



Backpack

a program of The Idaho Foodbank

IMPACT REPORT

AUGUST 2020



The Idaho Foodbank's Backpack Program ensures that students who are chronically hungry have access to adequate food over the weekend by providing them with a backpack full of nutritious, kid-friendly food every Friday during the school year.



Making a Difference in Children's Lives

The Backpack Program does far more than satisfy hungry tummies. It improves a child's social, emotional, and physical well-being. In addition, it creates happier families by relieving parents of the fear and anxiety associated with not being able to provide for their children. When basic needs are met, children and families can thrive.

Solving Childhood Hunger

2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

63,473	backpacks distributed statewide
2,988	children served statewide
174/63	participating schools and districts
295	children on program wait list

Survey Results Tell the Story

- **94%** of parents definitely or somewhat agreed that the Backpack Program has made a positive difference in the well-being of their child.
- **93%** of school coordinators rated the Backpack Program as very beneficial to children and families.
- **84%** of parents definitely or somewhat agreed that the Backpack Program helped stretch their household dollars to be used for other critical family needs.



Coming Full Circle

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closures has compromised access to services which provides nutritious meals over the weekend to hungry students.

To increase accessibility, The Idaho Foodbank partnered with the Idaho National Guard in April 2020 to build special food boxes destined for Idaho kids in need. Normally these students would receive a special package of food every Friday as part of the Backpack Program.

Thanks to the aid of the Idaho National Guard, this program was executed and supersized. Over 1,300 boxes containing 10 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners and 10 snacks were packed by soldiers for immediate delivery to kids. And for one soldier, this experience was particularly meaningful.

Sgt. Eli Morgan is a 5 year veteran of the Idaho National Guard. As a boy growing up in Idaho, the sergeant was like the 1 in 4 kids who could experience food insecurity due to COVID-19. "As a kid I would go with my mom to a food pantry. I love food and every time we went to the pantry we would get a whole big box with all kinds of items," said Morgan. "I thought it was a really cool thing that people gave out food. I guess everything is magical when you are a kid."

Morgan got to pass on some of that magic as he boxed up items for hungry students. "When I was young I did not know I was food insecure, but I do now and I try not to take it for granted," said Morgan.

Food AND Resources:

Delta Dental's Support

Hunger is often a symptom of other challenges in the home, including access to medical and dental care. The Backpack Program provides more than healthy food and hope thanks to great partners like Delta Dental. A child's eating patterns and a lack of access to healthy food increases their risk for oral health problems. Delta Dental is helping those facing hunger by providing toothbrush kits in our Backpack bags twice a year. These kits include a new toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss and information to educate parents and children on the importance of dental health.

"Truthfully, this program has been an amazing resource for my son. I don't have to worry about him on the weekends now."

— Parent

About The Idaho Foodbank

The Idaho Foodbank is an independent, donor-supported, nonprofit organization and is the largest statewide distributor of free food assistance in Idaho. The Idaho Foodbank was established in 1984 and since that time has distributed millions of pounds of food through its facilities in Lewiston, Meridian and Pocatello. In the last fiscal year, The Foodbank provided food for more than 18.6 million meals to Idahoans living with food insecurity. The Foodbank distributes food through a network of more than 400 partners including schools, food pantries, senior centers, feeding sites, shelters, mobile pantries and churches. Recognizing the crucial connection between hunger and health, The Idaho Foodbank focuses on providing nutritious food and collaborates with community organizations to promote nutrition education, wellness tools and healthy living. Visit idahofoodbank.org for more information. Find us on your favorite social media platform.



BACKPACK PROGRAM
SUPPORTED BY:



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The only Idaho nonprofit to receive a four-star rating for 11 consecutive years.