

The Vermont Foodbank (VF) is seeking \$5 million dollars in base funding to address the sustained, increased need for access to food in communities throughout Vermont.

- \$2 million in FY24 Budget Adjustment to address immediate needs
- An additional \$3 million in FY25 to address ongoing needs

This summer's catastrophic flooding around the state created an additional, cascading crisis for our neighbors experiencing hunger and has put additional pressure on the charitable and emergency food network. This level of need is beyond what our network of community organizations was built to address.

- We know from Hurricane Irene that there is a long tail to disaster recovery and many people who did not need help before these disasters will now need help for months, maybe years, to come.
- The recent increased need for food in communities builds on the economic devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was exacerbated by inflation in 2022.
- The need was made starker with the end of federal pandemic-era programs supporting our neighbors' nutrition needs. This was felt particularly strongly among neighbors who are least able to adjust quickly to these changing circumstances.
 - Since SNAP (3SquaresVT) Emergency Allotments ended in April 2023 (an average of \$500/month in lost benefits per family, affecting 40,000 households), the Foodbank's network of food pantries, food shelves, and meal sites has seen a marked increase in visits.

To keep the response going, VF needs \$2 million in base funding right now, in the Budget Adjustment process.

In June 2023, VF distributed 988,913 lbs. of food. In August it was 1.42 million lbs. – a 44% increase. We anticipate that this level of need will continue to remain high, especially in flood impacted regions.

\$2 million in base funding as part of the Budget Adjustment for FY24 means we can:

- Continue to purchase adequate amounts of food for distribution to local community organizations across the state
- Find new sources of produce to replace the local produce lost to flooding
- Address increased operating costs due to the larger, heavier truckloads of food VF is distributing statewide
- Ensure that culturally relevant food is available in communities to replace home-grown or locally grown foods destroyed by flooding
- Immediately and continuously get food to those most impacted by flooding, job loss, or other impacts of these disasters



An additional \$3 million in base funding in the FY25 budget will ensure that VF can continue this work as long as necessary as people all over Vermont recover from these cascading crises.