Health and Nutrition

The Idaho Foodbank

IMPACT REPORT | FISCAL YEAR 2026





Health, Hunger, and Social Determinants of Health:



When someone is food insecure, they are making difficult choices about how to make ends meet. The intertwined factors that impact an individual's ability to become food secure are known as the Social Determinants of Health. These are the conditions in the environment in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes. The Idaho Foodbank is actively partnering to find ways to work together to improve these Social Determinants of Health to address root causes of food insecurity.

84% of the food distributed by The Idaho Foodbank in Fiscal Year 2026 was considered nutritious

Project Canary: Data Analysis to Make an Impact

Meeting hunger with dignity means more than providing food — it means understanding the full picture of what families are facing. In 2025, The Idaho Foodbank took a major step forward in that mission with the launch of a new data dashboard, known as Project Canary, that brings together 35 community health indicators across all 44 Idaho counties. From nourishment and housing stability to economic wellbeing and demographic trends, Project Canary offers a real time, 10,000 foot view of the communities we serve.

For years, The Foodbank relied on partner feedback, statewide reports, and local insights to understand where need was growing. Project Canary doesn't replace those voices — it strengthens them. Project Canary pulls together various public data sources, including information from the U.S. Census Bureau and County Health Needs Assessments. By curating this data, the dashboard helps us identify emerging challenges earlier, focus nutrition education where it will have the greatest impact, and ensure that our programs reach communities experiencing the highest barriers to health and food access.

This tool has already become a strategic asset across the organization. Program teams use it to guide outreach and prioritize counties for new initiatives. Development staff incorporate the data into grant proposals and reports, helping funders understand the realities facing Idaho families. Leadership and the Board of Directors use it to inform long term planning and advocate for policies that support food security statewide.

Project Canary also empowers our partner agencies. With access to county level insights, partners can communicate local needs to donors, volunteers, and elected officials, strengthening their own capacity to serve.

In a state as geographically diverse as Idaho, no single measure can capture the full story of hunger. But with Project Canary, The Idaho Foodbank is better equipped than ever to respond with precision, equity, and care — ensuring that every community, from the largest city to the most rural county, receives the support it needs to thrive.



Nutrition Education

Empowering Idaho's Teens and Young Adults with Nutrition Education

Good nutrition is foundational at every age, but for teens and young adults it can shape lifelong habits, confidence, and independence. This year, The Idaho Foodbank's Health & Nutrition team expanded its reach across Idaho, delivering hands on education that helped young people build the skills they need to make healthy choices now and in the future.

In Eastern Idaho, The Foodbank partnered with Jefferson School District #251's TIES program, which supports students with disabilities ages 18–21 as they transition into adulthood. Through Cooking Matters classes, students learned essential cooking techniques, meal planning, and smart grocery shopping skills. These lessons strengthened their independence and equipped them with practical tools they can carry into daily life.

Across Southwest Idaho, youth programming flourished through collaborations with community partners. Boise State University Nursing School students developed an interactive nutrition game aligned with the "Veggie Vibes and Fruitful Choices" lessons, bringing creativity and engagement to a class at Wilson Elementary in Caldwell. Teen programming also expanded through Cooking Matters at the Store, including a class for graduating seniors at Frank Church High School focused on budgeting, label reading, and making informed food choices.

In South Central Idaho, The Foodbank partnered with Simply Hope Family Outreach to offer Cooking Matters for Teens as part of a youth life skills program. Participants gained confidence in the kitchen, learned how to prepare nutritious meals, and practiced reading labels and choosing healthy ingredients. These are skills that support long term health and self-sufficiency.

Across all regions, these programs share a common goal: empowering young people with the knowledge and confidence to nourish themselves well. By teaching practical skills early, The Idaho Foodbank is helping teens and young adults build healthier futures — one recipe, one lesson, and one kitchen moment at a time.

2,775 Nutrition Education Participants

In Fiscal Year 2026, The Idaho Foodbank offered 253 nutrition education opportunities to our neighbors in need. These include Cooking Matters and other nutrition education classes.

408 Resource Boxes Distributed

In Fiscal Year 2026, the resource boxes contained 23 different informational materials that went to The Idaho Foodbank Partner Agencies. This included information about job training, Medicaid & Medicare enrollment, and housing assistance.

"Comparing frozen to canned was helpful and learning to freeze my own when sale price is low."
– Cooking Matters Participant who was asked what they learned

"I learned how to cook and how to eat healthy"
– Cooking Matters Participant

"Getting to know how to read a label and to see all the ingredients."
– Cooking Matters participant who was asked about their favorite part of the class

Programs supported by: Allen Gamel, Delta Dental, Lamb Weston, St Luke's, The Albertsons Companies Foundation, The Food Trust, United HealthCare Svs Inc

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.

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