

The Backpack Program™



FOODBANK
OF IOWA

The Backpack Program™ partners with schools to provide sacks of child-friendly, easy to prepare foods to low-income children on weekends when they do not have access to school meal programs.

School staff and local volunteers coordinate the program at each program site, helping identify the students in need and providing them with Backpack sacks.

Program Details

- The Food Bank of Iowa purchases, stores, and provides Backpack sacks to 146 schools in 32 counties, providing much-needed food for about 5,400 children per week
- Each Backpack sack contains breakfast foods, lunch and dinner items, snacks, and beverages, all of which are selected to provide nutritional balance
- School staff and volunteers distribute the Backpack sacks at the end of each school week
- Children return to school on Monday better prepared to learn, grow, and develop properly

The Impact

“Thank you for the backpack. This is the best day of my life!”
— 2nd grader in the Backpack™ Program

“It is a life saver! We needed this to help with our food budget. Thank you!”
— Parent of a child in the Backpack™ Program

“Thank you for helping our family with food”
— 5th grader in the Backpack™ Program

“There just isn’t enough at lunch, so the kids are ‘starving’ and will ‘graze’ clear to supper time. This program has helped with that and the weekend food. Thank you!”
— Parent of a child in the Backpack™ Program

How to Help

Donate funds: For about \$4 per week, you can provide a Backpack sack to a child in need.

Contact your school: If your school does not have a Backpack Program™, contact your principal or school counselor to get started.



Child Hunger Facts

- 1 in 5 children does not have enough to eat
- We serve 5,400 children each week through the Backpack Program™, which serves K–6th grade students at 146 sites in 32 counties
- Many children in grades 7–12 face food insecurity, but no longer qualify for the Backpack Program™. The school pantry program helps meet this need.

Get involved

Contact Kate Pauly,
child & youth program coordinator
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