



# “Keeping In Touch”

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February 2021:

## **Agency Audit**

Our annual audit has been completed for 2020 with no findings for the agency. Thank you to the fiscal staff for all of their work with the audit this year. The audit and agency 990 can be found on our website under Public Sector Information.

## **Annual Report**

The agency has recently published our 2020 Annual Report. This report can be found on our website at: <http://communityactionmidne.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Annual-Report-2020.pdf>

The report is shared with our Congressional and Unicameral representatives as well as county boards and city clerks. While I am always proud of the work we do, putting together the information from this past year truly exemplified how important our programs. The challenges of COVID-19 have been immense but the agency and staff have risen to the challenges of helping our communities through this very difficult time. Just check out a few of the highlights:

- Last year we served 21,947 individuals which was a significant increase from 2019.
- Staff organized distribution of 26,000 FEMA protective gowns to 20 different community organizations, including area nursing homes.
- Our Senior Centers began curbside noon meal services and also distributed over 700 shelf stable meals along with hygiene kits to area seniors.
- Our WIC Program began remote services in April. Our case load increased by 4% and the show rate was never under 90%. Our Community Health Workers provided health outreach and education to minority populations helping them to access needed resources. Our Immunization Program began curbside mass flu vaccine clinics.
- Our Head Start provided remote learning beginning in April. Summer classroom programming was started in Kearney and Ogallala.
- RYDE Transit continued essential transportation services along with assisting with meal delivery for rural area seniors providing over 75,000 total boardings.
- Our Food Bank and CARES Program helped distribute 274,316 pounds of food to local food pantries, families, and seniors in partnership the USDA Farmers to Families Programs, Cash-Wa Distribution and local community partners and volunteers.
- Our Community Services Coordinators assisted with 579 emergency assistance payments for rent, utilities, mortgages, and other COVID needs.

If you need paper reports for your office area, please email me at [mcollins@mnca.net](mailto:mcollins@mnca.net). This report demonstrates the dedication and commitment of staff and board members and the positive impact our programs make for individuals, families, and communities. ***I am very proud of the work you do every day! Thank you!***



**COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP  
OF MID-NEBRASKA**  
*Helping People. Changing Lives.*  
**PROGRAM DIRECTORS' NEWSLETTER**  
February 2021

**ADMINISTRATION / COMMUNITY PROJECTS – KYLA MARTIN**  
**In the SPOTLIGHT this month**

This February is my 19<sup>th</sup> year with Mid and we've been doing craft shows since 2004. Hard to believe. In 2017, I was given oversight of the Food Bank, so that is why I started doing food drives for the Food Bank. It was then, also, that the Mobile Produce Pantries started. The food donated to the craft shows goes to these mobiles that travel around to town every two weeks in Buffalo County, Holdrege, and Minden. Thank you if you have ever participated in our food drives!

The number one idea to portray in any community project is to BE THE BRAND. Sometimes I slip up, but anyone who knows me or know what I do knows WHO I WORK FOR AND WHY. It's not just a job, it is a passion and a calling. I sweat, bleed, and freeze to death for Community Action. I don't have to be the best at everything I do, but I do want to portray our mission of helping people and changing lives in all that I do. Mid's mission falls in line with my own faith journey and I can't SELL what I don't believe in.

Over the last 17 years, this is what I've learned and developed for craft show goals:

1. Allow two types of vendors: hand-crafters and trade vendors. It is the goal to have a well-rounded show with many choices under one roof; a one-stop-shop.
2. Provide opportunities to entrepreneurs whether they handcraft or sell a product.
3. Help people and change lives by directing craft show profits back into our Community Action programs. Mid Show Promotions is a program under Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska, a private, non-profit organization.
4. Provide excellent customer services. This includes assistance with unloading and loading when needed, an overnight security guard for set-up convenience for odd hours, and vendor courtesy during the day.
5. Provide good exposure for our vendors with advertising and Facebook promotions. Please get in the habit of looking up Mid Show Promotions especially when we draw close to showtime.
6. Have organized and appealing shows with awesome traffic.
7. Be fair to all vendors; first-come, first-served to trade vendors.
8. Place vendors in an advantageous location, with no like vendors near.
9. Show loyalty to faithful crafters, extending them their same booth spaces year after year.
10. Troubleshoot and solve problems in a timely manner.
11. Help vendors make income and if not, get exposure and educate on their promotions.
12. Ensure vendors have a great experience and want to come back.

