



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Northern Illinois Food Bank Launches Innovative Food Finder Map to Help Connect Neighbors with Food Pantries and Programs

New digital tools increase access to food with easy to use features

Geneva, IL (January 23, 2022) – [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) (NIFB) announced today the launch of Vivery, an innovative platform and digital [Food Finder](#) map helping neighbors experiencing food insecurity connect with vital food resources in their community and surrounding areas. The new mobile-friendly map increases access to the fresh and nutritious food neighbors need to thrive.

Northern Illinois Food Bank works with a network of 900 food pantries and feeding programs to provide 78 million meals a year to neighbors across 13 counties in suburban and rural Northern Illinois. With the help of volunteers, donors, and member agencies, the Food Bank distributes perishable and non-perishable foods to 450,000 neighbors every month.

The Vivery platform, developed by the Thierer Family Foundation, helps food banks and food pantries remove obstacles preventing neighbors from finding food. Digital features include an interactive [Food Finder](#) map with a searchable directory of food distributions sites with up to date schedules, times, directions, and programs. The Northern Illinois Food Bank website allows for users to easily change the language so neighbors can access the food they need in the language they speak. Users can also search by zip code, an address, or even filter for specific dietary needs to ensure they find the right food at the right time and place.

“These digital tools are a game changer in the future of food accessibility and equity in Northern Illinois,” said Julie Yurko, President and CEO, Northern Illinois Food Bank. “Our hope is that we can reach more neighbors experiencing food insecurity and help them and their families get to thriving faster.”

“Updated search features and a clean, intuitive user experience help neighbors locate a food program convenient to their schedules and circumstances. The layout of the map is much more usable now,” says Chris Borresen, Network Resource Platform Specialist, Northern Illinois Food Bank. “The majority of neighbors use their mobile devices to search for food pantries and resources. The new Food Finder map scales down to a mobile screen nicely making it more user friendly.”

Vivery is working with other food banks in Illinois to include their programs, with the intent of removing borders from the [Food Finder](#) map. As a result, neighbors near the border of Cook County, served by

Greater Chicago Food Depository, will see the Northern Illinois Food Bank agencies, and also agencies outside of our network, in the same map.

This project was made possible by the [Thierer Family Foundation](#) in partnership with the Northern Illinois Food Bank to ensure people across Northern Illinois could have equal access to food. The foundation strategically funds innovative technology projects, including Vivery, to modernize access to food and significantly change the way an organization can serve their target audience.

###

About Northern Illinois Food Bank

For the past 40 years, Northern Illinois Food Bank has been dedicated to solving hunger and empowering neighbors. 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, Lake Forest, 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](#).

About Thierer Family Foundation

The Thierer Family Foundation was founded by Nasrin and Mark Thierer in December 2015, with a mission to increase the impact of nonprofits by helping them leverage technology to be more effective, efficient, and sustainable. The foundation strategically funds innovative technology projects, including Vivery to modernize access to food and significantly change the way an organization can serve their target audience. By investing in technology, the Thierer Family Foundation can greatly impact an organization's reach, help organizations deliver on their mission, and ultimately serve more people. Their hope is that this approach will pave the way for other funders to see the value of investing in technology within the nonprofit sector. Head to <https://thiererfamilyfoundation.org/> to learn more.

Contact:

Katie Heraty, Media Relations Director
Northern Illinois Food Bank
kheraty@northernilfoodbank.org