

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Julie Yurko

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

*Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-32

Julie Yurko, President and CEO of Northern Illinois Food Bank, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: March 10, 2022

Location: Geneva, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPLM volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript being  
processed.

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 1:23 / 1.38 hrs.

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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## Abstract

### Julie Yurko, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-32

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Julie Yurko was born in Fairfax, Virginia in 1968. She grew up in the Elmhurst, Illinois, and attended York High School. After her sophomore year, her family moved back east and Yurko finished high school at Wootton High School in Rockville, Maryland. Throughout high school Julie was active in the orchestra as a cello player. After she graduated in 1986, she began attending Northern Illinois University (NIU) in DeKalb, Illinois, with a major in music and minor in business. At NIU, Yurko continued playing the cello and became involved with the Youth Symphony Orchestra. After graduating in 1990, she became interested in working with several Chicago non-profits, like Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Children's Memorial Foundation at Lurie Hospital, and the Chicago Zoological Society at Brookfield Zoo. In 2009, she joined the Northern Illinois Food Bank (NIFB) as the Philanthropy Lead. In 2014, Yurko was named President and CEO of the non-profit, which serves thirteen northern Illinois counties. Northern Illinois Food Bank serves Stephenson, Winnebago, Boon, McHenry, Lake, Ogle, DeKalb, Kane, DuPage, Kendall, Will, Grundy, and Kankakee counties. It is a member of Feeding America.

In the interview, Yurko examines the challenges COVID-19 brought to the non-profit. Between the start of the pandemic in March 2020 to the time of the interview in February 2022, NIFB distributed over 180 million meals through soup kitchens, food pantries, youth and senior centers, shelters, direct distribution, and market online pickups. The NIFB was considered essential and was allowed to remain in-person, which caused a variety of considerations regarding employee and volunteer safety. Yurko details the challenges associated with the pandemic and its effects, such as increased cost of food, adjusting its food distribution process to meet local requirements, meeting the increased transportation needs, and continuing to build sponsor and donor relationships. Yurko also highlighted the variety of programs NIFB provides, such as Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Winnebago Community Market, and My Pantry Express.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Northern Illinois Food Bank; NIFB; food insecurity; Julie Yurko; Northern Illinois; pandemic's effect on food insecurity; COVID-19; COVID-19 pandemic; *Tumultuous 2020*; *Tumultuous 2020* oral history

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