The majority of these craft show goals align with Community Action goals, so it is truly a good fit. Being a non-profit, human service agency, Mid recognizes the need to promote businesses, events, and fundraisers that also help people and change lives. We've had booths that promoted missions, church projects, health insurance, blood drives, Be the Match, Girl Scouts, and so much more. As long as we share somewhat of the same mission, it is allowed. Do your programs need participants and exposure? Then think about doing it at Mid's craft shows. You have an 'in.' Check out our vendors on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/midshowpromotions/> Signs of Spring Craft and Trade Show is also on the second Saturday of April, unless that's when Easter falls. After cancelling the last three shows, I expect this show to be a 'barn burner.' Hope to see you there! Tootles for now... Kyla.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES – SARA FRIAS**  
**(Assistant Community Services Director)**

The Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program is still moving right along! We are in the middle of our third quarter with regular NHAP funds. Our COVID NHAP is a different time schedule though and has just started its third quarter. The

NHAP grants for Region 3 and 4 have both been submitted this week for fiscal year 2021-22. Grant reviews will come up shortly and hopefully we hear back sometime in March.

Now on to our current NHAP data. *I love data, yes I do! I love data, how 'bout you!?*

**Our most current data for regular NHAP:**

- 17 “Literally Homeless” Individuals (adults/children)
  - (living in their car, on the street, or homeless shelter)
- 115 “At Imminent Risk” of Losing Housing Individuals
  - (eviction notice in most cases)
- **Total of 132 Individuals**

**Totals**

Persons	132
Adults (18+)	62
Children (under 18)	70
Total Households	47
Experiencing Domestic Violence	20 individuals
Currently Fleeing Domestic Violence	7 individuals

**Program Completion**

Those that have come off the program exited to the following locations:

- 66 moved into a rental with no further housing subsidy
- 21 moved into a rental with a housing subsidy
- 1 moved in with friends
- **44 are currently still in the program**

**Our data for COVID NHAP:**

- 18 “Literally Homeless” Individuals (adults/children)
  - (living in their car, on the street, or homeless shelter)
- 206 “At Imminent Risk” of Losing Housing Individuals
  - (eviction notice in most cases)
- **Total of 224 individuals**

**Totals**

Persons	224
Adults (18+)	124
Children (under 18)	100
Total Households	88
Experiencing Domestic Violence	26 individuals
Currently Fleeing Domestic Violence	7 individuals

**Program Completion**

Those that have come off the program exited to the following locations:

- 25 moved into a rental with no further housing subsidy
- 3 moved into a rental with a housing subsidy
- 1 moved in with friends
- **195 are currently still in the program**

**In total for both:**

- 115/117 (98%) individuals who completed our program are in permanent housing
- 239 individuals are still on NHAP at the present time

This is why NHAP is so important. It is a lot of work for coordinators and myself, but we are able to help so many families with assistance.

### **Community Services Coordinators:**

**Franklin/Harlan and Phelps Counties** by Jean Harms – I had a lady call me last week needing help with her gas bill. She had fallen behind because she was off work due to health problems. I asked her if it was COVID related, and she said no. She had to have a heart procedure. While they were doing the procedure, they discovered another issue unrelated to her heart condition. This lady literally got out of one hospital only to check in to another for her additional procedure. In addition to everything else, she is courageously fighting an on-going battle with cancer.

This client works in an environment that has high risk for COVID. With her age and limited education, she was fortunate to find a job that she enjoys. She was telling me that she looks forward to going to work each day. She had such a good attitude about her situation. I was honored to meet her.

I was able to pay her gas bill and gave her some phone numbers of other places to call for additional assistance. She said once she gets caught up, she's financially able to manage things on her own, until the next medical issue.

