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**Indian Center, Inc.**

# Press Release

## **Indian Center to no longer serve as site for commodities distribution**

**Lincoln, Nebraska, December 10, 2018:** Indian Center Inc. will no longer serve as a site for commodities distribution after the state agency that oversees the program decided to rescind the grant that funds the program at the Center and give it to the Lincoln Food Bank.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services notified Georgiana Ausan, interim executive director for the center, on Thursday that they “will not be entering into an agreement with the Indian Center, Inc. to provide Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) services at the current time. This decision is due to irregularities in the financial practices and concerns about organizational capacity that have recently come to light.”

DHHS has identified the Lincoln Food Bank as the organization to provide CSFP services for the greater Lincoln area going forward.

The state agency told Ausan that the center had failed to submit reporting requirements for the program in a timely manner from January to October 2018.

The Indian Center has been struggling in recent months to regain financial stability, and center leaders are now concerned the loss of this latest program could make it more difficult to get the center on solid footing. The commodities program’s funding helped pay for indirect costs related to the center hosting the program in its building.

The commodities program also funded a full-time employee, who had to be laid off as a result of the loss of program funding. Ausan said the state agency gave no notice to the center that it planned to terminate its contract with the center for the commodities program up until now.

“We had no reason to think that they were not going to renew with us,” she said. “It was shocking.”

Starting Monday, the Indian Center’s commodities clients won’t be able to pick up food from the center. The Food Bank plans to continue commodities distribution once it is able to collect clients’ information and have its staff undergo training to provide the service, according the agency’s director, Scott Young.

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The commodities program had served nearly 250 people at the Indian Center and even provided deliveries to those who couldn't get to the center at 1100 Military Road on their own. The Food Bank plans to continue providing delivery to those clients who are unable to collect food in person, Young said.

"Our hope is to make a seamless transition from what's been going to what will be going on, but we're not sure how quickly we can make that all happen," Young said.

Ausan said the Indian Center will host a community forum at 6 p.m. Monday, December 17, to discuss the center's options moving forward. The forum will be open to the public. She encouraged people to attend the forum and offer ideas on fundraising and programs for the center.

"The board will take this opportunity to update the community on the organization's current state," she said.

Commodities program clients who have questions about the program can contact the DHHS Food Distribution Coordinator at (402) 471-0189.