



# word of mouth

Summer 2022

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## The following businesses, organizations, and foundations made a gift of \$1,000 or more from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 - June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022

4Paws 4Wheels 4Hunger  
AAA Northeast  
Adams Community Bank  
Adobe Employee Community Fund  
Alekman DiTusa, LLC  
Alice Willard Dorr Foundation  
Amherst Knights of Columbus Council 1619 Inc  
Avangrid Foundation  
Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc.  
Barings LLC  
Beatty-Roig Charitable Fund  
Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation  
Burr & McCallum Architects  
C & S Wholesale Grocers, Inc.  
C. E. Floyd Company, PBC  
Charles H. Farnsworth Charitable Trust  
Charles H. Hall Foundation  
Christopher W Rivers and Christopher L Miller Gift Fund  
Church World Service, Inc  
Clean Crop Technologies  
Cohn & Company  
Coldham & Hartman Architects  
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Costco Wholesale  
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DoorDash  
Dr. Hauschka Skin Care, Inc.  
Easthampton Savings Bank  
Edward L Bernays Foundation, Inc.  
Edwards Church of Northampton  
EKI Environment & Water, Inc.  
EOS Foundation  
Estate of George R. Moore  
Excel Dryer, Inc  
Family Veterinary Center  
Farm Credit East Cares  
Feeding America  
Florence Savings Bank  
Florence Savings Charitable Foundation, Inc.  
Freedom Credit Union  
Frontier Regional High School  
Gilson Family Foundation  
Grace Episcopal Church  
Greylock Federal Credit Union  
Hands Across the Valley Quilters Guild  
Health New England  
HP HOOD LLC  
HUB International Limited  
Hyundai Motor America  
INSA  
Instacart  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
Local 2324  
Irene E and George A Davis Foundation  
J. Polep Distribution Services  
Lions Club of Pittsfield, Inc  
Liquors 44  
Loomis Fund at Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation  
Merriam-Webster, Inc.  
Mohawk 4x4 Adventures Inc  
National Philanthropic Trust  
Ness Oleson Trust  
New England MCA  
Norcom Mortgage  
North East Pacers  
Northeast Contractors, Inc.  
Northwestern Mutual Foundation  
Overlook Industries  
PeoplesBank  
Pioneer Cold  
Pioneer Valley Books  
Pioneer Valley Racing  
Port Family Foundation  
Prentiss Smith & Co  
Price Chopper's Golub Foundation  
ProAmpac  
Queenan Foundation  
Sarah Gillett Services for the Elderly, Inc.  
Stone House Properties  
Stop & Shop Family Foundation  
Ted Ondrick Materials Group  
The Janey Fund  
The Leavitt Corporation  
The TJX Foundation, Inc.  
Tighe & Bond, Inc.  
UMACC  
United Personnel Services  
United Way of Hampshire County, Inc.  
United Way of Pioneer Valley  
USDA  
Vivian and Paul Olum Charitable Foundation  
Wakefern Food Corporation  
WAMC/Northeast Public Radio  
Weed Man / Mountain View Lawn Company, Inc.  
Western Area Mass. Dietetic Association  
Whalen Insurance  
Wheeler & Taylor, Inc  
Wild Oats Co-Op  
Williston Northampton School  
Women's Benevolent Society  
Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts



July 11<sup>th</sup>, Hampden County Partner Appreciation Event, posing with certificate of appreciation. From left to right: Rep. Carlos Gonzalez, Rep. Brian Ashe, Pastor Doyle St. Louis (From the All Nation Church of God Food Pantry), and Rep. Jacob Oliveira



July 5<sup>th</sup>, advocating for the RTA (Regional Transit Authority) Advancement Bill at Mass. Senator Jo Comerford's Boston State House office. From left to right: Cameron Lease (Senator Comerford's Director of Communications & Engagement), Food Bank Staff; Laura Sylvester, Public Policy Manager, Emily Reardon, Advocacy Coordinator, Hannah Moriarty, Donor Engagement Officer with Tate Coleman from the RTA Coalition.

May 12<sup>th</sup>, Franklin County Partner Appreciation Event, handing out certificates of appreciation to member agency partners.





# Forty Years of Vital Community Partnerships Persevere

**A**t times, it can feel overwhelming to reflect on all the crises occurring around the world. While we can't solve them all, we can solve the crisis of food insecurity in our own backyard. In my seventeen years at The Food Bank, I've witnessed state and federal governments, and the community rally to the cause. This was most evident during the recent spike in food insecurity due to the pandemic and during the Great Recession (officially from December 2007 through 2009). In both cases, it took time for government to respond by enacting policies and increasing funding to provide critical relief to households, businesses, and municipalities. In both cases, our community partners also responded immediately. This ability to respond immediately to crises is vital. You all – donors of funds and food, volunteers, and our frontline member pantries and meal sites – stepped up and you took action. For this, we are truly grateful!

