



ihn
ADVOCACY
& OUTREACH

The State of IHN's Indiana Advocacy
From Mark Lynch, IHN's Director of Advocacy

The Indiana State legislative session wrapped up on Friday, February 28. Quite honestly, those of us speaking up for people experiencing food insecurity, hunger, and homelessness were playing defense the whole session. Unfortunately, most of our amendments and testimony were met with resistance, and we saw no real change to the bills we were fighting against.

The biggest issue has been Senate Bill 1, which is going to become law here very soon. This bill was drafted in response to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act that was passed on July 4, 2025. The new federal law included shifting a significant part of the cost associated with SNAP benefits and program administration to the states. It also included new requirements for people seeking SNAP benefits. Senate Bill 1 also added language about immigrant access to SNAP and lowered the asset limit, limiting the amount of cash and other material assets a SNAP applicant can have in order to be eligible for assistance. That was just in the food space; in the health sphere, the bill also works to reduce access to the Medicaid program. I will end with what I believe is some good news. Indy Hunger Network continued its work with the Indiana Coalition for Human Services and also expanded its partnership with a national non-profit organization, Bread for The World, to increase our state-level advocacy. We have found that collaborating and coordinating with people and organizations across the human services spectrum has been the most effective way to engage policy makers and amplify our messages.

We now shift our focus to federal level advocacy around WIC and the Child Tax Credit. Stay tuned!



IHN's Mark Lynch speaks at the 2026 Clergy Day of Action, a joint IHN-Bread for the World advocacy event hosted by Christ Church Cathedral. If you want to learn more about advocacy trainings and actions, watch our social media channels, and if you're a faith or community leader who wants to collaborate with IHN, you can reach Mark at mark@indyhunger.org.

[Share This Newsletter With a Friend!](#)

IHN's 2025 by the Numbers

Food Pantry Network & Healthy Nudges

Food Resource Services Hub

Community Compass

Cooking Matters

Advocacy

30

Pantries Participating in the Healthy Nudges Program

187K

187,659 Total Users on Community Compass

136K

\$136,000 Distributed to Food Pantries through IHN's 2025 Grant Program

54K

54,527 Unique Users on Community Compass

90+K

\$90,645.56: Amount Spent on Equipment for Healthy Nudges Pantries

427

Bus Passes Distributed through FRSH

467

FRSH Clients Reached through Phone, Virtual, and In-Person Appointments

74%

74% Participants Reported an Increase in Confidence Making Healthy Meals

52

Satellite Partner Classes Held

1236

Participants in IHN Cooking Matters Classes

19

19 New Partner Sites Across 8 Counties In Central Indiana

8

137

IHN Cooking Matters Classes Held

525

Total Number of Advocacy Initiatives, including Media Coverage, Events, and Interactions with City, State, and Federal Leaders

ihn
FOOD PANTRY
NETWORK

FRSH is Now In Food Pantries!

The Food Resource Services Hub (FRSH) is IHN's youngest initiative, designed to help Marion County residents connect with food assistance resources through personalized, one-on-one appointments. Since 2023, clients have been able to request a phone, virtual, or in-person appointment at the IHN office, but now,

FRSH is on the move! Food Pantry leaders, read on to learn why hosting Niq Askren, our fantastic Food Resource Navigator, might be the perfect complement to the services you already offer.

If you're interested in hosting FRSH at your food pantry, please fill out this [FORM](#).



"This program is designed to make resource navigation easier for both pantry clients and pantry teams by bringing Niq into pantries for on-site support. It's a practical way we can collaborate with partners, fill service gaps, and improve the overall effectiveness of how neighbors access help. We want pantries to feel supported, and we want clients to leave with clear next steps and connections beyond food."

Adam Meyer, IHN's Director of Food Assistance Programs

"Bringing FRSH to food pantries has been meaningful, because our neighbors and visitors across the city are looking for a lot of different resources. Food comes first. But there are other areas of our daily lives we may struggle with as well, which can make things challenging. Our goal is to find ways to ease that, through helping with SNAP and WIC referrals, transportation support, providing emergency relief food bags, and child resources like diapers and baby formula. We even help clients fill out housing applications and research how to support them as individuals, because everyone's situation is unique."

Niq Askren, IHN's Food Resource Navigator





"Having Niq on site through the FRSN Program has been a tremendous resource for our neighbors at Mid-North Food Pantry. By connecting our clients directly to SNAP, WIC, and bus passes, the FRSN in Food Pantry Program is helping remove barriers that often prevent our neighbors from accessing the support they need."

Steven Slabaugh, Director of Operations, Mid-North Food Pantry

FRSN at Food Pantries Interest Form

(Food Pantry Leaders)

Make an Appointment with FRSN

(Clients Seeking Assistance)

Upcoming Events

IHN's 2026 Food Pantry Summit – Next Week!

Tuesday, March 10, 8:30am to 3:30pm – It's not too late to join us for IHN's annual day of learning, networking, and community-building. Sign up [HERE](#) for the largest gathering of food pantry leaders in Central Indiana.

Doors open at 8:15 AM at St. Luke's United Methodist Church (100 W 86th St, Indianapolis). See you at the Summit!

Food Pantry Coalition Meetings

April 22 & 29 – Continue the good work of the Summit by coming to an IHN Food Pantry Network Coalition Meeting. Gather with leaders from nearby food pantries to share success stories and find creative solutions to challenges you're facing. Contact Adam Meyer, adam@indyhunger.org, with any questions!

April 22nd 2026 – 1:00pm, Old Bethel United Methodist Church (8032 East 21st St, Indianapolis, IN 46219).

April 29th 2026 – 1:00pm, White River Christian Church (1605 N 10th St, Noblesville, IN 46060).

New Hours for FRSH at the IHN Office

Walk-in hours for the Food Resource Services Hub (FRSH) are now **Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 11:00am–2:00pm**, at the IHN Office, 32 E 32nd St. To make an appointment after hours, call 317-546-3990 or visit [HERE](#).

** There will be no walk in hours on the first Monday of every month and the second and fourth Fridays.

Community Compass is IHN's free digital tool that helps Hoosiers find food assistance quickly and easily. We're excited to share a new feature! Users can now create an account to "favorite" their go-to resources and receive notifications when those listings are updated. If you'd like a quick refresher on how to use the app, check out our short tutorial video on Vimeo. For those who prefer not to sign up, the app can still be used as a guest by selecting "Continue without an account." Learn more at indyhunger.org/compass or www.communitycompass.app



WORKING TOGETHER TO END HUNGER

Our mission is to address systemic hunger issues and eliminate disparities in the Greater Indianapolis hunger relief system through collaboration on programs, advocacy, and research.

Help further Indy Hunger Network's mission to ensure that anyone who is hungry can access the food they need by donating [HERE](#).