



Kate Maehr

Greater Chicago Food Depository

Special Award | 2024 Annual Philanthropy Awards

Kate Maehr leads the Greater Chicago Food Depository in its mission to end hunger. As executive director and CEO, Kate guides the Food Depository's daily response to food insecurity in Chicago and Cook County – a collective effort that includes food distribution with more than 800 community-based partners and programs. At the same time, Kate prioritizes strategies and actions to address the root causes of hunger – poverty, systemic inequity, and structural racism.

Under Kate's leadership, the Food Depository has expanded operations to meet rising demand for food assistance, developed new programs to serve priority populations, and advocated for strong anti-hunger policy at every level of government. Kate is steadfast in her belief that hunger is best solved with collaborative solutions that center the voices of people and communities most impacted by inequity.

Kate has guided the Food Depository's mission in times of historic need, including the Great Recession and the COVID-19 pandemic – when the Food Depository was charged with leading a community-wide response to unprecedented food insecurity.

From 2017-2024, Kate and the Food Depository board of directors led a transformational project to upgrade existing facilities and create a new, state-of-the-art prepared meal center. As a result, the Food Depository will have capacity to distribute up to 10,000 prepared meals per day.

Kate is a board member of Feeding America, co-chair of the Illinois Commission to End Hunger, and a member of the Illinois Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security. She has also served on the Chicago Food Equity Council and Mayor Brandon Johnson's transition team. Kate earned degrees from Macalester College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.