Forty years of partnerships have demonstrated the essential role we

all play to solve food insecurity when households face this grim and unjust reality at any given moment in their lives. For many, this reality is chronic. I met a person the other day who described how he works two jobs to keep a roof over his head and pay essential bills. Food assistance enables him to feed his family. Every day is a struggle with no end in sight. This is not right!

High inflation is causing food insecurity to rise again after it fell to still unacceptably high pre-pandemic levels earlier this year. We must double down on our efforts and deepen our partnerships, drawing from the hard lessons learned and the incredible creativity, adaptation, and innovation over the last couple of years.

Here, at The Food Bank, we are doing this in partnership with you. Here are some examples of our strategic priorities to prepare for the immediate and long-term future:

A Western Massachusetts where no one faces food insecurity and everyone has access to nutritious food.



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The Food Bank is committed to promoting cultural diversity through its board of directors, staff, volunteers and local member feeding sites. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20250-9410.

Your name is safe. We have never rented, sold, or loaned our donor list, and we never will. Without our donors, our work would not be possible. We value your support and privacy.

## FEED

Build our future home in Chicopee – a state-of-the-art green building with adequate capacity to meet the challenge of food insecurity for decades to come

Expand our Brown Bag: Food for Elders sites where they are most needed

Ensure we are distributing food equitably across all four counties

Institute a nutrition inventory ranking system to prioritize the sourcing, distribution, and consumption of healthy food

Continue investments in the Food Bank Farms to grow more healthy organic vegetables for at-risk children and households



## LEAD

Continue to advance public education and advocacy to promote long-term state and federal policy solutions to the underlying systemic causes of food insecurity

Engage with, and learn from, our community partners to provide more holistic collaborative responses to achieve household and community food security



## STRENGTHEN

Deepen our community partnerships in new ways to increase our impact and sustain it for the long haul

We're up for the challenge and grateful to have such stalwart partners like you!



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Andrew Morehouse". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Andrew Morehouse  
Executive Director  
The Food Bank of Western  
Massachusetts

# Breaking Ground: Building a New Headquarters and Distribution Center for the Future

**T**he Food Bank has broken ground on a new, larger, and greener food distribution center and headquarters in Chicopee! At a press and supporter event at the site in early June, Executive Director Andrew Morehouse expressed gratitude on behalf of everyone at The Food Bank for widespread financial support for the \$26.4 million construction project.

“We’ve had a lot of support for this capital campaign and are very close to reaching our goal,” Morehouse stated. “We’re just extremely grateful to everyone who has rallied behind our cause. We know we have a tremendous responsibility moving forward, and we are committed to upholding it.”

The 63,000 square foot warehouse at the new facility will triple food storage capacity, allowing for increased food distribution in all four counties of Western Massachusetts. The new headquarters will be located a close distance to highways, making food assistance more accessible to households facing food insecurity as well as through the region’s emergency food network of 173 food pantries, meals sites, and social service organizations that receive healthy food from us.

If you would like to support The Food Bank’s relocation and increasing efforts to address food insecurity in the region, please contact Hannah Moriarty, Donor Engagement Officer, to learn more. ([hannahm@foodbankwma.org](mailto:hannahm@foodbankwma.org))

Photos by Matthew Cavanaugh Photography









## *Access and Autonomy: Food Insecurity Among New Americans*

**F**rom an outsider's perspective, the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers to the United States is a triumphant conclusion of a long and often dangerous journey. This perception is only half correct. Indeed, this road is fraught with risks and complications. Yet, upon arrival, new Americans face an entirely new set of challenges to begin a new life.

On top of the psychological and emotional challenges is the abrupt confrontation of survival in a strange land often without being able to speak English. Routine daily activity is difficult to navigate not the least of which is obtaining food, clothing, and housing.

In late 2021, as the stories of recent asylum seekers from Afghanistan broke in the local news, Christina Maxwell, Director of Programs, jumped into action. She found out which local agencies were assisting them and reached out to see if they needed assistance. Maxwell recounts, "They told me they could really use some help accessing food because it was taking a very long time for many of the new arrivals to get approved for SNAP food assistance benefits. Many were already attending our Mobile Food Bank distributions as visitors or volunteers. The issue was they required Halal food which was not always available, and what was available was often unfamiliar."





◀ New Americans with Jewish Family Services volunteering at a Mobile Food Bank

Caroline Davis, Program Manager at Ascentria Services for New Americans, explains “Food insecurity is highest in those initial months prior to employment when somebody is primarily dependent on state benefits. We need to pay their first and last month’s rent, security deposit, possibly furniture if we don’t have donations, food, additional resources... it does not go very far.”