**Hastings/Adams Counties** by Katie Shaw – Hastings continues to see families impacted by COVID that need rent, utilities, and food. There have also been individuals seeking weatherization and commodities.

Back in September, a father and his adult son came to Community Action for assistance. The father had been injured at his previous job and was eventually let go. At the time that they came onto the NHAP program, the son was working, but lost his job due to cut backs on help and replacing with more experienced people. Both father and son worked very hard at getting employment and keeping it. At the time of exit, the father had been employed for 90 days and the son was still employed.

They were very thankful for the assistance they received in their time of need.

P.S. – Getting my second COVID vaccine shot on February 11<sup>th</sup> ☐

**Kearney/Buffalo Counties** by Kerry Oliva – I received a call from a lady who was in a panic because she did not know how she was going to be able to pay her rent. She had been off work for two weeks because she tested positive for COVID, even though she had no symptoms. Her mother, who lived with her, has not been working for some time because she is having health problems. I let her know that we have some COVID funding that we could help her with if her employer would complete a form for me stating that she lost hours/pay due to COVID. She returned the paperwork to me that following day and I was able to help with a large portion of her rent. She verbalized how grateful she was to Community Action for helping her during this time and also followed up with me through email, thanking me for helping her with her rent!

**Lexington/Dawson, Gosper and East Frontier Counties** by Martha Draskovic – Mary and Abe, who are both in their 60s, depend largely on Mary's income from Tyson. Abe is retired, but does not earn enough to cover bills on his own. Mary however, had not be able to go to work since the beginning of January. She had not been feeling well for a few days and was sent home for a high temperature reading. She was asked to go home and take a COVID test before returning or she would need to wait until there was no temperature or symptoms, but if her COVID test came back negative, then she could return to work. Mary decided she would go and take the test in order to return to work as soon as possible. However, by the following morning, she received a call letting her know that her test had come back positive for COVID. With United Way funding, we were able to help Mary and Abe with their electric bill.

**McCook/Red Willow, Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock, Furnas, and West Frontier Counties** by Araceli Santos-Ayala –



\$500 was awarded through the Annual Christmas Competition with 13 total branches participating. Lincoln Federal Savings, McCook branch won with 243 likes on the Lincoln Federal Savings Facebook site. Money was donated to Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska's McCook outreach office to be able to assist families in the local area. Pictured from left to right includes Stephanie Eaton – Branch Manager, Araceli Santos-Ayala – Community Service Coordinator, and Barb Ostrum – Emergency Outreach Coordinator.

**Minden/Kearney Counties** by Arica Zambrano – Things have been busy in Kearney County! The Farmers to Families is going over well. We are serving 50 families a week! CashWa just called and said that they are adding an additional 20 boxes, so this means that we will be able to help 70 families total! Yes, this is a lot of time, especially when it is frigid outside, but so worth it knowing that you're helping put food in someone's refrigerator ☐

My happy story for the month: We all know that Minden is small and if there's more than three cars lined up somewhere, people want to know what's going on... "what's happening over there!?" Anyhow, there was about 20 cars lined up and I thought to myself, "all of these cars are blocking this poor woman's business" though she never complained. It is a new business and we were blocking her parking for potential shoppers. So, I thought to myself, "well, we can't move the food anywhere else, but I can bring her food as a peace offering!" ☐ Needless to say, she was overjoyed and gladly accepted the produce, milk, and meats. This last week, she said "Arica, I want to tell you thank you. Times have been very hard and the food you gave me helped a lot." You see, the moral of the story is that you never know if someone is going through a hard time, so be kind to people. Blessed to be a blessing!

**North Platte/Lincoln, Arthur, Grant, Keith, Thomas, Hooker, Logan, McPherson, and Perkins Counties** by Donna Legas – In North Platte, we have been extremely busy with rent and utility assistance! I assisted one person turn gas service on for the first time in several years! She is also a veteran. She owned her home and her furnace did not work. I helped her apply for the Emergency Repair and Replace program for non-working furnaces and got gas service turned on for her. She had no idea about the Replace program or that we could help her get gas turned back on. She was extremely thankful! She had just been using space heaters and dressed in her winter coat and several layers to stay warm. Thanks to our funding, she will now be able to stay warm! I have been getting a lot of phone calls regarding the Emergency Repair and Replace program and have sent in several applications for heaters that did not work in this brutal cold.

