



Columbus Area United Way



October 1, 2025

Community & Family Partnership Collaborative Meeting

Transit

- Community Taskforce
- Surveys
- Localized Need
- Expansion Phases
- Meeting – October 15th, 2025 – 2 PM

Food Boxes from Catholic Charities

- Who is served? People in need who are already being served by partners. Must have children in the home who are 18 years or younger to receive food boxes. Agencies take food boxes to those they are working with.
- How often? Once a month
- How does it work? Agencies sign up for the number of food boxes they can distribute to those they work with who are in need.
- Where? Pick up of food boxes occurs at Harrah's parking lot.
- 1,495 food boxes distributed thus far in 2025 serving approximately 6,600 individuals.



Fresh Produce Distribution & Food Rescue

Rescuing food before it goes to waste. Our efforts include working with those who grow produce locally, to securing food nearing expiration from grocery stores, working with potato producer. Researched opportunities such as grocery stores, Lay's Chips, fresh produce producers in the area who may take their products to farmer's markets.

Roughly 600 individuals per week are served starting July 1.



Food Access - Schools

- To better understand food programs offered in local schools, we sent out an 8-question survey to school administrators, principals, counselors, and food services directors between April 26-30, 2025.
- 21 responses received
- 4 schools had multiple responses
- When answers differed, we followed up to clarify
- After merging duplicate responses, the final count was 16 unique schools



Food Access - Schools



87%
OF SCHOOLS SURVEYED
ARE INTERESTED IN
LEARNING MORE ABOUT
THE COMMUNITY
ELIGIBILITY PROVISION

14

SCHOOLS
SURVEYED
OFFER FREE
LUNCHES FOR
ALL STUDENTS



Food Access - Schools

WHAT FOOD SECURITY OR CHALLENGE IS IN YOUR SCHOOLS' AREA?

We often have a shortage of the weekend Backpack meals and do not have enough to offer to high school students.

THEY DON'T QUALIFY FOR F/R BUT STILL STRUGGLE TO PAY

YES, WE HAVE SOME FAMILIES WHO NEED FOOD SUPPORT

FRL STUDENTS ARE ALWAYS A CONCERN, ESPECIALLY ON WEEKENDS & DURING SCHOOL BREAKS!

I help in the lunchroom every day, and you can tell for which students lunch is their best meal. They load up their trays and eat most of it 99% of the time.

for a few families possibly

We have 20 students that receive free or reduced lunch through the federal program.

NOT SPECIFICALLY BUT THERE IS ALWAYS A STRUGGLE TO KEEP UP ON LUNCH ACCOUNT BALANCES FOR FAMILIES THAT DON'T QUALIFY FOR FREE.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The results will be reviewed by the School Food Security Team to help guide next steps in improving access to meals for students across our region.

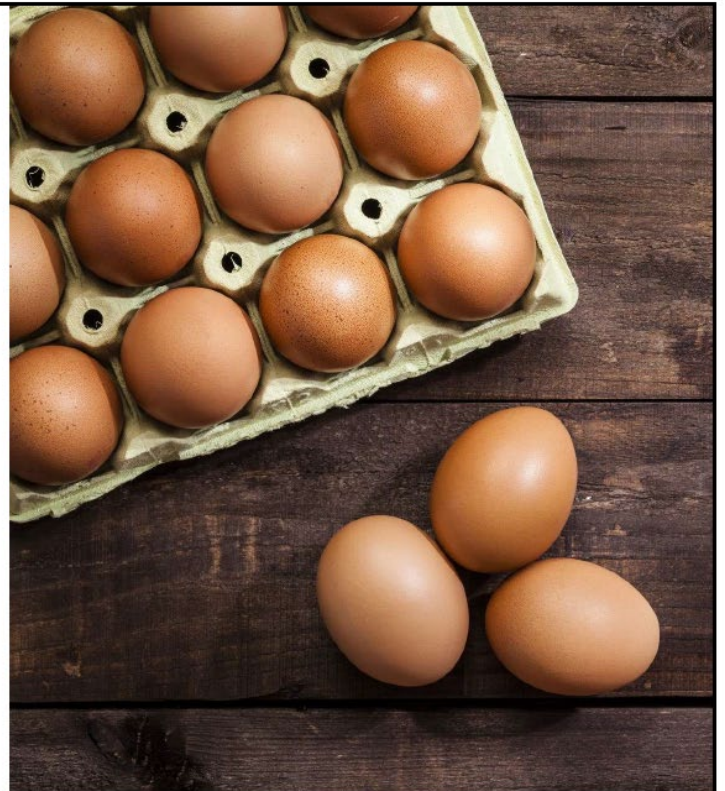
Food Access - Seniors

- Development of Food Matrix – Including Senior Centers in four-county region
- Opportunity for champions to help with food rescue to extend into Boone and Nance
- Partnership with supporting food boxes specifically for seniors via CAUW grant funding.
- Explore opportunities to education and increase SNAP enrollment among senior population.



Local Food Purchase Assistance Grant

- Initial funding \$65,000 - purchase beef, eggs and some cheese from local producers who met grant requirements.
- Food had to be distributed to those in need.
- 17 agencies worked with us to distribute 1# packages of ground beef, dozens of eggs and some cheese.
- State funds remained at end of grant cycle which allowed us to apply for additional funds. If awarded, we will purchase more beef, eggs and pork for distribution. Funds must be expended by December 31, 2025.



