

FIVE BIG STEPS DEFINE FISCAL 2005

NIFB Fills in Coverage Gap with Hunger Connection Merger

After 20 years of receiving less than ideal food assistance, residents of Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties had cause to celebrate on January 17, 2005 when The Hunger Connection, a Rockford based independent food bank, and NIFB merged. The two organizations joined forces in a move to bring more food to the area by making it a branch of Northern Illinois Food Bank, and linking it to America's Second Harvest - The Nation's Food Bank Network.

In 2003, NIFB had conducted a gap analysis to determine the levels of food service being provided in the northwestern portion of Illinois and learned that the average family at 150% of poverty was being underserved due to either inadequately stocked food pantries or that they were too far from a pantry. The simplest solution appeared to be to join forces with the Hunger Connection that had a large network of pantries, but as an independent food bank, not enough food. The Hunger Connection Board agreed to combine its assets including its trade name with those of Northern Illinois Food Bank. NIFB now operates the Hunger Connection as a branch and oversees its operation from St. Charles.

The real benefit goes to the people who live in the five counties served from the Rockford location. More food availability has translated into higher levels of service and now the amount of food received by the average person in poverty has grown to 73.4 pounds per person. NIFB's expanded service area now includes thirteen counties, and a network of agency partners that totals 473 agencies that operate 520 hunger reduction programs or feeding sites. These sites are serving an average of 227,000 people per month.

NIFB Tops 20,000,000 Pound Mark!

Twenty million pounds sounds like a lot of food. It is a lot of food. It is not enough to end hunger in northern Illinois, but it is far better than the fifteen million pounds NIFB distributed to hungry neighbors last year. Part of the growth in food distribution has been fueled by the addition of programs added in the Hunger Connection merger, but the greatest increase is attributable to a more aggressive cost-free distribution program that takes the food directly to the doors of the Food Bank's agencies. A study had shown the Food Bank that

delivered orders typically contained 2.5 times more food than orders that were picked up.

The Food Bank made the commitment to deliver a minimum of fifty-five percent of its orders within its 7,000 plus square mile service area. To make this possible, a shift in both logistics and staffing philosophy had to occur. More drivers and trucks needed to be on the road. NIFB now has five tractor-trailer units on the road each day, plus two straight trucks, and has set a goal to deliver 70% of its agency orders in fiscal 2006, which will help our 521 hunger reduction sites increase the amount of food assistance they can provide to folks in need.

Getting food into distribution is one of the biggest challenges facing the Food Bank due to the fact that many of its agency partners operate with limited resources—both volunteers and vehicles. The Sara Lee Foundation continues to support the Food Bank's distribution initiative with special grants that make this vital program possible.

Mobile Pantry Delivers Produce and Protein to Hungry Neighbors

Imagine 150 to 200 families patiently waiting in line in order to share 8,000 pounds of nutritionally balanced food. Up pulls the NIFB Mobile Pantry, a specially designed truck that was underwritten by a grant from the UPS Foundation, and begins to distribute packages of frozen meat, bagged salads, salad dressing, bread, assorted other food items and even household cleaning products.

The NIFB traveling "food pantry" delivered in excess of 500,000 pounds of food during fiscal year 2005 to agencies throughout northern Illinois. A number of the Mobile Pantry visits were sponsored by area businesses that also provided volunteers to assist in the distribution of food. Woodward Governor Company of Rockford established a special Mobile Pantry fund to assist agencies in the Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties, and their employees have helped host seven visits.

Food Rescue and Recovery Sets Records

Providing protein to hungry neighbors has always been one of the most significant challenges faced by Northern Illinois Food Bank. Thanks to the generosity of Jewel the challenge to keep protein on the Food Bank's menu is now history. Each day NIFB trucks visit Jewel stores in northern Illinois and pick up perishable and prepared foods that

include large quantities of beef, pork, poultry and seafood—all vital sources of protein.

The Food Rescue and Recovery program collected a total of 1,473,170 pounds in fiscal 2005 versus 642,267 pounds in 2004. There is finally an answer to the question, “Where’s the protein?” It’s on the NIFB daily menu.

SPECIAL 2005 HIGHLIGHTS AND ‘THANK-YOUS’.

As an organization continues to grow, it can become a normal reaction to simply measure performance basis percent increase over prior year. Accomplishments that are not growth driven are sometimes overlooked or undervalued. This list of highlights attempts to capture some of both and it identifies some of the special donor-partners who helped make each achievement a happen.

