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Growing to Give

Capital Campaign

The Campaign for the Expansion of NeighborGood into its Own Home as a Client-Choice Community Pantry and Dynamic Food Insecurity Agency

ABOUT THE NEED: FOOD INSECURITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

Rising to Meet

The Need For Food Security Services in the Greater Sarpy County Community

NeighborGood, formerly Tri-City Food Pantry, recently celebrated its 15-year anniversary.

*Over **the next 15 years**, NeighborGood must continue its role as a beacon for food security in this community as various factors converge to create rapidly increasing demand.*

Exploding Population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Sarpy County was the single fastest-growing county in the state of Nebraska, as well as the county that experienced the most population growth in the decade between 2010 and 2020. In this time, the population grew **17%** from 158,840 to **190,604**. Population trends, county infrastructure, and the positive economic conditions of Sarpy and its neighboring counties indicate that this trajectory will only continue in the 2020s. Poverty rate is currently estimated at 5.5%.

Economic Adversity for Working Families. Looking merely at population growth would indicate the urgent need to build greater infrastructure for food security in the community, but the need for NeighborGood's services are exceeding the pace of the county's overall population growth. While Sarpy County has historically experienced low rates of poverty and food insecurity, the rate of persons living in poverty increased from 4.2% in 2010 to **5.5%** in 2020. The decreasing rate of owner-occupied housing units may indicate steeper increases in the future. As the approximate 3,480 "employer establishments" that make up the local commerce and industry will need to keep pace with population growth to provide high-quality entry-level jobs for young people entering the workforce and new residents, food security among the community's most vulnerable residents will be threatened.

Increasing Cultural Diversity. The greater Sarpy County community is not a monoculture. Not everyone eats the same way. The 2020 U.S. Census lists no fewer than eight (8) races and ethnicities represented among the residents of Sarpy County, and **5.5% of all residents having been born in a country other than the United States** (2017-21). Cultural barriers present obstacles to obtaining culturally appropriate food. The need for a greater variety of foods, different hours of operation, and other accommodations are necessitating new solutions for food security in our community. In a survey conducted in Summer 2022 as



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part of the Sarpy County Minority Health Needs Assessment, researchers found that the #3 priority of survey participants was “Getting healthy and affordable foods.”

Disaster Preparedness. “In March 2019, Sarpy County was significantly impacted by the Heartland Floods. Approximately **400 homes were destroyed** and many more damaged resulting in over 1000 households impacted by these horrific floods.”* Since that time, Sarpy County has experienced the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Derecho of 2020, and countless instances of severe weather. “The risk of tornado damage in Sarpy County is higher than the Nebraska average and is much higher than the national average (FEMA Tornado Index score of 221.28). A total of **73 historical tornado events** that had recorded magnitude of 2 or above were found in or near Sarpy County.” While the speed and impact of climate change are not easily quantified on the local level in the near future, even conservative estimates will show that our community is at risk for disasters that can cause **acute instances of food insecurity**. It is essential that our community establish an Emergency Point of Distribution Center that can serve people in times of crisis.

Unique Market Position. While countless church pantries and community pantries have existed in Sarpy County and surrounding communities for as long as recorded history, only NeighborGood Community Pantry is located in the geographic population center, connected to all major area houses of worship and school systems, and positioned to become a **7-day, accessible, consumer-choice** food security agency that can help clients in dynamic ways, placing them on paths to self-reliance and food security to the greatest extent possible.

Sources:

1. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sarpycountynebraska>
2. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/decennial-publications.2010.html>
3. <https://sarpydisasterrecovery.org/about/>
Offline: “Assessment” Melanie Chapman, MPA, Community Health Planner – Minority Health & Health Equity, Sarpy/Cass Health Department
4. https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_national-risk-index_technical-documentation.pdf (Figure 128)
5. <http://www.usa.com/sarpy-county-ne-natural-disasters-extremes.htm>