecure.

“If we want to be the healthiest state in the nation, we have to confront the issue of hunger in our communities. Individuals who are food insecure lack adequate access to the food needed for a healthy lifestyle.”

**- Governor Branstad,
September 2011**

There is an existing state network that can efficiently distribute the emergency food throughout the state. The Iowa Food Bank Association and its eight Feeding America food banks distribute in excess of 16 million pounds of grocery products to over 1,000 nonprofit agencies that serve hungry Iowans each year.

Iowa Food Bank Association



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Coordinating efforts to alleviate hunger by supporting Feeding America food banks that serve Iowa

Sources: 1 Feeding America; 2 USDA: Household Food Security in the United States