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Northern Illinois Food Bank Announces Rockford Relocation and Expansion Plans at Press Conference with Senator Stadelman

New location will be 30K sq. ft. and rebranded as Neighborhood Market

GENEVA, IL (August 27, 2024) – Today, Northern Illinois Food Bank announced exciting updates regarding the relocation and expansion of its Northwest center in Rockford, in a press conference attended by Julie Yurko, President and CEO of Northern Illinois Food Bank, and Illinois State Senator Steve Stadelman. The event marked the introduction of the future home of the Northern Illinois Food Bank Northwest Center, set to relocate to a new and expanded facility at the former K-Mart site at 1397 Sandy Hollow Road, Rockford, IL later this year.

As highlighted during the press conference, food insecurity remains a critical issue throughout Northern Illinois. In Winnebago County, food insecurity affects 1 in 7 residents. According to the ALICE Report, 41% of Winnebago County households fall below the threshold of financial survival meaning they struggle to cover basic living expenses such as food, housing, transportation, healthcare, and childcare.

Over the past five years, the Food Bank has responded by increasing meal distribution from 5.3 million in FY19 to 8.7 million in FY24 in Winnebago County.

Northern Illinois Food Bank's Northwest Center collaborates with over 100 food pantries, schools, senior centers, and community organizations throughout Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson, and McHenry Counties to ensure neighbors have access to nutritious food. The Winnebago Community Market, a 4,000-square-foot pantry located within the current Rockford center, has been a crucial resource, serving 1,700 families each week since its opening in 2018.

Since 2015, the Food Bank has been operating from a 19,000-square-foot facility, which it has now outgrown due to increasing demand. With the need for more space and lease ending in December, the Food Bank is taking the opportunity to relocate and expand its operations to a new, larger 30,000-square-foot facility on Sandy Hollow Road.

Northern Illinois Food Bank Northwest Center relocation and expansion will provide several key benefits:

- A larger parking lot with improved visibility and accessibility on a major thoroughfare.
- 11,000 additional square feet of space, including two dock doors and ample warehouse space, which will support expanded food storage, an agency dock, freezer and cooler capacity, and additional office and meeting areas.
- The current Northwest Center and Winnebago Community Market will be renamed the Northern Illinois Food Bank Neighborhood Market, offering an enhanced grocery shopping experience for neighbors and supporting the OrderAhead program for convenient, private online grocery ordering.
- The new space will also allow for the expansion of wrap-around services and resources for the community.

The Food Bank is actively fundraising for the Neighborhood Market renovations and build-out, with a goal of raising \$600,000 by the end of the year. So far, nearly \$200,000 has been raised, including a generous matching gift from Theresa and Jerry Hinck and contributions from UW Health, Barbara Bullock, and Christopher Bullock. Additionally, the Kjellstrom Family Foundation has contributed to the expansion, and a grant from US Foods will help fund innovative temperature-controlled lockers for grocery pickups.

Senator Stadelman also announced securing \$50,000 in funding as part of the ReBuild Illinois capital spending bill, supporting local infrastructure and capital improvement projects. “I’m proud to support Northern Illinois Food Bank in its mission to ensure no one in Rockford goes hungry,” said Senator Stadelman.

“We are encouraged by the generosity of our donors and partners, including Senator Stadelman, who has been a long-time supporter of the Food Bank,” said Julie Yurko during the announcement. “While we are grateful for all the support, we still have a long way to go. If you can help, please consider a financial contribution or other resources. Together, we can ensure families throughout Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson, and McHenry counties get the food they need to thrive.”

Following the press conference, attendees were invited to tour the new facility that is still under construction and will be open to the public later this year.

For more information on how to contribute to the Northern Illinois Food Bank’s expansion project, please visit [Northern Illinois Food Bank Neighborhood Market - Northern Illinois Food Bank \(solvehungertoday.org\)](https://www.solvehungertoday.org)

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About Northern Illinois Food Bank

For over 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](#).