One in three families, one in five children, and one in thirteen seniors in Iowa live in poverty. That means they do not have enough money to provide for their basic needs. One way that people try to make ends meet is by cutting their food costs—skipping meals, eating less. People living in poverty are literally tightening their belts. Over half of our pantry clients are children (0-17) and older adults (55+).

It is a myth that most people are hungry because they are lazy or irresponsible. About 90% of adults who need food assistance work at least 30 hours a week. Many of these people do not earn an hourly wage that is sufficient to cover their needs. In Iowa, a single adult would need to earn a minimum of $13.16 to cover living expenses. If a family has children, that hourly wage would be much higher. The minimum wage in Iowa is $7.25, and that’s not enough for anyone to live on.