

IN THE KNOW, UDMO DECEMBER 2025



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EAGLE GROVE, HIGH SCHOOL
DONATION.
YAY!!



WEBSTER COUNTY, DRIVE THRU PANTRY



CHRIS WHIPPLE OUTREACH
SPECIALIST-WRIGHT COUNTY
ACCEPTING A GENEROUS FOOD
DONATION FROM PRESTAGE FOODS



BY: JULIE EDWARDS



LEGISLATION & ADVOCACY

GOVERNMENT REOPENS – HOUSE AND SENATE BEGIN WORKING ON THE BUDGET.

DECEMBER 3RD, THE FULL HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY PASSED AN AMENDED VERSION OF HR 1355, “WEATHERIZATION ENHANCEMENT AND READINESS ACT OF 2025.” THE BILL WOULD REAUTHORIZE WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDING THROUGH FY30, WITH THE FOLLOWING APPROPRIATIONS:

- FY26–FY28: \$300 MILLION ANNUALLY
- FY29: \$325 MILLION
- FY30: \$350 MILLION

THIS LEVEL OF BIPARTISAN SUPPORT IS NOTABLE AND ENCOURAGING.



AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS & PROGRAM UPDATES

COUNTY SUPERVISOR VISITS

DISTRIBUTION OF UDMO’S ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNTY SUPERVISORS IS UNDERWAY. THIS YEAR’S RELEASE WAS SLIGHTLY DELAYED DUE TO THE LAUNCH OF TWO NEW DATA SYSTEMS. WHILE THE REPORTS LOOK DIFFERENT FROM PRIOR YEARS AND COMPARISONS ARE MORE CHALLENGING, THE NEW SYSTEMS NOW ALLOW US TO GATHER UNDUPLICATED HOUSEHOLD COUNTS, A VALUABLE IMPROVEMENT.

UDMO FISCAL AUDIT

WIPFLI CONDUCTED THE AGENCY’S ANNUAL FISCAL AUDIT DURING THE LAST WEEK OF NOVEMBER. A FULL REPORT WILL BE SHARED WHEN AVAILABLE.

FISCAL YEAR-END ACTIVITIES

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FINALIZING SERVICE DATA FOR YEAR-END REPORTING, INCLUDING THE PREPARATION OF UDMO’S ANNUAL REPORT AND REQUIRED FUNDER REPORTS.

FISCAL & HR – UKG IMPLEMENTATION

FISCAL AND HR STAFF HAVE BEEN WORKING DILIGENTLY ON THE TRANSITION TO UKG. THIS IS A MAJOR UNDERTAKING, AND WE EXTEND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO ASHLEY, TIFFANY, AND TYLER FOR THEIR DEDICATION. THE TEAM WILL TRAVEL TO EACH UDMO SITE TO TRAIN EMPLOYEES ON THE NEW SYSTEM.

LIHEAP

UDMO CONTINUES TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS TO HELP ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS PREVENT UTILITY DISCONNECTIONS THROUGH MARCH. DEMAND REMAINS STEADY.

BY: JULIE EDWARDS
CONTINUED

HEAD START

HEAD START PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO OPERATE AS USUAL. FAMILIES IN THE HEAD START PRESCHOOL PROGRAM ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY FOR CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT FULL-DAY SERVICES, AS ONLY HALF OF OUR PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS CURRENTLY RECEIVE FULL-DAY FUNDING.

OUTREACH FOOD PANTRIES

FOOD PANTRY DEMAND INCREASED IN NOVEMBER DUE TO THE DELAYED RELEASE OF SNAP BENEFITS AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN. AS SUPPLIES RAN LOW, OUR COMMUNITIES RESPONDED GENEROUSLY WITH FOOD AND MONETARY DONATIONS. WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR THIS SUPPORT.

OUTREACH HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

HOLIDAY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES ARE IN FULL SWING AS WE ASSIST ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES. THANK YOU TO ALL DONORS WHO SUPPORTED SENIORS AND FAMILIES THIS SEASON—YOUR GENEROSITY ENSURES THEY FEEL CARED FOR AND SUPPORTED.

FORT DODGE FACILITY SEARCH

DUE TO PROGRAM AND STAFF GROWTH, UDMO IS SEEKING A LARGER FACILITY IN FORT DODGE TO ACCOMMODATE EMPLOYEES SERVING WEBSTER COUNTY AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

ESTHERVILLE OUTREACH RELOCATION

CONSTRUCTION AT THE ROOSEVELT BUILDING IN ESTHERVILLE IS NEARING COMPLETION. OUTREACH WILL MOVE INTO THE NEW SPACE ON DECEMBER 29–30.

