



Starting a Backpack Program™ in your community

Partnering with your local food bank is the key ingredient to making the Backpack Program™ work. The “need” for the number of Backpack sacks can be established through your school administrators.

In 2004, the Kiwanis Clubs in Lincoln, NE started its program by providing \$25,000 in seed money (three schools and fewer than 100 Backpack sacks per week). It worked! And the program has grown! In 2016-2017, about 14,000 Backpack sacks are being handed out each Friday. Churches, businesses, service clubs and individuals provide helpers and funds to make it a success.

Each Friday afternoon during the school year, the Backpack sacks are handed out to students that each school has identified for the program. Two volunteers are needed at each school.

Kiwanis’ part in this effort is that each club or combinations of clubs have adopted a school to hand out the Backpack sacks, and most clubs donate funds from their budget to support the program.

How to Organize:

1. Determine need (Community Analysis) with community leaders: school administrators, religious leaders, food assistance program operators, etc. Kiwanis clubs can lead this effort.
2. A food bank type organization needs to be available in the community. Some items they must perform: they must want to do it, can secure food for Backpack sacks, secure funding, provide facility for storage and operation, vehicles to secure food and transport Backpack sacks to schools, and staff to make the program work.
3. As the program expands, the food bank will need to secure support from businesses, churches, service clubs, etc., to help implement the program on a weekly basis.



Questions?

In Nebraska: Food Bank for the Heartland, 402-331-1213

In Iowa: Food Bank of Iowa, 515-564-0330