



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **East Court Clinic Food Pantry Opens in Kankakee**

*Northern Illinois Food Bank establishes first hospital-based food pantry outside of Chicago*

**(KANKAKEE, IL – Nov. 8, 2021)** – [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) and Riverside Healthcare opened East Court Clinic Food Pantry, the first hospital-based food pantry in Northern Illinois outside of Cook County. It will provide free groceries to patients in need of nutritious food that meets their dietary requirements.

“We’re thrilled to mark this momentous occasion in Kankakee, locating a food pantry actually in a clinic where neighbors in need of food assistance have access to nutritious food,” said Jen Bucko Lamplough, Chief Impact Officer of Northern Illinois Food Bank. “Studies show a direct correlation between food insecurity and health problems. East Court Clinic Food Pantry will make a difference in the lives of its neighbors by providing the food and resources they need to thrive.”

“It’s an honor to partner with the Northern Illinois Food Bank to become the first hospital-based food pantry in the area,” said Riverside Healthcare President and CEO Phil Kambic. “Having food security is the first step to comprehensive wellness. Everybody deserves great quality healthcare and everybody deserves a meal in their stomach.”

Riverside Healthcare, the Food Bank and its generous partners – the United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois and Feeding America – contributed to the buildout of the space and donated the equipment, including two freezers, a cooler and wire racks. The Food Bank also stocked the pantry with nutritious foods.

“Opening this pantry is quite an achievement. The Food Bank will use these successful partnerships as a model in other areas of high incidence of food insecurity as part of our strategic plan to improve access to nutritious foods and resources for our neighbors in need,” said Maeven Sipes, Chief Philanthropy Officer of Northern Illinois Food Bank.

Hospital-based pantries are part of the Food Bank’s Screen and Intervene Initiative, which provides nutritious foods and education to improve health outcomes for individuals experiencing or at risk for chronic health issues, such as diabetes or heart disease. The initiative offers participants, depending on their location, different options to access nutritious foods at no cost.

These include Rx Mobiles, Rx Markets, My Pantry Express (the Food Bank's free online food pantry), and hospital-based food pantries.

Most neighbors (71.7%) involved in Screen and Intervene reported they found the initiative very good and said their health conditions are easier to manage when they receive food from an Rx Mobile, according to a Food Bank survey. Many respondents (78.4%) said they had at least one chronic health condition.

For more information about Screen and Intervene or other Food Bank initiatives, visit [SolveHungerToday.org](https://SolveHungerToday.org).

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## **ABOUT NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK**

Our vision at [Northern Illinois Food Bank](https://NorthernIllinoisFoodBank.org) 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](https://FeedingAmerica.org), 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](https://SolveHungerToday.org), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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