

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Jennifer Clark  
[jennifer.clark@northernillfoodbank.org](mailto:jennifer.clark@northernillfoodbank.org)  
630-443-6910 Ext. 142  
Images available

## *An Enduring Mission and a Vision for the Future* *Northern Illinois Food Bank Unveils New Strategic Plan: UNITE*

**(GENEVA, Ill., March 3, 2021)** - For many, the New Year symbolizes a renewed start — a time of resolutions, commitments and change. For Northern Illinois Food Bank, 2021 marks the beginning of a five-year collaborative journey as the Food Bank unveils its new Strategic Plan: UNITE.

Strategic Plan: UNITE is the culmination of more than a year of preliminary work and planning to identify key strategies and to increase collaboration among its network of 900 agencies and feeding programs, neighbors and supporters. The plan will guide the co-creation of programs to ensure that everyone the Food Bank serves has equitable access to the quantity and quality of the food they need and want.

In conjunction with the new strategic plan, Northern Illinois Food Bank has adopted new Vision and Mission statements, which will guide the continued development of organizational culture in the coming years.

***Vision:*** *For everyone in Northern Illinois to have the food they need to thrive.*

***Mission:*** *To provide nutritious food and resources for our neighbors, with dignity, equity and convenience, through partnerships and innovation.*

UNITE is centered around five interconnected strategic pathways: Embrace Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI); Enhance Food Supply; Empower our Neighbors; Engage our Network; and Evolve the Food Bank. Within each pathway are strategies and detailed measures of success.

“We selected UNITE as our strategic plan’s theme, because we did not develop this plan alone and we will not achieve it alone,” stated Julie Yurko, President and CEO of Northern Illinois Food Bank. “The cornerstone of UNITE is rooted in collaboration and reaching even more neighbors with new approaches, enhancing their overall experience.”



The key to achieving the new strategic plan’s goals is a heightened understanding of what the Food Bank’s neighbors need and want to feel safe, welcomed and valued when they seek help. UNITE addresses this by seeking feedback and input directly from neighbors to drive food sourcing and accessibility decisions. The plan also calls for enhancing direct-to-neighbor approaches such as mobile and online markets, SNAP outreach, and direct marketing to meet growing community needs and add food distributions at some of its existing centers to reach more food-insecure neighbors in 2025.

“With our strategic partners Boston Consulting Group and See What I Mean, the Food Bank leadership team engaged with our stakeholders to gather information and shape our efforts for the future through the new plan,” said Dirk Locascio, Board Chair of Northern Illinois Food Bank. “We realize that achieving the goals outlined in UNITE will require continued extraordinary commitment, investment and support of the community.”

## **About Northern Illinois Food Bank**

Our vision at [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) is for everyone in Northern Illinois to have the food they need to thrive. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and proud member of [Feeding America](#), we serve our neighbors in 13 counties with dignity, equity and convenience, providing 250,000 meals a day. We bring together manufacturers, local and corporate grocers, area farmers, corporations, foundations, and individuals who donate food and funding, and each week nearly 1,000 volunteers help us evaluate, repack, and distribute food. We also proudly partner with more than 900 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and youth and senior feeding programs to provide nutritious food and resources. Our distribution centers are located in Geneva, Park City, Rockford and Joliet. Find out how you can [get help](#), [volunteer](#), [donate](#) or [get involved](#) at [SolveHungerToday.org](#), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#). For more information on the Food Bank's new strategic plan, visit: [www.SolveHungerToday.org/UNITE](http://www.SolveHungerToday.org/UNITE).