- Northern Illinois Food Bank capped an extremely busy fiscal year by distributing 20,062,699 pounds of food. This new high will rank the Food Bank in the top 40 Food Banks nationally. Thanks to over 80 different food donors who made this possible.
- Merging Hunger Connection into the overall NIFB operation, which improves service to people in Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties. Special thanks to the dedicated members of the Hunger Connection Board for voting to support this joining of resources to better serve the hungry.
- Growing the Food Rescue and Recovery program to over 1.4 million pounds of food. Thanks to Jewel and its many employees who made certain that good, safe, usable food came to NIFB instead of being thrown out.
- Blackwell Consulting helped design and launch a new website that now works 24 hours a day promoting the Food Bank.
- Achieving a distribution rate of 64 pounds of food per person in poverty. Progress is being made, and NIFB ranks in the top third amongst all Food Banks, but we have a long way to go to reach more acceptable targets, which ought to be in the 240-280 pound range per person in poverty.
- Growing the Summer Food Service program to now provide lunch to 2400 kids each day.
- UPS made it possible for NIFB to acquire a refrigerated Mobile Pantry that increases distribution opportunities for types of food and to a wider group of agencies.
- Establishing a Food Resources Department with a staff dedicated to sourcing, soliciting and acquiring food.

- **Hosting nine National Hunger Awareness Day activities that raised the awareness level of hunger in local communities to new highs.**
- **Obtaining over \$1,000,000 in U.S. Government Food contracts and funding.**

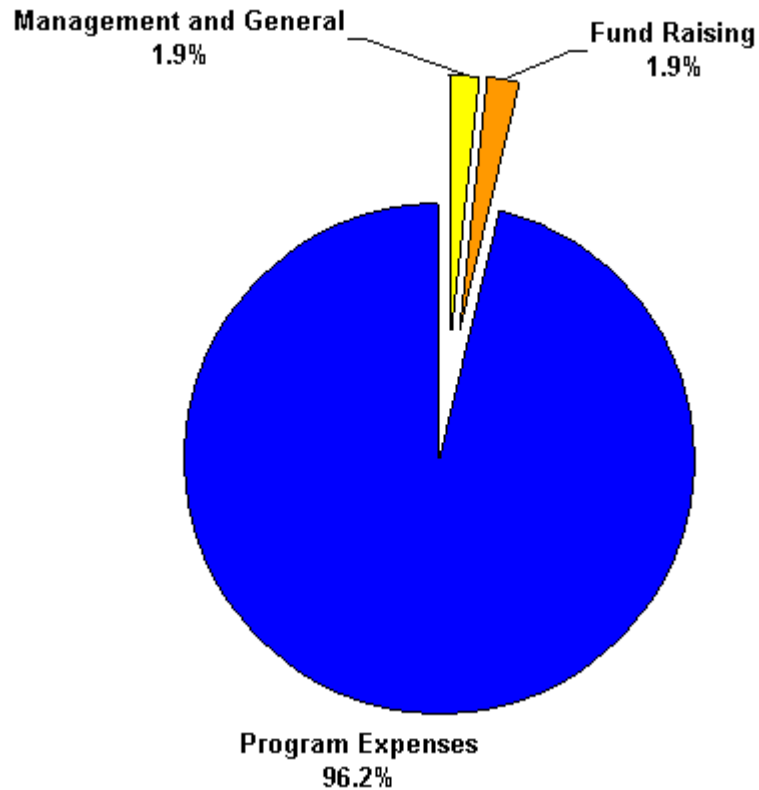
Thanks to each of you for the support you provided Northern Illinois Food Bank this past fiscal year. Your help made a difference in the life of some neighbor who needed food. If you did not have the opportunity to help this past year, give us a call and get involved today.

NIFB Maintains Four Star Rating

Northern Illinois Food Bank receives ** ranking from Charity Navigator for the third consecutive year. Once again NIFB managed its operations in a judicious manner that enabled it to invest 96.2% of all resources in providing food and service to low income, needy people.**

The Food Bank spent over 96 cents out of each dollar on food assistance programs and services. The Board and management of the Food Bank are committed to providing its food and financial donors with a dependable, efficiently operated organization that they can be proud to support. As Northern Illinois Food Bank pursues its mission of providing food assistance to the hungry, it continues to be dedicated to making each dollar of support stretch as far as possible.

Northern Illinois Food Bank
Fiscal Year 2005 Expenses



SPECIAL NOTE: (Reprinted from the Charity Navigator website.) Charity Navigator works to guide intelligent giving. We help charitable givers make intelligent giving decisions by providing information on over four thousand charities and by evaluating the financial health of each of these charities. We ensure our evaluations are widely used by making them easy to understand and freely available to the public. By guiding intelligent giving, we aim to advance a more efficient and responsive philanthropic marketplace, in which givers and the charities they support work in tandem to overcome our nation's most persistent challenges.