Q: Can our mission remain valuable to clients?

The Mission

“We provide nutritious food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations and individuals in northeast Iowa, while offering hunger education programs to the area and those in need.”

We believe that our current plan of action embodies the heart and soul of our mission. Yes, the last few weeks has delivered a heartbreaking reality, and to see our network of impact, 38 years in the making, get turned on its head overnight, is unsettling to say the least. Though these are trying times, make no mistake, we are considered an “Essential Service” for a reason, and we take that very seriously.

If the last few weeks prove anything at all, it’s that our team will move mountains to keep the programs and service we provide active, regardless of how much work that takes. Because at the end of the day, we remain committed to ensuring that COVID-19 will not take the value of our services away from our clients. The only question left is one that only you have the answer to:

Is our mission valuable to you?

Please consider donating.

| Up to $50,000 Now Being Matched |

Thanks to the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa, the new COVID-19 Cooperative Fund will match donations up to $50,000.

| Consider Becoming A Monthly Donor |

We are in this for the long haul. We foresee a dramatic increase in costs over the next few months. Recurring donations greatly aid us in long-term sustainability planning. At this point, any forecasting we can do, helps us greatly.

If you have already donated, thank you so much!

online: www.NortheastIowaFoodbank.org
mail: 1605 Lafayette St. Waterloo, IA, 50704 PO Box 2397
phone: 319-235-0507

EMERGENCY RESPONSE
WE NEED YOU NOW MORE THAN EVER

COVID-19 UPDATE

We are reaching out to you today because a few weeks ago, we came to the realize the severity of our current situation. COVID-19, by all accounts, comes with far more long-term consequences than most will likely realize. The economic, health, and societal implications that the Coronavirus has on our organization will indeed provide an answer to the age old question:

What’s the worst that could happen?

The reality we face today is that on top of the estimated 43,000 northeast Iowans who were already experiencing hunger - long before this crisis developed into what we now know it to be today - thousands more economically burdened and immunocompromised seniors, children, and families stand to be affected as a direct result of COVID-19. As a supporter of the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, we think you deserve to know where we are today, so that when we call on your help, you believe us when we say:

“We have a plan.”

(Continue reading on page 2)
What we do next is critical.

It's Our Time To Shine

We remain confident that our current infrastructure, food-safety practices, and the public's participation in appropriate social distancing, will be the determining factors in a successful response to the ever-changing COVID-19 situation in northeast Iowa. With this mind, our leadership team has met daily, over the last several weeks, tasking ourselves to answer the three imperative questions that will determine our plan of action, our future in northeast Iowa, and ultimately, your role in helping us shape that future:

- 1.) “How will COVID-19 affect our operations?”
- 2.) “How will we respond?”
- 3.) “How can our mission remain valuable to our clients?”

Our intention is for you to truly see behind the scenes at how we are responding to this unprecedented event, as it has unfolded. The following pages will walk you through how we have answered these questions. We would like you to keep in mind that we cannot continue this work without your support and your generocity.

Q: How are we going to respond?

Our Pantry Operations

Cedar Valley Food Pantry & Mobile Food Pantries

Instead of single-file lines where clients pick food from the shelves, we place boxed of pre-packed meal kits directly into the clients vehicles via a drive-thru, curbside system. Doing so eliminates crowds, limits the likelihood of potential exposure, decreases their wait time, while still receiving plenty of healthy, convenient, and wholesome grocery items.

Our Programs

BackPack Program & Elderly Nutrition Program

With schools and senior centers either closing or limiting their services, children and seniors still need a way to receive the convenient, do-it-yourself food items that our BackPack and Elderly Nutrition programs provide. Partnerships remain a key solution, as there are fewer active drop-off sites. This means that we need to continue our work with schools implementing curbside meal programs, and senior-centered organizations like Northeast Iowa Area on Aging and Elderbridge Area on Aging.

Kids Cafe / Summer Feeding

Our Kids Cafe Program provides after-school meals during the school-year. Once summer arrives, we scale the number of program locations, and switch to operating our Summer Feeding program. Now that schools are considering cancelling the rest of their school-years, we are working with area community organizations, like YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and Social Action Inc, in what inevitably will be a hybrid model of both programs, all while keeping social-distancing, hygiene, and nutrition in mind.

Our Partnerships

Agency Distribution Deliveries

With over 2 million meals, a third of our entire distribution, done through the work of our 200 partner organizations in northeast Iowa. To streamline our ability to serve these communities, all agencies receiving deliveries will move to our online ordering system.

Managing Volunteers

Our volunteer team has closely followed Social Distancing guidelines, implementing them with our strict food-safety policies and our rigorous hygiene practices. The result? A coordinated system of 10 person (or less) teams, working in separate areas of our facility, spaced, gloved, and managed responsibly.

Q: How will COVID-19 affect our operations?

Less Food = More Expenses

As grocery stores continue to produce empty shelves, food donations are no longer the most reliable way (or safest) way to source and distribute grocery products to our clients, or our non-profit and community partner agencies. Moving forward, we will increasingly rely on purchasing food to meet the growing demand resulting from the COVID-19 crisis.

Less Help = More Work

As Social Distancing guidelines continue to evolve and constrict our volunteer operations, the workload remains while the workforce diminishes daily. While we continue to rely on a relentlessly passionate staff, 30 people working double overtime is simply not the solution.

Sourcing Food: Key

- Purchased
- USDA
- Donated
- Need To Purchase

Going from this... ...to this.