

**Blessings in a Backpack  
Walmart Foundation  
Cycle 1, February 2017**

**FY18 Ask**

**Project:** Feeding the Future of Nebraska

**Ask Amount:** \$27,500

**Total Kids:** 465

**Walmart Kids:** 250

**Organization Profile**

**Official Name:** Blessings in a Backpack, Inc.

**Legal Name:** Blessings in a Backpack      **AKA Name:** Blessings in a Backpack

**Address:** 4121 Shelbyville Road      **City:** Louisville      **ST:** KY      **Zip:** 40207

**Telephone:** 312-893-5511      **Web Address:** [www.blessingsinabackpack.org](http://www.blessingsinabackpack.org)

**Organization Mission,** Provide the organization's mission statement, 2,000 characters 1,655

Blessings in a Backpack mobilizes communities, individuals and resources to provide food on the weekends for elementary school children across America who might otherwise go hungry.

Incorporated in 2008 with a goal of providing weekend nutrition to children facing food insecurity, Blessings in a Backpack (Blessings) has grown to a national organization that partners with 1,000+ schools in 45 U.S. states and Washington D.C. As a leader in the movement to end childhood hunger, Blessings envisions a world where every child in America has adequate nourishment to learn and grow

Each site is led by passionate volunteers who—with support from the national office—secure and pack bags of food that are discreetly distributed by school staff to food insecure students. During the 2016-2017 school year, more than 92,000 students will leave school every Friday with Blessings bags full of nutrition that help keep hunger pangs at bay until they return to school on Monday.

**Facebook Site address,** 500 characters      <https://www.facebook.com/BlessingsinaBackpack>

**Twitter handle,** 500 characters      <https://twitter.com/BlessInBackPack>

**Web Address:** [www.blessingsinabackpack.org](http://www.blessingsinabackpack.org)

**Program Information**

**Program Title:** Feeding the Future of **Nebraska**

**What state is this request for?** Dropdown box **Nebraska**

**Program Focus Area:** Hunger relief and Healthy eating

**Program Focus Category:** Charitable Meals

**Program Subcategory:** Food distribution

**Fund Use:** Provide a brief summary of how the funds requested in this application will be used if this application is selected for funding. 250 character maximum. *Currently 248*

Walmart Foundation's support would provide **8,750** hunger-free weekends to **250** children living with food insecurity in **Nebraska** during the 2017-2018 school year.

**Unmet Need/ Problem Statement**      **Define problem organization addresses**  
**Why is it important**  
**How does problem affect target population**  
**What is organization's plan to address the problem**  
*2056/2500 characters*

Imagine this: you are nine years old, and school is letting out for the weekend. For some of your friends, access to nutritious food during the next two days is a given, but not for you. For you, Fridays ignite panic and the start of 65 hours of hunger pains, because you are going home to little or no food. Who will feed you this weekend? Blessings in a Backpack will!

For the first time ever, over half the public school students in this country are from low-income families, leaving one in five American children to battle food insecurity. These students rely on the federal free and reduced price meal programs to feed them, which is often the only guaranteed food in their lives.

The effects of hunger are particularly devastating for children, because without access to consistent and proper nutrition, kids will have increased vulnerability and heightened potential for long-term consequences. At such a young age, food insecurity impacts children's health, social development, cognitive growth and general well-being. Thus, these hungry children face poorer overall health, increased hospitalizations, more behavioral issues, lower academic achievement and more anxiety than children who have consistent access to food. Providing growing children consistent nutrition paves the way for students to achieve more in school and lead full, healthy and successful lives. The United States is one of the wealthiest countries on the planet; hunger should not be a roadblock for our children to overcome to reach their dreams.

Each Friday of the school year, Blessings in a Backpack (Blessings) sends home a bag full of food with children who face food insecurity. This food keeps hunger at bay so students can return to school after the weekend feeling nourished and ready to learn. But Blessings' impact goes beyond just removing food insecurity. Student survey results show that children fed by Blessings experience the following positive results:

- \* 78% feel cared for by their community.
- \* 71% feel they are helping their family.
- \* 60% have fewer behavioral issues at school.
- \* 59% find it easier to learn at school.