**Superior/Nuckolls, Webster, and Clay, Counties** by Ashlei Roesti – I had a lady call me who seemed very distraught. She explained to me that the house her and another family were living in was about to be condemned. Both of these families were sleeping in the living room using only two small space heaters to stay warm. They were also paying for a membership at the YMCA so that they could take their three children there to shower. The house had no hot water, and broken windows. She shared with me that both her and the other family living in the house applied for low income housing and were accepted, but that the only problems was that the rental deposit for each apartment was \$500. This lady said that if we were not able to assist with the rental deposits for both apartments, perhaps we could at least donate blankets, as the temperatures are very low. We are so fortunate to have the funding that we do! We were able to pay the rental deposits for both families to get into these apartments. I am so grateful to know that both families will have a warm place to sleep at night, and be able to cancel their membership at the YMCA, as they were only keeping the membership for the showers. If it wasn't for the funding that we have, this family would still be trying to stay warm through these harsh winter months. This family was so thankful and instantly started crying when I was able to call them with the good news! I am so appreciative to work for Community Action Partnership and help put a family's mind at ease.

#### **SOAR – BRENDA WOMMER**

What a difference a year can make! I had a past client reach out to me about SSDI and she was asking very specific questions. I asked if she was asking for herself, and she said yes. I was shocked! She has always been a very active, hard-working person, but in the past 12 months, her health has deteriorated to a point that she can no longer work. Her doctor suggested applying for SSDI, as her condition was only going to get worse. So, after meeting with her and gathering more information, we plan to start filing for benefits.

If you know of anyone that might benefit from SSI/SSDI, please let me know. They need to be homeless or near homeless, have a mental disability diagnosis and be at least 18 years of age. I will help them compile all the required medical history and other information and make a packet to submit to SSI/SSDI. By using the SOAR model, approval rates are much higher than submitting information yourself.

#### **SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM – LORI GERIH**

##### **Robot Dogs: A Growing Trend**

Some older adults who can no longer care for a pet, or who move into facilities that don't allow animals, are finding joy and comfort with lifelike robotic dogs such as Hasbro's Joy for All Companion Pet Golden Pup. These high-tech

pooches look, move, and sound like the real thing. They sport realistic fur along with built-in sensors that listen for vocal cues and respond to human touch.

Because they can soothe anxiety and generate nurturing feelings without having to be walked, fed, or bathed, robot dogs can be excellent companions for seniors. In fact, research in the *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association* has shown that robotic dogs can be very effective in reducing loneliness in nursing home residents. They are definitely an option to consider if you or someone you love needs a low-maintenance pet.

## **ROMA/COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWS – TAMMY JEFFS/SARA FRIAS**

### **CARES Act**

**Phelps County NHAP Coordinator by** Wendy Space – Becky came to me in October. She had been unemployed since March due to COVID. At the time that she came to me, she was struggling with depression and motivation to find new employment. Her parents had been trying to help her financially, but they could no longer assist. Becky was enrolled in NHAP. We were able to help her get caught up on her rent and utilities. I helped Becky apply for mainstream resources like Medicaid and SNAP, which also helped her get by for a few months. By January, Becky's depression had greatly reduced and she was able to find employment again. She had felt so hopeless in the beginning that she didn't even know where to begin to get her life back on track. With our help, she was able to focus on her health and finding employment. Becky was so grateful for the assistance she received and has since felt re-energized!

**Lincoln County NHAP Coordinator by** Marge Mosher – Things have been steady here in North Platte, especially the need for rental assistance. One amazing thing this week that I have been happy about is the three-day training with Bob Swanson. He makes you feel comfortable and is an EXCELLENT teacher! You definitely learn a lot about yourself and he is with you every step of the way. The whole training makes you think about things (especially about yourself) that you never had to think about before. And for someone who suffers from anxiety / depression, it has been an incredible learning tool (both personally and professionally).

