



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Julie Yurko of Northern Illinois Food Bank Named Food Bank Leader of the Year** *National award honors exceptional leadership in hunger relief*

**Geneva, IL** (December 17, 2025) — [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) is proud to announce President & CEO [Julie Yurko](#) has been named the 2025 Food Bank Leader of the Year by [Food Bank News](#), a national publication covering hunger relief organizations and trends across the country.

Yurko was selected through a competitive nomination process, with the final decision made by the publication's editorial team. The award recognizes exceptional leadership, innovation, and measurable impact in the fight against hunger.

In announcing the honor, *Food Bank News* cited Yurko's tireless commitment to centering neighbors, strengthening satisfaction and loyalty across the Food Bank's network, and driving innovation to meet the evolving needs of Northern Illinois communities. The publication also highlighted the organization's impactful use of Net Promoter Score (NPS) tools and the implementation of neighbor councils, both of which ensure that community voices help shape and improve food access services.

Last year, Northern Illinois Food Bank and its network of more than 900 food pantries and feeding programs provided over 93 million meals to neighbors across its 13-county service area in Northern Illinois. Under Yurko's leadership, the Food Bank continues to expand its reach and deepen its commitment to dignity, access, and community-centered care.

"We are thrilled to see Julie recognized on the national stage," said Northern Illinois Food Bank Board Chair Nate Carden. "Her inspirational leadership and data-driven strategy have transformed how we serve neighbors with dignity and compassion."

Yurko, who has led Northern Illinois Food Bank as President and CEO since 2014, has championed efforts to improve the overall neighbor experience, diversify food access options, expand fresh food availability, and build stronger partnerships with pantries, donors, and volunteers.

“I am honored and humbled to receive this recognition,” said Yurko. “It reflects the dedication of our entire team, our partners, and the neighbors who inspire us every day. Together, we’re building a stronger, more nourished Northern Illinois.”

Read the full *Food Bank News* announcement [here](#).

###

### **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](http://SolveHungerToday.org), or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and LinkedIn.