

Volunteer Newsletter

Your quarterly source for volunteer news and updates.



February 2026



Coordinator Corner | Jennifer Stensaas

Community Engagement Manager



February often brings a natural volunteer slowdown as winter drags on, but hunger doesn't take a seasonal break. Families and individuals in our communities continue to rely on us for consistent access to nutritious food, and that work depends on helping hands. Even during this late-winter slump, every volunteer shift filled matters. Your time, energy, and commitment help ensure food is distributed with dignity and care. Thank you for showing up, staying engaged, and making a meaningful difference when it's needed most.

Our mission: to end hunger in South Dakota.

As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, Feeding South Dakota is providing food in all 66 counties of in the state and fighting hunger in rural communities, metro areas and Native American Reservations through its programs and agency partners.

Our Core Values



Serve With
Compassion



Work With
Purpose



Connect With
Intention

When Dennis Needed Support, He Found it at Feeding South Dakota

For the past year, Dennis has been driving 30 minutes from Lennox to attend the monthly mobile distribution at the Faith Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls. Dennis makes ends meet on Social Security. "I get \$108 in food stamps and take medications. My income just doesn't last with the prices nowadays," he said.

With the pause of SNAP benefits in November, Dennis had an even bigger reason to rely on Feeding South Dakota. "I only got \$16 out of the usual \$108," Dennis explained. "I didn't know what I was going to do for a while." He later received the remainder of his benefits.

Smiling, Dennis expressed his gratitude for the mobile food bank. "It means a lot to me — Feeding South Dakota is great. There are so many people like me, and if it wasn't for places like this, I don't know what we would do ... if you look around, it is mainly all seniors. This is important."

Now, as our partnering agencies work to restock shelves following the holidays, your help is still needed. For every \$10 you donate, Feeding South Dakota can provide 30 nourishing meals to children and adults experiencing food insecurity. Your generosity puts your passion into action, meeting today's urgent needs while helping create a hunger-free tomorrow, strengthening our communities one family at a time.

Thank you for all that you make possible. Please stand with us again to help ensure everyone enjoys equitable access to the nutrition they need. When challenges arise, you and Feeding South Dakota are there — meeting neighbors where they are, filling the gaps, and making sure no South Dakotan faces hunger alone.



Look around at who's here — it's mainly seniors. This food assistance is important.

— Dennis

Brookings Partners Unite to Serve Their Community

This year, Feeding South Dakota's Thanksgiving distributions looked a little different. For the first time, we offered Thanksgiving kits for purchase to community partners statewide — expanding access to holiday meals, especially in rural areas. Each kit includes everything a family needs for Thanksgiving: apples, dinner rolls, gravy mix, green beans, potatoes, frozen pie, stuffing, turkey breast, yams, butter, and a milk coupon.

While many partners already host their own giveaways, several communities chose to join us in distributing these kits — including Brookings, where a standout collaboration took shape.

In Brookings, Feeding Brookings (Ascension Lutheran Church), the Brookings Boys & Girls Club, Jacks Cupboard, and the Brookings County Food Pantry teamed up to host a joint Thanksgiving distribution. Though each organization serves different populations, they came together with one goal: ensuring every family facing hunger received a holiday meal.

By uniting, they also brought clarity and consistency to the community, sharing one coordinated message about when and where meals would be available. Each organization contributed its strengths — distribution times, storage space, volunteers, delivery drivers — creating a smoother, more efficient process.

The partnership formed after each group originally requested kits for separate events. When Feeding South Dakota proposed a joint effort, the idea quickly took off. A series of planning meetings with our Community Partnership Coordinator brought the vision to life — transforming individual plans into a true community effort.



Brookings is a powerful reminder of what's possible when community partners come together — sharing not just food, but purpose, compassion, and the joy of giving.

Impact by the Numbers for FY26 Q1 - Q2:

Hours:

33,727

Number of Volunteers:

16,539

Pounds:

6,899,068

A Shoutout to Our Volunteers in Buffalo & Newell

Hi Volunteers! As some of you may know, my name is Olivia, and I'm the Communications Specialist at Feeding South Dakota. I run our social media and help write the stories for all our newsletters.

On December 11, I had the chance to leave the Sioux Falls warehouse and head to Rapid City for a mobile distribution ride-along with our awesome driver, Seth. Visiting our rural communities is something I truly love—it's a taste of home for me. I'm originally from a small town in northwest Minnesota, not far from Fargo, North Dakota. —THE COLD TUNDRA!!! BURRRRRRR

On this trip, I got to visit with our neighbors in line at the mobile distributions and, of course, watch all of you in action. You were such fun, kind, and passionate volunteers! I also have to give a special shoutout to the kiddo in Newell who had me jump in and help—keep it up, you're going to do amazing things!

Our volunteers are the heart of hunger relief. Without you, accomplishing our mission to end hunger in South Dakota would be impossible. Thank you for all you do and for being so welcoming and kind during my visit!



Volunteer Appreciation Month

Feeding South Dakota is once again **raffling off a KBO Breeze Step-Thru E-Bike—generously gifted by a donor**—as a special thank you to our amazing volunteers during Volunteer Appreciation Month in April! Raffle tickets will be available during March with the winner announced in April. Watch for more information to come!



605 Meal Makers Challenge

All new monthly gifts to Feeding South Dakota will double all year-long in 2026 thanks to the generosity of Jim & Melody Mielke.

When donors invest through the 605 Meal Makers program, they help build a reliable foundation for Feeding South Dakota which helps ensure food reaches neighbors in all 66 counties through our mobile distributions, child hunger programs, and community partners.

To learn more about the 605 Meal Makers program scan the QR code or head over to our website at feedingsouthdakota.org.



FEEDING SOUTH DAKOTA PANTRY BITES



3-Ingredient Egg Bites

Easy, fluffy baked egg cups with cottage cheese (**12g of protein per serving!**)
The perfect portable, filling breakfast. Just blend and bake!

Prep time: 5 minutes

Cook time: 22 minutes

Total time: 27 minutes

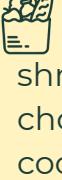
Yield: 12 bites (6 servings)

Ingredients

 9 large eggs

 ¾ cup cottage cheese

 ½ tsp salt + pepper

 Optional add-ins: ½ cup shredded cheese, 1 cup chopped spinach, or ½ cup cooked veggies

Instructions

-  Preheat oven to 350F. Line a regular muffin tin with silicone liners or paper liners sprayed with cooking spray.
-  Place eggs, cottage cheese, salt, and black pepper in a blender. Blend for 15-30 seconds.
-  Pour mixture into the muffin tin (they will be full). Add a sprinkle of optional cheese and veggies if desired, using a fork to dunk them into the mixture.
-  Bake for 22 minutes. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days. Microwave for about 15 seconds to reheat.

Nutrition Facts

Serves: 6

Serving Size: 2 bites

Calories per serving: 133

Total Fat: 8.3g, **11%**

Sugars: 1g

Sodium: 395.8mg, **17%**

Iron: 1.3mg, **7%**

Cholesterol: 283.5mg, **1%**

Calcium: 63.9mg, **5%**

Dietary Fiber: 0g, **0%**

Total Carbohydrates: 1.4g, **1%**

Saturated Fat: 2.8g

Protein: 12.3 g, **25%**

% DAILY VALUE

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