FEMA REIMBURSEMENT

UDMO IS AWAITING FINAL FEMA APPROVAL FOR THE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST RELATED TO STORM DAMAGE AT THE SPENCER OUTREACH OFFICE.

FACILITIES WALK-THROUGHS

OUR INSURANCE PARTNER, GALLAGHER, CONTINUES CONDUCTING HEALTH AND SAFETY WALK-THROUGHS AT SPENCER HEAD START AND OUTREACH FACILITIES. THESE PROACTIVE ASSESSMENTS HELP IDENTIFY AND CORRECT POTENTIAL HAZARDS.

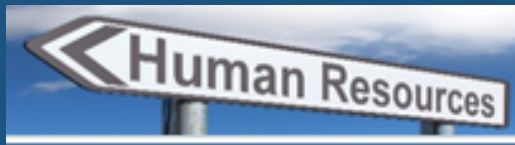
EMPLOYEE HOLIDAY GIFTS

UDMO EMPLOYEES HAVE RECEIVED THEIR HOLIDAY APPRECIATION GIFTS. THIS SMALL GESTURE REFLECTS OUR GRATITUDE FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & KEY DATES

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16 AT 1:00 PM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23 AT 4:00 PM



HR MONTHLY NEWS

UKG WILL GO LIVE DECEMBER 16TH AND ALL EMPLOYEES MUST USE. THE LAST REPORTING DAY FOR PAYLOCITY IS DECEMBER 15TH. ANY LEAVE REQUESTS AFTER DECEMBER 15TH NEED TO BE SENT THROUGH UKG. VIEWING ACCESS WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE IN PAYLOCITY FOR TAX FORMS.

****MAKE SURE TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE FIRST FEW PAYSTUBS AND ENSURE BENEFIT DEDUCTIONS AND TAXES ARE CORRECT.**

OPEN POSITIONS:

- ASSISTANT TEACHER, SPENCER
- TEACHER (3YR OLD), STORM LAKE
- HOME VISITOR – MILFORD, SHELDON, SIBLEY & HARTLEY (WESTERN SITES)
- FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALIST - MIECHV

FY 25 EMPLOYMENT DATA REVIEW (10/1/24-9/30/25): (EMPLOYEES PER PROGRAM)

- HEAD START: 95 - EARLY HEAD START: 37
- INDIRECT: 11 - WEATHERIZE: 6
- FADSS: 5 - LI HEAP: 2
- CACFP: 1 - HOUSING: 4
- OUTREACH: 17 - 1ST FIVE: 4
- KIDS: 2



HOUSING REPORT NOVEMBER 2025 – TANYA PETERSEN, HOUSING DIRECTOR

71 HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED RENTAL ASSISTANCE IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER.

THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 IOWA BALANCE OF STATE CONTINUUM OF CARE GRANT COMPETITION HAS OPENED. WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON OUR SUBMISSION. THE DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 12, 2025 AT 12PM.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES BY STAFF

DURING THIS MONTH'S SCHEDULED HOME VISIT FOR RECERTIFICATION, I MET WITH THE CLIENT AND HER FAMILY TO REVIEW THEIR CURRENT SITUATION AND ADDRESS ANY NEW NEEDS. THE CLIENT SHARED THAT THEIR HOUSEHOLD HAS RECENTLY WELCOMED A YOUNG CHILD INTO THEIR HOME FULL-TIME. THIS TRANSITION HAS BROUGHT BOTH JOY AND NEW CHALLENGES, AS THE FAMILY HAS BEEN NAVIGATING BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS, CLOTHING NEEDS FOR THE CHILD AND HIS TWO SIBLINGS, AND OTHER RELATED ADJUSTMENTS.

TOGETHER, WE TOOK TIME TO DISCUSS THEIR CONCERNS IN DETAIL AND EXPLORE PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS. I PROVIDED INFORMATION AND REFERRALS TO SEVERAL COMMUNITY AGENCIES THAT COULD ASSIST WITH CLOTHING, BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS, AND FAMILY RESOURCES. ADDITIONALLY, I COORDINATED A MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AT THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO ENSURE THE FAMILY'S CONCERNS WERE HEARD AND THAT THE CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS ARE BEING PROPERLY ADDRESSED. THE GOAL WAS TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE FAMILY AND THE SCHOOL TO SUPPORT EACH CHILD'S SUCCESS.

