



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Northern Illinois Food Bank Announces Free Summer Meals for Kids Program and Family Fresh Mart starting June 1**

*Meals are available at no cost and no registration or ID is required for children to participate*

GENEVA, IL. (May 29, 2026) — As schools close for summer break, many families lose access to free and reduced-price school meals that children rely on throughout the year. Beginning June 1, [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) and its network of community partners throughout 13 counties in Northern Illinois will launch the Summer 2026 Meals Program and Fresh Family Mart to help ensure children continue to have access to nutritious meals while school is out.

“Summer should be a time for children to grow, play, and thrive, not worry about where their next meal will come from,” said Julie Yurko, President and CEO of Northern Illinois Food Bank. “As food costs continue to rise and many families face increased financial pressure, our Summer Meals Program, Family Fresh Mart distributions, added mobile food distributions, and Summer EBT resources help provide nutritious food for children who depend on school meals during the year and are at risk of summer hunger.”

Northern Illinois Food Bank’s network for 900 food pantries and feeding programs provide 93 million meals a year across 13 counties in Northern Illinois.

Last year, Northern Illinois Food Bank’s [Summer Meals Program](#) provided 7,000 meals each day to children across Northern Illinois. This year, the organization anticipates an increased need due to shifting school calendars with summer breaks starting earlier, continued elevated gas and food costs, and changes to SNAP benefits impacting family budgets.

**Summer Meals for Kids Program - Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**

Northern Illinois Food Bank's 138 Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) partner sites across Northern Illinois offer a combination of breakfast, lunch, and/or snack options for children and teens 18 years old and younger. Meal sites include schools, libraries, park districts, churches, community centers, and other neighborhood locations throughout the Food Bank's 13-county service area.

Meals are available at no cost and no registration or ID is required for children to participate. Availability and meal service times vary by location.

To find a Summer Meals for Kids Program site near you, visit **"Summer Meals" at [SolveHungerToday.org](https://SolveHungerToday.org)**.

### **Family Fresh Mart**

This summer, Northern Illinois Food Bank is also expanding its "Family Fresh Mart" program, a privately funded initiative designed to supplement the Summer Meals Program by providing families with fresh produce to take home. The program expanded from last year's pilot and will distribute fresh produce weekly at six locations across Northern Illinois.

#### **Family Fresh Mart locations include:**

##### **Tuesday**

- Zion Benton Public Library | 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Open to the public)

2400 Gabriel Avenue, Zion, IL

##### **Wednesday**

- Addison Public Library | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Open to the public)

4 Friendship Plaza, Addison, IL

##### **Thursday**

- St. Francis Park | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Open to the public)

277 Jefferson Ave., Elgin, IL

##### **Friday**

- Santori Library \*Parking Lot | 12 – 2 p.m. (Open to the public)

101 South River Street, Aurora, IL

### **Summer \$120 EBT**

In addition to Summer Meals sites, families may also qualify for [Summer EBT](#) benefits, which provide eligible children with \$120 in grocery benefits over the summer months when school meals are unavailable. Northern Illinois Food Bank encourages families to

check eligibility and apply if needed. Most eligible children are automatically enrolled, but some families still need to complete an application.

Families can apply for Summer EBT online at Illinois [ABE Access Portal](https://abe.illinois.gov/sebtPortal/) <https://abe.illinois.gov/sebtPortal/>. The application deadline for 2026 Summer EBT benefits is August 14, 2026. For additional assistance with Summer EBT applications, families can contact Northern Illinois Food Bank's SNAP team at 844-600-7627.

The Illinois Department of Human Services website lists [certified farmers markets and farm stands that accept the LINK card](#).

And the [Link Match program](#) doubles every SNAP dollar spent at eligible farmers' markets.

### **Solve Summer Hunger with a Virtual Fundraising Drive**

Northern Illinois Food Bank can't solve summer hunger alone. Join the Food Bank in solving summer hunger by launching a fundraising drive in support of neighbors facing need. Get started today and make a difference here:

<https://support.solvehungertoday.org/campaign/solve-summer-hunger-2025/c689351>

To find a Summer Meals for Kids Program site near you, **visit "Summer Meals" at [SolveHungerToday.org](https://solvehunger.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 320,000 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](https://solvehunger.org), or follow us on [Facebook](#), TikTok, [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).