



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Northern Illinois Food Bank Joins Partnership for a Healthier America's
Healthy Hunger Relief Initiative**

*National partnership will radically improve the quality of food distributed
to food-insecure families in Northern Illinois*

[GENEVA, IL – Oct. 19, 2021] - [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) has joined the [Partnership for a Healthier America's \(PHA\)](#) Healthy Hunger Relief initiative to further uplift the health and well-being of our neighbors in Northern Illinois. The Food Bank will work with PHA – the national nonprofit organization fighting for food equity formed in conjunction with former First Lady Michelle Obama – to address hunger, malnutrition and chronic disease by increasing the supply of healthier options and decreasing the supply of unhealthy options.

“PHA’s Healthy Hunger Relief partners serve as the foundation of our mission to transform the food landscape in pursuit of food equity,” said **Nancy E. Roman, President & CEO of Partnership for a Healthier America**. “Through our work together, we’re ensuring that communities and families all across the country have access to healthier, high-quality, culturally relevant and nutritious foods.”

Northern Illinois Food Bank, along with 29 other new Healthy Hunger Relief partners, will receive support from PHA to implement a comprehensive nutrition ranking system, developed by experts at [Healthy Eating Research](#), over the next two years. In addition, PHA will provide technical assistance to help partners understand the nutritional quality of their inventory and make strategic decisions within and across food categories to improve nutritional quality, enhancing food equity for the communities they serve.

The Food Bank has received \$70,000 in grant funding from PHA to establish the foundation needed to implement a nutrition ranking system and to support the distribution of nutritionally dense fresh produce.

“The timing of this new collaboration with Partnership for a Healthier America is perfect. As we roll out our new strategic plan, one key tenet is enhancing our food supply so we can provide nutritious food for our neighbors to thrive,” said **Julie Yurko, President & CEO of Northern Illinois Food Bank**. “This partnership offers unique tools that will help us easily and accurately

assess the nutritious value of the millions of pounds of food coming through our distribution centers, and they will guide our future decision making as we acquire food.”

“We’re also impressed by the brain trust the Partnership has assembled. The knowledge and experiences of the food bank collaborators as well as other health experts will be invaluable to our team as together we address food insecurity as a social detriment of health,” Yurko said.

PHA’s Healthy Hunger Relief initiative currently works with 28 partners, reaches more than 7 million Americans, and has introduced 115 million pounds of healthy food into the emergency food system, while removing 19 million pounds of low nutrition food. By welcoming 30 new partners to the program, like Northern Illinois Food Bank, PHA’s Healthy Hunger Relief work will double in reach and span across 18 states, impacting more than 14 million Americans with good food. PHA’s Healthy Hunger Relief work is now in 30% of all food banks across the country.

PHA made a [commitment](#) last month to provide 50 million servings of vegetables, fruits, and legumes to food-insecure families by 2025. PHA’s work with its Healthy Hunger Relief partners is part of this broader effort to meaningfully shift the food supply available in disadvantaged communities as the organization works to improve food equity across the country.

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ABOUT PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHIER AMERICA

[Partnership for a Healthier America \(PHA\)](#) is the premier national nonprofit organization working to transform the food landscape in pursuit of health equity. At PHA, we believe that there is no true equity in society without health equity and that there is no health equity without food equity. Over the course of a decade, PHA has partnered with more than 300 corporations, nonprofits, and organizations around the country with the vision that all families in every zip code have access to affordable good food. Visit PHA at ahealthieramerica.org

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](#).

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