THE FOLLOWING DAY, I CONDUCTED A FOLLOW-UP CALL TO CHECK ON THE FAMILY'S PROGRESS WITH THE REFERRALS. THE CLIENT SHARED THAT SHE HAD ALREADY MADE CONTACT WITH SEVERAL AGENCIES AND HAD BEGUN RECEIVING ASSISTANCE. SHE EXPRESSED DEEP APPRECIATION, STATING THAT I HAD DONE MORE TO SUPPORT HER FAMILY IN 24 HOURS THAN OTHER AGENCIES HAD ACCOMPLISHED IN MONTHS.

IT WAS REWARDING TO HEAR THAT FEEDBACK AND TO SEE THE FAMILY'S SENSE OF RELIEF AND RENEWED HOPE. MOMENTS LIKE THESE REINFORCE THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING NOT ONLY HOUSING ASSISTANCE BUT ALSO COMPREHENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT, ONGOING SUPPORT, AND COMPASSIONATE GUIDANCE TO HELP FAMILIES THRIVE IN ALL AREAS OF THEIR LIVES.

STATEWIDE CRISIS LINE UPDATE: CLIENTS IN NEED OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD CALL THE STATEWIDE CRISIS LINE AT 1-833-739-0065 TO COMPLETE THE INTAKE PROCESS. NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS ARE 7AM – 8PM. CLIENTS CALLING OUTSIDE OF THESE HOURS WILL NEED TO LEAVE A MESSAGE AND WAIT FOR A CALL BACK. CALL BACKS ARE BEING MADE USUALLY WITHIN 1-3 BUSINESS DAYS.



- **LIHEAP (LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLD ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM) STARTS OCT. 1ST FOR A HOUSEHOLD WITH AN ELDERLY (60 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER) AND/OR A DISABLED HOUSEHOLD MEMBER. ALSO, ANY HOUSEHOLD IN A CRISIS RELATED SITUATION MAY APPLY FOR LIHEAP IN OCTOBER. EVERYONE ELSE CAN APPLY NOV. 1ST THRU APRIL 30TH.**
- **LIHEAP APPLICATIONS: FOR NOVEMBER, OUTREACH TOOK AND PROCESSED 813 LIHEAP APPLICATIONS. THIS REPORT FROM STATE INCLUDES ONLINE AND DENIED APPLICATIONS IN IT.**
- **ECIP/CRISIS: WE HAVE STOPPED ALL ECIP/CRISIS AS OF OCT. 27TH. WE MAY START UP AGAIN WITH THIS ONCE STATE UPDATES ALLOCATION AMOUNTS.**



KYLE DIETRICH-WEATHERIZATION DIRECTOR

NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED IN NOVEMBER 2025: 10

NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED IN FY 2025: 110

GOAL FOR 2025: 110 HOMES

THE WEATHERIZATION DEPARTMENT COMPLETED 10 HOMES IN NOVEMBER, ALLOWING US TO REACH OUR ANNUAL GOAL OF 110 HOMES ONE MONTH AHEAD OF SCHEDULE. I WANT TO EXTEND A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL OUR STAFF AND WEATHERIZATION CONTRACTORS FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION. MEETING THIS GOAL EACH YEAR IS A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE, AND YOUR COMMITMENT IS WHAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE.

THERE ARE NO MAJOR PROGRAM CHANGES THIS MONTH; HOWEVER, WE DO HAVE ONE IMPORTANT UPDATE REGARDING VERMICULITE. PROGRAM GUIDELINES NOW REQUIRE ALL STAFF TO HOLD AN ASBESTOS CERTIFICATION AND LICENSE BEFORE HANDLING VERMICULITE. WHILE MANY OF US HAVE PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED THE CERTIFICATION, LICENSING WAS NOT REQUIRED UNTIL RECENTLY. WE ARE CURRENTLY SCHEDULING A REFRESHER COURSE AND WORKING WITH A PROCTOR TO ENSURE ALL TEAM MEMBERS ARE FULLY CERTIFIED AND LICENSED.

UNTIL THESE REQUIREMENTS ARE COMPLETE, ANY HOME CONTAINING ASBESTOS MATERIALS—SUCH AS VERMICULITE INSULATION—WILL NEED TO BE DEFERRED. ONCE OUR CERTIFICATION AND LICENSING ARE FINALIZED, WE WILL RESUME WORK ON THESE HOMES AND CONTINUE SAMPLING AS NEEDED. AS ALWAYS, WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO DELIVERING STRONG RESULTS AND SUPPORTING THE ENERGY NEEDS OF HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS OUR 17-COUNTY SERVICE AREA.

