

# North Iowa Community Action Organization Empowers People with CACFP

*North Iowa Community Action Leverages Child and Adult Care Food Program During Pandemic*

ROUND ROCK, TX, UNITED STATES, October 11, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The mission of North Iowa Community Action Organization is to provide quality services that empower people in need to achieve and sustain economic stability through collaborative efforts. Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program supports this mission by promoting access to good nutrition for participants. This is no small task considering that the organization provides services to nine counties in North Iowa.



All NICAIO staff are involved in executing the CACFP. From the cooks, who shop, prepare and serve meals, to the teachers and teacher associates who eat with students and teach them about family-style meals, and good nutrition, and to the Administrative staff who trains and supports, the CACFP is integral to operations at NICAIO. But it's not just the staff. They also rely on collaborative relationships with local schools, businesses, and individuals in the communities they serve.

When the pandemic struck, NICAIO continued to provide for the nutritional needs of participants. Classrooms were closed at the beginning of March of 2020, but staff still needed to make sure students were not only educated but received nutritional food. NICAIO embarked on a mission to deliver food to participant families in all nine North Iowa counties that they serve. Staff boxed and delivered food boxes during the months of April, May and June 2020.

In particular, they leveraged relationships with existing vendors, but they also secured new relationships with commercial food producers for donations and wholesale relationships to meet the new challenges of packaged weekly meals as well as grab-and-go options.

Once classrooms reopened, NICA O offered families the option to attend virtually; however, virtual participants would still need to receive meals. They were able to achieve this by collaborating with outlying schools across several counties to offer families in those districts the option to pick up breakfast and lunch each day; in some cases they picked up meals for the week. If a family was unable to pick up meals, NICA O delivered meals to them. Truly, the staff was determined to ensure every child was fed, whether they attended virtually or in person.

In fact, they continue to offer and deliver meals to those students who are quarantining due to COVID. But it doesn't stop there. This new program of take-home meal bags has gone beyond the pandemic and expanded to ordinary operations. This past year NICA O has begun to send home food bags with students during the holiday breaks. Even though the funding for these meals was not derived through the CACFP, NICA O remains committed to child nutrition and chose to follow the standards set by the CACFP.

Throughout the height of the pandemic, and even in the days since it has faded from the headlines, North Iowa Community Action Organization remained true to their mission of using collaborative efforts to support their participants. From activating partnerships with vendors to engaging the entire staff—everyone has had a hand in keeping kids fed.

Since 1986, [NCA](#) has served as a national platform for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Community. The mission of NCA is to bring members information on legislation, regulation and advocacy issues, share resources among the entire CACFP community, and provide an engaging, informative annual conference offering the largest CACFP networking and training opportunities in the nation. CACFP is an indicator of quality care. When children and adults are cared for by providers who participate in the CACFP, they are receiving the best nutrition available.

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