**Adams County NHAP Coordinator by** Tara Vazquez-Alarcon – During my first month I have learned a lot working here. There are many people still seeking services due to COVID. I have gotten a pretty good caseload so far and am booked out for weeks. I have been learning a lot about the MVRT process this past month. Sitting in on the weekly MVRT call and having two of my clients I am currently helping come off that list has allowed me to learn so much more. I have been able to see the process from start to finish. Both of my clients have become stably housed and are working on getting things on track at the moment.

P.S. – I am getting my second COVID vaccine on February 11<sup>th</sup>.

**CSBG Disaster Quality Assurance Coordinator by** Sam Schmidt – No report.

**Food Security Coordinator by** Leslie Santana – For the last couple of months we have been really busy with all the food give away events. We've been giving out food every Thursday for the past couple of months and we also have the Mobile Produce Pantries that are every other Friday. The weather has been crazy, but we've been having good turn outs. For the next couple of weeks, we will be traveling to Elm Creek, Amherst, and Ravenna for Mobile Produce Pantries.

**Dawson County Community Health Worker by** Jessica Fagot – I have been busy with the Mobile Food Pantry, making deliveries to many who do not have transportation. I continue to send reminders about the opportunities available to exercise in order to be more active during these COVID times. I have also been providing education to people in the community who have reached out to me expressing doubts about getting the COVID vaccine. The CDC has a lot of valuable information available in Spanish that I have been able to share to provide COVID education.

**Red Willow County Emergency Community Services Outreach Coordinator by** Barb Ostrum – We are now in the worst cold spell we have seen for a while. It always amazes me how many people are surprised by our cold weather conditions. This is Nebraska. I do realize this weather does create additional hardships for folks though. Higher heating bills, vehicles that won't start, frozen pipes, and other cold weather issues. Even late starts for schools can be detrimental for parents trying to get to work.

We are truly blessed in our area that if someone has a problem, the community steps up to help. We have different funding sources like Share the Heat that is faith-based. We now have some additional funding from Salvation Army (Heat Share). We also have several churches that will work together to ensure everyone is safe. As we search out help for families, we have some great resources to tap into as needed. I anticipate my next In Touch will include some of those stories as folks start getting those BIG bills. *Helping People, Changing Lives.*

**Keith County Emergency Community Services Outreach Coordinator** by Balie Waldhelm – Way out in Ogallala I have been very busy with referrals from Families 1<sup>st</sup> Partnership and our local SCIP office. I have been able to help distribute the resources they have available for our rural counties (over \$1,000 worth of assistance in the last month!). On my current caseload I have assisted several households with available Kiewit funds, as well as my current CARES funds – two new NHAPS too! I have been able to extend my outreach program deeper into my community by connecting with the West Central Nebraska Joint Housing Authority. We teamed up with our local Rotary chapter and Food Bank for the Heartland to distribute 1200 boxes of food to 600 households in Keith County. Our Head Start still distributes their Farmers to Families boxes and many families don't pick them up, so I have reached out to CSFP clients to ask if they would like a portion of what they have left over. I received a text message yesterday afternoon from a client, which said "This is amazing. I had two chicken breasts left for the next five days for my four children and myself and now I have food until I get paid. This is God given, this is truly amazing!" The impact our program has had on our western counties is changing lives!

**ADMINISTRATION / COMMUNITY PROJECTS – KYLA MARTIN**  
**In the SPOTLIGHT this month**

**FISCAL – KRIS WRIGHT**

The agency's 2020 audit is complete. The agency 2020 audit report and IRS Form 990 are available on the agency website at <http://communityactionmidne.com/public-sector-information/>.

If you need to complete a new W-4, the forms are available on the agency website at <http://communityactionmidne.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Fillable-Federal-W-4.pdf> and <http://communityactionmidne.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Fillable-State-of-NE-W-4-form.pdf>. The agency accounting and human resources staff are not able to assist with determining your tax withholding. If you need assistance determining your tax withholding, the IRS has a tax withholding estimator available at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/tax-withholding-estimator> or you can contact your tax preparer and they should be able to assist you with this.

