

# Watseka Area Food Pantry

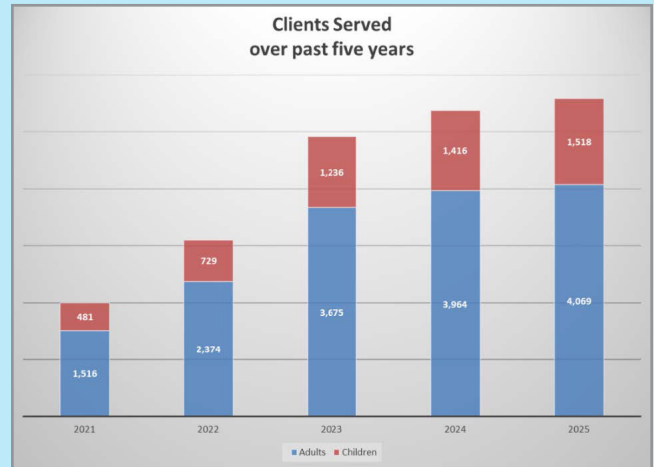
Serving All Residents of Iroquois County

## 2025 Impact Report

### Serving

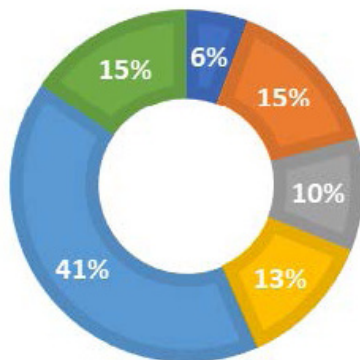
While the number of households served in 2025 remained consistent, the number of individuals served increased by almost 200. October 2025 was our busiest month since the flood of 2018.

The graph shows that the number of adults served has doubled, while the number of children served has more than tripled.



### Ages Served

■ 0-4 ■ 5-12 ■ 13-18 ■ 19-29 ■ 30-64 ■ 65+



Per Feeding America, the number of people in Iroquois County experiencing food insecurity increased to 1 in 7 individuals versus 1 in 8 individuals in 2024. **For Children, 1 in every 6 children is food insecure.**

### A Client Thank You

*"I am writing to express my heartfelt appreciation for the incredible work that the church has been doing over the years and its profound impact on my family. In July of 2023, I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma cancer. I am still undergoing treatment in which I am unable to work. Your food pantry has helped me provide meals for my boys and I. I am forever grateful of your dedication and compassionate volunteers in helping individuals like me. Warm Regards" – A Single Father*

## The need for the Watseka Area Food Pantry continued to grow in 2025.

### Sourcing

In 2025, the purchasing power of the Food Pantry experienced a decrease due to rising costs. The Food Pantry used monetary donations to purchase over 78,000 pounds of food and goods from the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. In addition, thousands of pounds of foods, including bread, milk, and cheese, were purchased from local stores. We also received 43,000 pounds of donated items from Midwest Food Bank. **The value of a grocery cart provided to households was \$160 with the cost being \$46.** The Food Pantry works hard to minimize food costs. In 2025, we were able to secure in-kind donations from MPS Hi-Grade Eggs, Janie’s Mill (flour), and Incobrasa Industries (oil). Now these items can be offered to clients regularly.



MPS Hi-Grade Eggs has supplied approximately 1,440 dozen eggs since May.

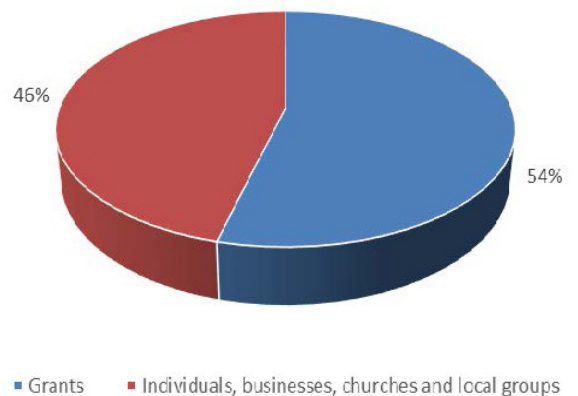


Grants from the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois provided funding to purchase a combo refrigerator/freezer unit used to store eggs as well as new shelving to increase our storage capacity.



The Food Pantry was the recipient of the fundraising done by the Watseka Family Festival Committee

### Funding Sources



Our funding comes from grants and from individuals, businesses, churches, and local groups. Food donations from local sources, such as summer garden produce, help to offset costs.



## Ministering

**The Food Pantry is a 100% volunteer-run organization.** Martha Howe has worked as a volunteer with the Food Pantry for 19 years in an administrative role. Approximately 60-70 volunteers work on a monthly basis to help with deliveries, stocking shelves, shopping for food, and filling daily food orders.

The Food Pantry operates as a client choice food pantry. Based upon household size, clients select their groceries from a list of available items. It takes about 8 volunteers daily to fulfill daily orders and complete other operating duties. That donated time is valued at \$34.79 per hour or over \$213,000 per year (as calculated by the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland).

Volunteers represent a variety of churches, organizations, and individuals throughout Iroquois County. To inquire about volunteering, call or visit the Food Pantry during operating hours.



**“Let’s Taco about Food Insecurity”** was the theme for the Watseka Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours hosted by the Food Pantry in September.

Food Pantry Volunteers discussed with attendees the operations of the Food Pantry and gave tours. A delicious taco bar was served; it included items utilized by our clients.



## From a Volunteer

*I started helping unload monthly deliveries. We come from different backgrounds, churches, etc. but we are unified in one goal, helping people through tough times. I've witnessed first-hand people being touched by the help with nothing asked in return. It is what Christ called us to do when he stated, 'I was hungry and you fed me.'*

– Buck Stimson

## Watseka Area Food Pantry

**Open Monday—Friday, 9:00-11:00 am**

**Watseka First United Methodist Church**

301 South Fourth Street • Watseka, IL 60970

**815.432.0122**

To be eligible to receive services, people must live in Iroquois County and meet the federal income eligibility guidelines.

### How can you continue to help?

- Volunteering - there are many opportunities.
- Hosting a food drive – we can help you with ideas.
- Donating excess garden produce – we love to share your bounty.
- Donating cash - A \$46 Donation will support a cart of groceries for one household valued at \$160. Donations may be sent to the address above or through the church's website at [watsekaumc.org](http://watsekaumc.org).

The Food Pantry receives the benefits of the church's status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization; therefore, donations may be tax deductible.