At that time, The Food Bank had many gift cards donated by Big Y and Stop and Shop supermarkets. The Food Bank decided to provide gift cards to three local refugee assistance agencies to pass along to these families: Ascentria Services for New Americans, Jewish Family Services, and Catholic Diocese of Springfield. From December 2021 to April 2022, The Food Bank provided 3,213 gift cards to 861 refugees. In April, most of the refugees were from Ukraine.

Davis continues “That’s where The Food Bank came in and was an enormous resource for us because we were at least able to fill some of that void with Big Y and Stop and Shop gift cards to provide those resources to clients.” Gift cards were especially helpful because refugees were able to choose their own food on their own schedule, both of which promote greater autonomy and dignity among new Americans. Kathryn Buckley-Brawner, Executive Director of Catholic Charities at the Diocese of Springfield, says “recognizing the diversity in others is what you do when you give them the ability to choose.”

Although this partnership is not a complete solution for new Americans, expanding access to food — especially food choice — is a step forward in our collective journey towards a more equitable Western Massachusetts.



◀ New Americans with Jewish Family Services volunteering at The Food Bank warehouse



## *Farm-to-School Initiative Launched with Springfield Public Schools*

**T**he Food Bank's Farm-to-School pilot initiative with the Brightwood and Lincoln Elementary Schools in Springfield ended for the 2021-2022 academic year. This initiative piloted a new way of distributing healthy food to families when parents dropped off their children at school. In partnership with Springfield Public School's parent engagement coordinator, Home Grown food service staff, and FoodCorps members, The Food Bank's warehouse team sourced culturally appropriate fruits and vegetables for the largely Puerto Rican school community and delivered it to the schools three times from April to June.

PTO volunteers and Food Bank staff handed out an average of 102 grocery bags to parents at each of the three monthly distributions. The parents expressed excitement to see in the bags: mangoes, pineapples, plantains, bananas, and traditional Caribbean root vegetables like yuca, malanga, and yautia. Food Corps members handed out home recipes in English and Spanish that PTO parents provided.

Jose Escribano, former principal of Brightwood Elementary and current Food Bank Board member, reflected "The pilot was a big success. It was amazing to see how excited families were to receive the fresh vegetables and the rich discussions related



Brightwood Elementary School in Springfield, MA

to healthy eating that took place during the PTO meetings. I thank everyone who made this possible.”

The Food Bank received a USDA Farm-to-School grant to plan and launch this initiative as well as to engage students in learning about healthy food grown locally and, specifically, at The Food Bank Farm in Hadley. Because of the pandemic, students couldn't visit the farm. So, we brought the farm to the children. The Springfield FoodCorps team created videos at the Food Bank

Farm and interviewed Food Bank Farm staff. More than 2,186 students and faculty received the videos on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. The videos and information about The Food Bank Farm can be found on our website: [foodbankwma.org/special-initiatives/food-bank-farm/](http://foodbankwma.org/special-initiatives/food-bank-farm/)

The Food Bank also provided funding to the Springfield and Holyoke Public Schools to expand their school gardens. In October, we are excited to begin monthly “Farm-to-Table” distributions at both schools during the 2022-2023 academic year. We'll source vegetables from local farmers, including organic produce from the Food Bank Farm. During the winter months, we'll again source tropical fruits and vegetables as well as shelf stable vegetables from Quebec, Canada. This is different story for another time!







Chili Project (1989)

## A Walk Down Memory Lane of The Food Bank Farms

In the spring of 1989, an exciting new plan was set in motion to address the rising need for more nutritious food that would give birth to the first Food Bank Farm. Called the Chili Project, The Food Bank partnered with Michael Docter, a leader in the local farm movement, who grew vegetables on an acre of land donated by Hampshire College with the help of volunteers. That year, they made 3,000 quarts of vegetarian chili that The Food Bank distributed to local food pantries.

The ambitious venture continued each summer until 1991 when a yield of 4,000 quarts of chili and an additional 6,000 quarts of tomato puree proved that incorporating local agriculture into The Food Bank's mission could be a game changer for community access to fresh, healthy produce. In 1992, in its 10th anniversary, The Food Bank purchased its first Food Bank Farm in Hadley and hired Michael Docter to farm it and live in the farmhouse. After a few years, Docter became an independent contractor and continued

to farm the Food Bank Farm for the next 15 years until he moved out and started his own farm down the road. In 2010, Ben and Liz Perrault of Mountainview Farm CSA directly took over farming the Food Bank Farm and have continued the tradition to the present, which began with Docter, of providing a share of the harvest to The Food Bank in lieu of cash rent and selling the remainder to their shareholders, in this case, from the Perrault's own farm in Easthampton.