**Program Description –Brief synopsis of what program will achieve. 1410/2000 characters**

In **Nebraska**, **19.7%** of the child population is income-eligible for nutrition assistance programs. Blessings has been partnering with volunteers in **Nebraska** for over **four** years to reduce these devastating statistics and provide young children consistent access to food. "Feeding the Future of **Nebraska**" is committed to providing hunger-free weekends to **465** children facing food insecurity during the coming school year.

To make hunger-free weekends possible for these children, program activities include:

- \* Training, supporting and retaining volunteers as they work to purchase food and pack bags
- \* Providing bags full of food to **465** elementary students each week
- \* Developing and managing relationships with partners, including schools, food providers, community groups, businesses and volunteers
- \* Engaging the community in Blessings' work through volunteer opportunities and funding partnerships

Each week during the school year, food is transported to the school where a volunteer team packs the food into bags and gives them to the teachers to distribute discreetly on Friday. Menu items are child-appropriate and vary depending on each site's food partner and the community being served. Examples include: oatmeal, granola bars, pasta, canned vegetables, raisins and fresh fruit when possible. On Monday mornings, after a hunger-free weekend, children return to school, ready to learn.

**Target Population—Describe population . 1283/2000 characters**

In the United States, there are 15.3 million children facing food insecurity. In **Nebraska** alone, there are **92,230** children who are income-eligible for nutrition assistance programs. These students are provided nutritious meals during the school day, but what happens when school is over on Friday? Blessings directly serves children to ensure that students receive the proper nutrition they need and deserve. Funding from the Walmart

Foundation would provide 8,750 hunger-free weekends to 250 children in Nebraska. Blessings is currently providing weekend nutrition to 401 children at nine schools in Blue Springs and Norfolk.

The following is a letter from a parent on what the program means to her and her family, "I had never thought about how a program like Blessings in a Backpack could help our family so much. I work long hours and even with my parents helping out, but I have a tight income. Blessings in a Backpack is a blessing for our family.

When we do not have much food at home, my son can just grab a ravioli from his bag and heat it up for dinner. This program makes a big difference for our small family. Not having to worry about my son being hungry is a relief for me. He can focus on going to school, getting good grades, staying out of trouble. As a parent working hard to provide for my family, Blessings in a Backpack is more than just filling a belly to some it's joy, to some it's peace, to some I'm sure it's taking care of their family... for me, Blessings in a Backpack is all of the above."

**Area served** – Gage, Madison

**Desired Outcomes – Identify major goals & outcomes**

**What are the anticipated benefits for the target population**

**What is the impact the organization expects as a result of program**

*1791/2000 characters*

Blessings' desired goal for "Feeding the Future of Nebraska" is that 465 food insecure children do not continue to experience weekend hunger throughout the school year by ensuring these children leave school on Fridays with a Blessings bag of food. In doing so, these children will have access to the consistent nutrition necessary to lead full and healthy lives. The following measurable indicators will happen:

- \* 48,842 pounds of food will be distributed to 465 children throughout the 2017-2018 school year.
- \* Food for 16,281 hunger-free weekends will be provided to children facing food insecurity.
- \* 52 volunteers in Nebraska will help Blessings combat the issue of child hunger.

Progress towards these goals is monitored through a variety of tools, including surveys, volunteer feedback and staff reports. These tools are used to analyze the project's progress towards its goals and its impact, make modifications for future activities and communicate the project's results with its funding partners and the greater community.

In addition to the measurable indicators and quantitative results above, feedback from teachers, volunteers and parents provide insight on the impact Blessings has on children's lives and the greater school community. In their own words, the following comments give insight on the dramatic and positive impact Blessings has had.

A parent said, "It helps me as a parent to provide and have something for my kids on the weekend."