1st FIVE

Celebrating a Year of Impact & Growth

2025 Celebrations

Together, we have strengthened partnerships, celebrated recognitions, and advanced healthy mental development for children from birth to five.

OUTREACH EVENTS

- FAMILY RESOURCE EVENTS
- EARLY INTERVENTION CAMPAIGNS
- CELEBRATIONS FOR REFERRING PROVIDERS



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- STATEWIDE & NATIONAL TRAININGS
- ENHANCED REFERRAL PATHWAYS
- SHARED BEST PRACTICES



IMPACT ON HEALTHY MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

- INCREASED REFERRALS FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO FIVE, ENSURING TIMELY SUPPORT.
- EXPANDED FAMILY ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS AND RESOURCES.
- STRENGTHENED PROVIDER COLLABORATION, LEADING TO MORE COORDINATED CARE.
- ELEVATED COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

As we move into 2026, 1st Five remains committed to:

- Expanding outreach and family engagement.
- Continuing to celebrate and support providers who make a difference in the lives of young children

Thank you to our partners, providers, and families for making 2025 a year to remember!

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES NEWSLETTER

December 2025-Jessie Hansen Early Childhood Services Director



MIECHV PROGRAM

- We are continuing to look for our third team member for MIECHV for Webster County.
- Ashley and Christina will be done training and start home visiting on **December 22nd, 2025.**
- We are accepting referrals in Webster County for families interested in services!
- We have secured a location for our group based parent education meetings and partnered with the First Congregational Church in Fort Dodge.
- Signed contract for **Mental Health Consultation with UnityPoint-Berryhill.** We look forward to this partnership!



KIDS PROGRAM

- Emmet County is joining us in partnership under the Parents As Teachers Affiliation! **They are the 5th partnership under the PAT affiliate with UDMO.**
- We continue to work towards implementing parent education groups monthly.
- We no longer will have to continue the Iowa Family Support Credential



CARES PROGRAM

- We continue to see an increased request for car seats, support for transportation in our communities, and connecting families to resources.
- The CARES Program provides services for children with families 0-18 and recently we were able to connect a family with a electric scooter that great increased their overall physical health and well being.

SARINA SMITH-EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTOR



ENROLLMENT:

EARLY HEAD START WITH 183 CHILDREN AND HEAD START PRESCHOOL WITH 254 CHILDREN.

DISABILITIES:

EARLY HEAD START STUDENTS SERVED ON IFSP'S: 11

HEAD START PRESCHOOL STUDENTS SERVED ON IEP'S: 18

TOTAL SERVED: 29 TARGET: 47

TEACH – CDA, 2 YEAR OR 4-YEAR DEGREE:

CDA CERTIFICATION COMPLETION: 1

ASSOCIATES DEGREE IN PROGRESS: 3

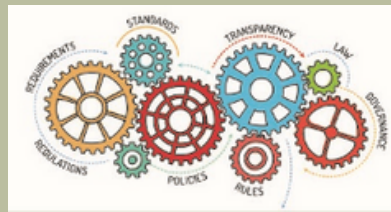
BACHELOR DEGREE IN PROGRESS: 1

COACHING:

TEACHERS – 4 AND HOME BASE TEACHERS – 5

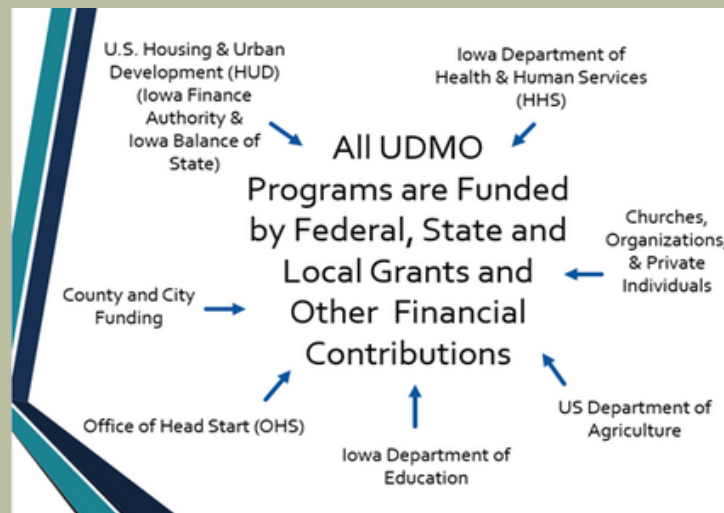
IT TAKES A COMMUNITY:

- A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MINI GRANT WAS SUCCESSFULLY SECURED TO EXPAND TARGETED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND FURTHER STRENGTHEN PROGRAM QUALITY.
- LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO ENGAGE DIRECTLY WITH SITES AND PARTNERS TO ENSURE ALIGNMENT, CONSISTENCY, AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS PROGRAMS.
- ONGOING PLANNING EFFORTS REMAIN FOCUSED ON COMPLIANCE, OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY, AND SUSTAINED SUPPORT FOR STAFF AND SERVICES.
- THANKS TO BRENT BUHROW WITH BUHROW CONSTRUCTION FOR DONATING \$15 PER CHILD TO ENSURE THEY ALL RECEIVE A BOOK, OR MORE AT THE EMMETSBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY BOOK FAIR SPREE.