Now, in our 40th anniversary, The Food Bank is the proud owner of two farms in Hadley and is at the forefront in the national food bank network – Feeding America -- of integrating local organic farming with the local emergency food network by distributing fresh vegetables to households and children in schools. The new farm in Hadley also serves as an educational hub for students, families, and volunteers to learn about sustainable farming and ecological preservation (Visit [foodbankwma.org/special-initiatives/food-bank-farm/](http://foodbankwma.org/special-initiatives/food-bank-farm/)).



First Food Bank Farm (early 1990s)

**“Growing our own is a way to prove a point that we can use the community to produce such food.”**

**Former Food Bank Executive Director Catherine D’Amato, 1989**



New Food Bank Farm Community Engagement plot (2021)

# A Moving Target of Food Assistance Across Western Massachusetts



**15%**  
increase

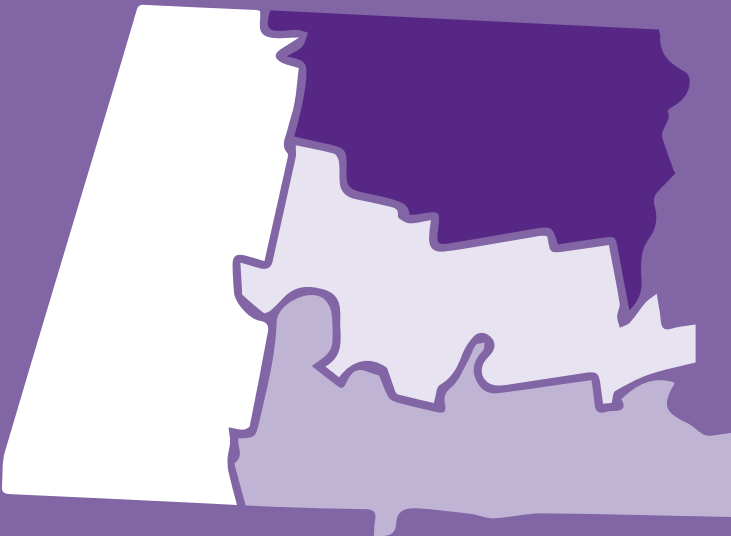
Since February, food insecurity has increased by 15%

due to sustained inflation, especially of food and gasoline, coupled with the expiration of special government assistance during the pandemic.



Almost **125,000** individuals received food assistance during the height of the pandemic (Nov. 2020)

**93,768 INDIVIDUALS SERVED**  
IN JUNE 2022



**BERKSHIRE:**

17,927

**FRANKLIN:**

9,623

**HAMPSHIRE:**

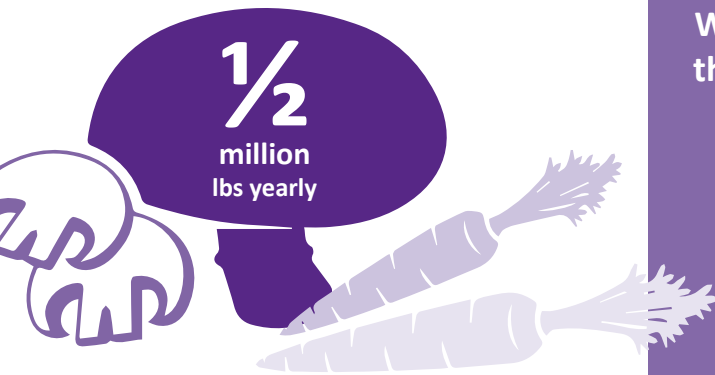
30,580

**HAMPDEN:**

35,638

Source: The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Inc., [www.foodbankwma.org](http://www.foodbankwma.org)





**1/2**  
million  
lbs yearly

The Food Bank purchases about half a million pounds of fresh vegetables annually from dozens of local farmers with support from the Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP). Collectively, local farms donate about the same amount every year.

With food insecurity on the rise again, The Food Bank will continue to be there for our neighbors in need of food assistance.



Much like households and other businesses, The Food Bank is facing rising operating, transportation, and food costs.



We've been paying  
**24%**  
more for fresh  
vegetables from  
local and national  
suppliers



We expect  
increases of  
**20%**  
for shelf-stable  
dry goods



Freight charges  
alone are up  
**42%**

Please make a donation today to ensure healthy food for everyone!

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit Number 786  
Springfield, MA 01152



P.O. Box 160  
Hatfield, MA 01038



Sign up for our eNewsletter  
[foodbankwma.org](https://foodbankwma.org)

# Monte's March for The Food Bank

2 DAYS. 3 COUNTIES. 43 MILES.  
Fighting hunger, feeding hope.

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
November 21 & 22, 2022  
Springfield to Greenfield, MA



Photo Credit Matthew Cavanaugh