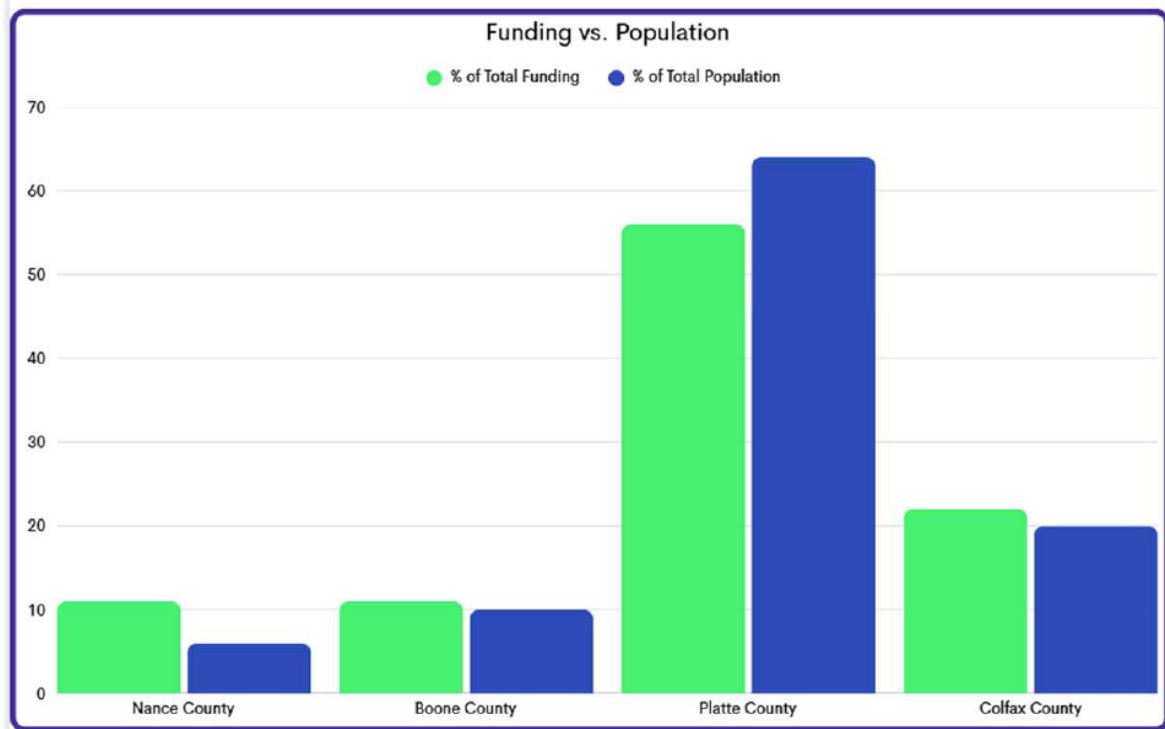


Local Food
Purchase
Assistance –
between October
2024 and mid
August 2025

**720 Pounds
of Cheese**

**2951
Pounds of
Ground
Beef**

**4150
Dozens of
Eggs**



Early Care & Education

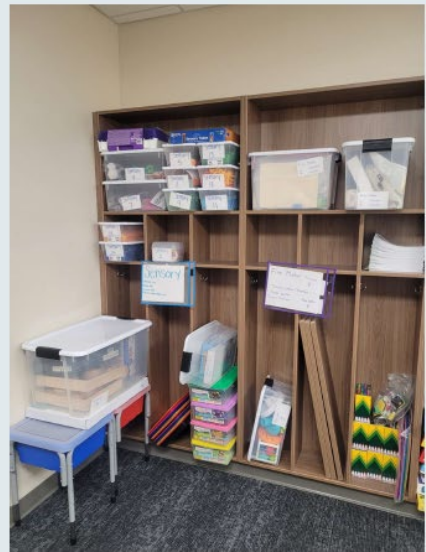
- Child care providers asked parents of the children in their care what having childcare means to them. This was done in April during “Day Without Childcare”
- Many responses from parents
- Using these parent responses in CAUW social media posts



Early Care & Education

- First Five Nebraska's Policy Leadership Academy (PLA)
 - Encouraged at least nine people in the four-county area to apply for PLA
 - Highly competitive
 - Early Childhood Advocacy
 - Three individuals from our area have been accepted
 - Molly Parsons, Strong Starts Schuyler Vice Chair, Early Educator in public school system
 - Rosa Pinto, Heartland Workers
 - Amy Ramos, CNCAP/Head Start, Schuyler

Early Care & Education – Resource Center for Child Care Providers



Welcome
 Thank You, Partners
 6 Regions, 1 Nebraska
 Central Child Care Champions
 NE Child Care Tax Credits
 Advocacy Call to Action!
 Q&A Wrap UP Thank you!

Navigating Nebraska Child Care Tax Credits

- 32 people attended this 2 hour presentation in Albion, September 24 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Free meal and child care provided
- Survey results taken from Boone & Nance County child care providers were shared at this meeting
- New partners worked on this including 6 Regions One NE, Boone County Development Agency, and UNL Extension staff in that area.



MULTIPLE CHOICE

How would you rate your business's financial stability?

Showing the most recent responses to the question. [See all responses here.](#)



Total responses

5



LB304

- Childcare subsidy – publicly funded programs offered in each state to offset the high costs of childcare, enabling parents to pursue employment or education so they can better provide for their families.
- To qualify for assistance, families must meet certain income requirements.
- LB 304 is a bill in NE Legislature that makes permanent the current income eligibility requirements for childcare assistance.
- We want LB304 to pass!
- If it does not pass, it will make Nebraska the third lowest in the nation.