A teacher stated, "Blessings is wonderful because no child goes hungry over the weekend."

A social worker observed, "It's been a positive program that has helped meet the nutritional needs of our families."

Finally, in the words of a child who receives a Blessings bag each Friday, "I like the program. Because it helps me. And it gives my tummy food on the weekend."

**Sustainability –How will program be sustained/integrated into organizations work if program is not funded** *1950 /2000 characters*

Blessings benefits from a dedicated, diversified funding base and uses strategies targeting partners on the community, state and national levels. Each site's volunteers drive community-level fundraising efforts with guidance and resources from the national office. Volunteers secure support from their community's businesses, organizations and concerned citizens using a variety of methods.

Blessings is expanding its volunteer training program to include webinars, conferences and other tools. A specific focus area of this new work is on growing and diversifying community-level funding. If local program volunteers are not reaching their local fundraising goals, they will have access to more tools and support as they work with the national office to ensure their program’s direct expenses are fully funded.

To build on volunteers’ community-level efforts and ensure the organization is fully funded, Blessings staff and national volunteers implement a multi-dimensional fund development plan that includes:

- Individual donor solicitation and stewardship: Efforts include annual fund solicitations, a monthly giving program, a giving society and various campaigns such as Giving Tuesday and Monthly Giving challenge.
- Corporate partnership program: A robust and flexible corporate partnership program offers corporate donors opportunities such as programmatic support, national sponsorships, cause marketing campaigns, in-kind gifts and employee engagement. Current corporate partners include Tyson, Constellation Brands, Harley-Davidson, Cigna, Unilever, Arby’s and Discover.
- Foundations: Throughout the country, foundations are partnering with Blessings.
- Events: Hundreds of fundraising events take place each year, ranging from jeans days at corporations and chili dinners at schools to the Kentucky Derby’s Unbridled Eve black tie gala and the Blessings Golf Classic.
- Professional Athletic Partnerships: Over 70 professional athletes, such as Dale Earnhardt, Jr. and Donald Driver, partner with Blessings.

**Organizational Budget:** \$10,797,728

**Program Budget:** \$51,168

**Requested Grant Amount:** \$27,500

**Budget Breakdown**

Please provide a breakdown of the funds requested in this application. The total entered must equal the Requested Grant Amount entered previously.

**Program Budget Items:** Please enter the total amount of each item below.

- Personnel Costs: Total amount of program-related personnel expenses including: compensation, benefits, insurance, etc. Compensation (including benefits, insurance, etc.) is limited to 50% of any single program-related position. You may request funds for multiple positions.
- Materials and Supplies: Total of all program-related supplies and materials.
- Other Direct Costs: Total of all other program-related direct costs.
- Indirect Costs: Total of all non program- related expenses including: non program-related staff, shared supplies, rent, occupancy, utilities etc. Indirect costs cannot exceed 10% of total request amount.

Personnel Costs: \$1,183  
 Materials and Supplies: \$22,960  
 Other Direct Costs: \$612  
 Indirect Costs: \$2,745

**Explanation of Personnel Costs:** Please list the positions, amounts and percentage of total compensation for each position included in the above Personnel Costs total. Compensation (including benefits, insurance, etc.) is limited to 50% of any single program-related position. The request may include funds for multiple positions. If the organization is not requesting support for Personnel Costs, enter N/A. 2,000 character maximum Example: Program Manager- \$25,000 (50% time)

Program Manager, \$813, 1.3%  
 Chief Program Officer, \$150, .2%  
 Manager, Program Support, \$142, .2%

Director of Program, \$35, .2%  
 Coordinator, Volunteer Services, \$25, .2%  
 Manager, Volunteer Services, \$18, .2%

**Explanation of Materials and Supplies:** Please provide a line-item breakdown of all items included in the above Materials and Supplies total. If the organization is not requesting support for Materials and Supplies, enter N/A. 2,000

characters max Example: Books - \$5,000

Food - \$22,500  
Bags and Storage Bins - \$98  
Office Supplies - \$175  
Printing and Marketing - \$187

