

The Douglas County Backpack Buddies Consortium (DCBBC) the organizational structure behind the Douglas County Backpack Buddies Programs (BBP) was established in October 2009. At that time several volunteers were serving two schools and about 50 students each weekend. In February 2011 DCBBC began partnering with and receiving non-profit status with the Minden Rotary Club Foundation. And then in February 2016, the Program received independent non-profit charitable status as the Douglas County Backpack Buddies Program (Fed ID 81-1442001). With our fifteenth full academic year completed (2023/2024), we continue to provide services to eleven schools in Douglas County and one school in Alpine County. This includes: 6 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 3 high schools and K-8. Approximately 200 students receive a backpack of non-perishable food each weekend which provides seven meals and meets the minimum daily requirement for calorie consumption as published by the USDA. Additionally, we provide snacks and drinks to school nurses who often see students that are hungry and not sick, provide snacks to 3 pre-schools, snacks to Counselors and special program's and to the general school population.

Backpack Buddies programs are a nationwide effort to provide weekend meals to students identified by the schools as homeless or needy and who, without this program, would go hungry on weekends. In this particular program, a typical weekend food bag contains seven meals and meets the minimum requirements as published by the USDA for calorie consumption. This food is aimed at preparing the student to be ready to learn on Monday. Many of these students qualify for the reduced/free breakfast and lunch programs offered on the school campuses Monday -- Friday.

A survey conducted of program participants (questions were asked to teachers or parents) in February 2024 showed that the majority of the students receiving weekend food, state that they have improved academic performance, attendance and experience fewer behavioral issues at school.

As a well accepted and admired program, we have focused on raising community awareness through presentations, food drives, and partnerships. We have established collaborative relationships with Suicide Prevention Network, Partnership of Community Resources in Minden, Carson Valley Community Food Closet, Friends in Service Helping (FISH), Food Bank of Northern Nevada (of which we have a service partner agreement), and local churches and businesses. We routinely solicit food donations throughout the community, and have established a successful communication system with participating schools. Our volunteers gave over 4,800 hours of service during 2023/2024. Having stabilized our food procurement processes and having attained a consistent volunteer staff, our main focus is on financial sustainability through grants and donations from government and corporate sponsors, community organizations, foundations, and individuals.

During summer and all school breaks we provide food bags at the Food Closet. The BBP also provides in-need students with hygiene packets.