**HEAD START – BRANDI SMITH**  
**Head Start/Early Head Start (0 – 5)**

Staying Positive During the Pandemic – The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging us in ways that we could never have imagined. The sudden changes in the way we live our lives can become overwhelming. Staying positive during a time like this is definitely easier said than done. Here are a few examples to keep in mind when getting overwhelmed with all these changes: Remember that it will not be this way forever; Recognize the good, even great ways in which you have approached and handled the challenges you have been faced with; get plenty of sleep and maybe get caught up on things that you usually push aside; Think of the things that you are grateful for; keep a journal or do some meditation and reflect on all the things that you have to be appreciative of even in this stressful time; and Exercise! Apart from its physical benefits, exercising releases endorphins in your body that trigger positive feelings. Being cautious of our mood in today's environment should be a priority to us all. Remaining calm and positive in times of doubt can help us navigate through problems and find a path toward our more resilient selves.

**HEALTH SERVICES – TISH MEYER**  
**IMMUNIZATIONS/COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER**

The COVID-19 vaccinations have been keeping us pretty busy. Two Rivers Public Health has informed us that Phase 1A is winding down with just a few more to go. They have now started on Phase 1B with the 75+ crowd. Two Rivers Public Health has asked if we could partner with them during the mass vaccination process at the Peterson Senior Center here in Kearney. Our first event went well and at the end, we gathered to brainstorm how to make it even better! Another partnership we have made is with the Kearney County Hospital to assist with vaccinating the 75+

crowd of Kearney County. They have asked for our return for the following week in continuing the process again. The following chart shows the revised Phase 1B Prioritizations.

Priority Tier	Local Health Dept. Focus		Healthcare/Pharmacy/ Community Clinic Focus
Ongoing	Age 65+, age 18+ with high-risk medical conditions		Age 65+, Age 18+ with high-risk <u>medical conditions</u>
TIER I	First Responders	Dispatch Police/State Patrol/FBI Fire Adult/Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asthma</li> <li>• Cancer (currently have cancer)</li> <li>• Cerebrovascular Disease affecting Blood Vessels</li> <li>• Chronic Kidney Disease</li> <li>• Chronic Liver Disease</li> <li>• COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)</li> <li>• Cystic Fibrosis</li> <li>• Chronic Lung Disease</li> <li>• Diabetes Type 1</li> <li>• Diabetes Type 2</li> <li>• Down Syndrome</li> <li>• Heart Conditions such as Heart Failure, Coronary Artery Disease or Cardiomyopathies</li> <li>• High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)</li> <li>• Neurologic Conditions (such as Dementia)</li> <li>• Pulmonary Fibrosis</li> <li>• Sickle Cell Disease</li> <li>• Thalassemia (a Type of Blood Disorder)</li> <li>• Weakened Immune System due to Solid Organ Transplant (Kidney, Liver, Pancreas, Heart, or Lung)</li> <li>• Weakened Immune System from Blood or Bone Marrow Transplant, HIV, using Steroid or Other Medication</li> </ul>
	Utilities	Power Water Gas Sanitation	
	Homeless Shelter Staff		
	Corrections Staff		
	Educators	Teachers – public, private, higher education Support staff Licensed daycare providers	
TIER II	Funeral Homes	Funeral homes Coroners	
	Grocery		
	Food Processing	Meat packing plants Food processing Co-ops	
TIER III	Transportation	Trucking Railroad Gas stations	
	US Postal Service		
	Public Transit	Bus Air	

*\*\*ACIP defines phase 1B as the subset of workers at highest risk for work-related exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, because their work-related duties must be performed on-site and involve being in close proximity (<6 feet) to the public or to coworkers.*

### HOUSING – JACKIE HARPST

#### Carbon Monoxide: The Silent Killer

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an invisible, colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill without warning. It is important to know the fact to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, including:

- **Common Causes:** The majority of CO poisoning cases occur due to fuel-burning appliances that are improperly vented or being used incorrectly. Examples of these fuel-burning appliances are furnaces, water heaters, cook stoves, fireplaces, clothes dryers, and portable fuel fired heaters and generators.
- **Symptoms:** Depending on the length of exposure and concentration of CO, symptoms can range from a mild headache to flu-like symptoms without the fever to death.
- **Who is at Risk:** CO can affect anyone! However, more men than women are poisoned resulting in death and individuals age 65+ are more at risk.
- **How to Stay Safe:** Only 1 in 10 homes in the US has a working CO monitor. Standard smoke alarms **do not** detect CO. Protect your household by installing CO detectors/alarms in a central location, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Change the batteries annually and test the alarm regularly.

