

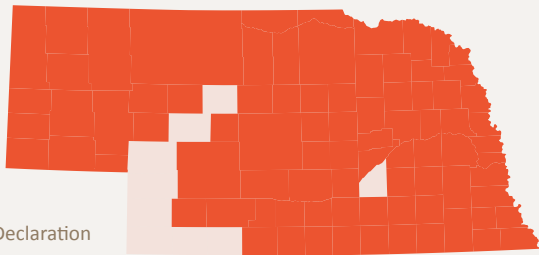
Exploring the Food and Water Response to the Spring 2019 Nebraska Floods

With funding provided by the Gretchen Swanson Family Foundation, the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition conducted a case study of the March 2019 Nebraska floods to understand how natural disasters impact the people living in affected areas, especially vulnerable populations, and to examine lessons learned related to emergency food and sheltering during natural disasters and recovery. Interviews were conducted with two disaster preparedness and management experts, as well as 27 interviews with community and state stakeholders including long-term recovery groups, disaster preparation and relief organizations, county emergency managers, and community leaders.



Received State or Federal Disaster Declarations

84 counties • 5 tribal nations



■ Disaster Declaration

Damage Surpassed \$1.2 Billion

\$620 million in roads, levees, and infrastructure
\$440 million in crop losses and \$400 million in cattle losses
\$22 million in damage to businesses
1,414 homes damaged or destroyed



Challenges

Cities were stranded due to high waters, collapsed bridges, and washed out roads

Water treatment facilities, water lines, and independent water wells serving rural families were damaged

Displaced families had to figure out how to feed a family without kitchens and limited budgets



Immediate Needs

Access to clean water & food




City-wide boil ordinances
Bottled water donated by the truckload

Safe place to sleep

Shelters and food/supplies at school gyms, fire halls, and other large buildings



Lessons Learned

-  Improved collaboration among local disaster relief organizations is needed
-  Improved communication channels with citizens to ensure everyone is aware of resources is needed
-  Acknowledge that disaster response won't always follow a predetermined plan



Community Members are the Real Heroes

"From the residents, the people that weren't affected by the flooding, they were the ones making the food and bringing it up there. Even before breakfast, they would make a meal plan and say, 'This is what we're having for breakfast. Who's willing to help?' And they would get enough to feed a hundred people."

Flood Waters Receding, but the Need is Still There

"[Flood survivors are] doing all these things that [they] had zero budget to do with. And again, I don't think it's that initial impact. It's that long-term impact when those bills start coming in, that really starts setting these families back. And they go month after month until it's at the point where something's got to give and it's usually their food budget."



Long-Term Recovery

Long-term recovery groups helped those who lost their homes, savings, and jobs by connecting them with mental health, food security, housing, and other resources

Nebraska granted permission to allocate Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, providing additional food dollars based on family's income



Next Steps

- Finish analyzing the qualitative data
- Publish the findings in an academic journal that reaches professionals working in disaster preparedness and public health.