**Explanation of Other Direct Costs:** Please provide a line-item breakdown of all items included in the above Other Direct Costs total. If the organization is not requesting support for Other Direct Costs, enter N/A. 2,000 characters maximum

Example: Travel - \$3,000

Volunteer Support and Program Management Tools - \$250  
Rent and Utilities - \$150  
Telephone & Communications - \$112  
Travel - \$100

**Explanation of Indirect Costs:** Please provide a line-item breakdown of all items included in the above Indirect Costs total. Indirect Costs cannot exceed 10% of total requested amount. If the organization is not requesting support for Indirect Costs, enter N/A. 2,000 characters maximum Example: Rent - \$4,000

Non-program Personnel - \$1,575	Depreciation Expense - \$35
Administrative Fees and Expenses - \$365	Accounting - \$32
Travel - \$203	Telephone and Communications - \$28
Fundraising Activities - \$165	Volunteer Leadership Support - \$28
Rent and Utilities - \$162	Office Supplies & Equipment - \$27
Postage - \$58	Software and Service - \$15
Miscellaneous - \$37	Professional Development - \$15

**Demographics**

People served – 250      Gender – Unknown – 250      Age Group – 250 Children (0-12)

Ethnic Background – 250 unknown      Veterans – No

**Program Metrics – Two versions (250, 500 kids) but Number of Sites is state-specific**

Grocery or Food Distribution

250 children 0-17 served

Number of sites – 3

Pounds of food distributed – 26,250

Backpacks distributed – 8,750

Average meals per pack – 3

Average pounds per pack – 3

**Donor Recognition**

Describe how (if selected to be funded) support from the Walmart Foundation, the program, and its progress and results will be communicated and with whom. 2,000 characters maximum

Blessings takes great pride in sharing the organization’s impact with the public that is made possible due to support from its funding partners. Blessings works with its corporate partners to develop a marketing strategy that aligns with both partners’ needs and goals, such as a check presentation event or a packing event to align National Blessings in a Backpack Week (week of September 18, 2017) and the U.S. Conference of Mayors “National Blessings in a Backpack Day,” which is September 21, 2017. Below are ways the Walmart Foundation’s support of \$27,500 to provide hunger-free weekends for children in Nebraska will be recognized and communicated externally:

- Logo in Fiscal Year 2017 annual report
- Logo in Fiscal Year 2017 School Investor Report
- Logo on BlessingsinaBackpack.org’s Partners landing page
- Name listed in an e-newsletter distributed to 19,000+ addresses
- Social media posts

**Additional Information**

**Other Potential Funders:** List other potential funders and the requested level of support for the proposed program. 2,000 character maximum

Since the program year does not begin until July 1, fundraising efforts for the coming year are just beginning. Through the activities outlined in response to the program sustainability question, Blessings will ensure the program’s budget of \$51,168 is fully funded in Fiscal Year 2018 to sustain the program’s health and continued growth.

**IRS 990 Form** – Upload

**IRS Determination Letter** – Upload

**Board of Directors** – Name, “Add to List” –

Ulysses Bridgeman	Michael Gouloff	Sara Moores
Paul Colangelo	Darby Hills	Kate Rose
Joe DePippo	Ubong Ituen	Cynthia A. Ryan
Tonya York Dees	Lisa Kahl-Hillerich	Reena Sood
Ana Dutra	Teresa McMahan	Richard Stephens
Richard Gordon	Doug Meijer	Ramona Ustian

**Associate Involvement:** *List any Walmart or Sam’s Clubs associates that currently serve on the organization’s board of directors. 2,000 character maximum.*

There are currently no Walmart or Sam’s Clubs associates serving on Blessings’ national board of directors, but Blessings is currently expanding its national governance and regional advisory boards if a Walmart employee is interested in learning more about volunteering in a leadership role with Blessings to improve the lives of children facing food insecurity.