**NUTRITION SERVICES – KYLA MARTIN**  
**CSFP/FOOD BANK**

The nutrition programs continue to help a lot of people. The team has been rocking their regular schedule, but then along comes COVID-19. They adjusted and added more to their plates, though none of us knew how long the extra food would be coming in from Farmers to Families or from CARES funding. But we are all hanging in there. Frigid temperatures effect everything we do, especially during COVID when we are trying to serve our clients outside. Our programs count on trucks to run and they are being very whiney in this cold weather. We are doing the juggling act of trucks. We are seeing some lower numbers in the CSFP counts, thinking that there is so much food saturation right now, that seniors aren't needing the little boost. They are still scared to get out, too. Hopefully things will normalize when this pandemic slowly disappears. Gibbon mobile numbers were down, too, but we still think the Thursday distributions are getting everyone covered to the best of our ability. Dick Cochran of Hot Meals USA lined the Food Bank up with five semis of food from Liberty Fruits in Kansas City. This is 1200 boxes every week and will finished up at the end of February. That is in addition to the program we are already doing with DHHS, Food Bank for the Heartland, and CashWa with CARES funding. CashWa and Food Bank for the Heartland have led us to believe that there will be more food coming in March and April. Now we will have to wait and see. At the time of publication, the Food Bank should be getting a freezer replacement with CARES Act Funding. This is a much-needed upgrade. Thank you to all the wonderful staff who go above and beyond to get food out to the masses!

**CEO – MEREDITH COLLINS**  
**SENIOR CENTERS**

**North Platte Senior Center** by Becky Blume – No report.

**Minden Senior Center** by Sheana Overleese – The month of January we served 517 meals in 18 days with an average of 29 people per day. Donations were \$1,691.50 with an average of \$3.13 per meal.

**Peterson Senior Activity Center Meal Program (Kearney)** by Tammy Jeffs – Peterson is still operating with curbside pickup. Individuals wanting to pick up a lunch should call the day prior to get on the list. Suggested rate of \$4.50 for folks over 60. Stay warm!

**TRANSPORTATION – CHARLES MCGRAW**

The Transportation Department is off to a busy start for the first months of 2021. Special **thanks** to all of the Transportation staff who have helped during the holidays and vacation days.

NDOT and local public transits are working on Public Transit week in Nebraska, which will be April 11-17. Governor Ricketts will be signing a proclamation, declaring the second week in April to be Public Transit week.

Also, **thanks** to all of my staff who helped on "snow days". Special **thanks** to all the drivers who drove through these challenging streets packed with snow and ice.

**WIC – JUDY SCHULTZ**

**Outreach and Retention WIC Goals for 2021:**

- By September 30, 2021, the percent of WIC enrollment will increase by 1% through outreach and retention.
- By September 30, 2021, the percent of WIC participation will maintain or increase in show rate through issuing age-appropriate, milestone incentives.
- By September 30, 2021, there will be an increase in satisfaction and understanding on eWIC grocery store experiences for our new WIC clients through survey, education, and follow-up.



## **BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELOR – LEAH JAMES**



WIC's breastfeeding peer counselors will be starting a new Breastfeeding Support Needs Assessment Survey using the Microsoft 365 Forms app. Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program participants will receive a link to the needs assessment survey via text and the information will be used to help the peer counselor tailor breastfeeding education and support specific to that participant's needs. This education and support will further support WIC moms in obtaining their individual breastfeeding goals. This needs assessment will be in addition to the routine phone calls and text messages to participants to support and help them throughout their breastfeeding journey.