**SHAKIRA MEYER –
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, COMPLIANCE & REPORTING**

AS A NONPROFIT 501(C)3 COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, UPPER DES MOINES OPPORTUNITY, INC. APPLIES FOR FUNDING MADE AVAILABLE BY NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL ENTITIES. THROUGHOUT THE 1ST AND 2ND QUARTERS OF THE UDMO FISCAL YEAR 2025, THERE ARE MANY LOCAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS GRANT CYCLES OPEN. ADDITIONALLY, UDMO APPLIES FOR PROGRAMMATIC GRANTS AS THEY OPEN OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR. BELOW IS A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUNDING SOURCES THAT SUPPORT THE VALUABLE WORK ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS DO; ADVANCING THE MISSION OF UDMO - DEDICATED TO BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES BY ADDRESSING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.



UDMO Funding Requests Update:

Recent Foundation/Organizational/Trust Grants Submitted & Status: December 2025	County	Program	Submitted/ Pending	Amount Awarded	Not Funded
<i>Giving Tuesday – Outcome Update to Come</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Outreach</i>		X	
Homeland Security – EM FEMA Grant	CL	Repairs – App in Process	X		
Fort Dodge United Way	WE	Water Assistance	X		
Barkema Trust	WR	Client Services		\$2,500	
Valero Benefit for Children (Invite Only)	WE	Food Assistance	X		
Hoepfner Trust	CL	Client Services for Children		\$4,000	
Awards Announced in Winter/Spring 2026					
Sheldon United	OB	Client Services – Sheldon	X		
United Way	BV, CL, OB	Client Services	X		
Dickinson County Good Neighbor Fund	DI	Client Services	X		
Belmond Area Community Trust	WR	Client Services Belmond	X		
Program Grants Submitted and Status: December 2025	County	Program	Submitted/ Pending	Funded	Not Funded
Head Start 1303	Emmet	Roosevelt HVAC	X		
Head Start/Early Head Start – Continuation	BV, CL, DI, EM, OB, OS, PA	Annual Submission	X		

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE DIRECTOR-ALISA SCHLIEF

NOVEMBER 2025



FADSS:

**ENROLLED FAMILIES: 77 TARGET # OF FAMILIES PER MONTH: 76
FAMILIES IN RECRUITMENT: 1 FAMILIES ON WAITING LIST: 37**

OUTREACH:



ALL THINGS HOLIDAY

OUTREACH OFFICES HAVE STARTED ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR ALL OF THEIR HOLIDAY PROGRAMS!!

SANTA FOR SENIOR APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED IN: BV, CLAY, HAMILTON, HUMBOLDT, O'BRIEN, OSCEOLA, PALO ALTO, WEBSTER AND WRIGHT.

ADOPT A FAMILY APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED IN: BV, CLAY, DICKINSON, HAMILTON, HUMBOLDT, O'BRIEN, OSCEOLA, PALO ALTO, POCAHONTAS, WEBSTER AND WRIGHT.

BIKES FOR TIKES APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED IN: HAMILTON, HUMBOLDT, POCAHONTAS, WEBSTER AND WRIGHT.



DONATIONS

WOW!! WHAT A MONTH OUTREACH HAD.....THERE WAS SUCH AN AMAZING OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT. WE CANNOT EXPRESS HOW GRATEFUL WE ARE TO HAVE SUCH WONDERFUL PARTNERS, CONTRIBUTORS AND VOLUNTEERS!

OUTREACH HAD JUST OVER \$82,000 IN MONETARY DONATIONS AND 48,000LBS OF FOOD DONATED!



FOOD SERVICES:

NOVEMBER WAS A BUSY MONTH FOR FOOD PROGRAMMING IN OUR OUTREACH OFFICES!!

7,019 FOOD SERVICES WERE PROVIDED BY ALL 12 OUTREACH OFFICES THAT BENEFITED 13, 400 INDIVIDUALS!!!