# North Central Idaho

IMPACT REPORT | FISCAL YEAR 2026




**Together, we can solve hunger.**




## Statewide Coverage, Local Focus

The Idaho Foodbank is a statewide hunger-relief organization that distributes food and conducts direct-service programs through facilities in Meridian, Pocatello, and Lewiston. Lewiston has served as The Foodbank's distribution hub for North Central Idaho since 1985.

## Solving Hunger in North Central Idaho

FISCAL YEAR 2026

| | |
|---|---|
| **2,381,896** | pounds of food for 1,984,913 meals |
| **89** | partner agencies |
| **10** | counties served |
| **29,371** | people served (monthly on average) |
| **3,514** | volunteers provided 11,605 hours of service |

# North Central Idaho:
## Revitalizing a Critical Community Pantry Through-Data Driven Partnership

In the fall of 2025, the future of the Cottonwood food pantry was uncertain. The pantry's longtime volunteers and supporters were considering closing its doors, raising concerns about how the community would continue accessing essential food resources. Rural communities often rely on a small number of trusted access points to find food assistance. The impending closure of the Cottonwood food pantry threatened a critical link in the region's food security network.

The Idaho Foodbank had recently created an internal dashboard that pulls publicly available community health indicators and food insecurity data to create a more complete picture of the social determinants of health needs in communities. The Foodbank utilized this dashboard to gain additional insights into the challenges facing Idaho County. The county's food insecurity rate of 14.7 percent was significantly higher than the statewide average, underscoring the importance of maintaining a reliable pantry in Cottonwood. With this and other data in hand, The Foodbank had a more complete picture to share when reaching out to regional partners who had a shared interest in improving community health. We wanted to explore a path forward that would strengthen, rather than sunset, the pantry's role in the community.

The pantry has now officially rebranded as the St. Mary's Health Community Pantry, reflecting a renewed mission centered on community health and expanded support. St. Mary's Health recognized the importance of the



Cottonwood food pantry and stepped up to lead this pantry's work. Prior to the partnership, the pantry relied entirely on local donations. Now they are part of The Idaho Foodbank's partner agency network, meaning The Foodbank provides a steady supply of the food that is distributed, ensuring consistent access to nutritious items for families across the region.

"The Idaho Foodbank has been a wonderful partner, and our volunteers make this work possible," said Brynn Knudson, St. Mary's Health Foundation development director. "Together, we are advancing the health of our region by ensuring every home has the essentials they need to thrive."

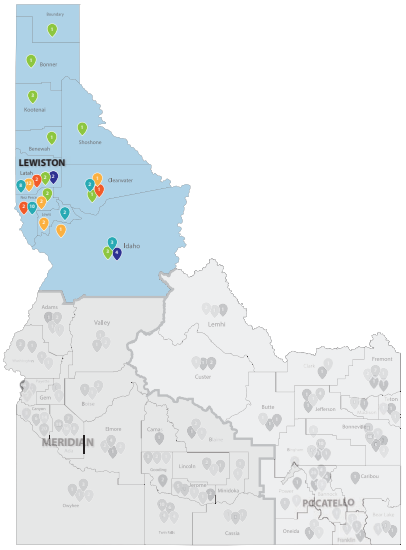
The revitalized pantry offers food, as well as household and personal care items, which strengthens its role as a dependable resource for families facing hardship. Guided by data and grounded in collaboration, the Cottonwood pantry's transformation demonstrates how strategic decision making can preserve vital services and support the long-term health of North Central Idaho.

## Counties Served in this Region

- Benewah
- Bonner
- Boundary
- Clearwater
- Idaho
- Kootenai
- Latah
- Lewis
- Nez Perce
- Shoshone

## Programs and People Served:

Mobile Pantries ..... **13**
Backpacks provided by partnering with 22 schools..... **10,547**
School Pantries ..... **6**




*Programs and food distributions are coordinated through facilities in Meridian, Pocatello and Lewiston.*

Over **400** Partner Agencies

**44/44** Idaho counties receiving programs and/or services

**About The Idaho Foodbank**

The Idaho Foodbank is an independent, donor-supported, nonprofit organization. It is a statewide and community-anchored organization that is the largest distributor of free food assistance in Idaho. The Idaho Foodbank's mission is to nourish, educate, and advocate to support thriving, food-secure communities across Idaho. It is uniquely situated as a statewide connector of people, partners, and solutions.

The Idaho Foodbank was established in 1984 and has distributed millions of pounds of nutritious food through its facilities in Lewiston, Meridian, and Pocatello. In the last fiscal year, The Foodbank provided food for more than 22 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, shelters, mobile pantries, and churches. Visit idahofoodbank.org for more information.

Charity Navigator ✦ FOUR-STAR ✦