

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject: FW: Testimony for Vermont Food Bank

From: JMerrill-Snide@springfieldmed.org
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Hi, My name is Julie Merrill-Snide and I am here to support state funding in the amount of \$500,000 for the **Vermont Food Bank** to increase the **Vermonters Feeding Vermonters** program. I am a community health worker and work with families that have barriers to getting healthy and staying healthy. Food insecurity is one of the top social determinants that stand in the way of that goal.

In Springfield, The Vermont Food Bank delivers fresh fruit and vegetables once a month. The Community Health Team volunteers at this event and an average of well over 200 families per month are served. This program provides fresh fruit and vegetables to families that are unable to purchase them at the store because of the cost. This also gives families opportunities to try new foods that they have never tried before. We have tasting samples and recipes to share with each person. The participants rave about how they cooked the veggies from last month and they share recipes and ideas, and most importantly are thankful for the opportunity to receive the free fresh fruit and veggies.

Some of the benefits of the **Vermonters Feeding Vermonters** program:

1. **IMPROVED HEALTH FOR VERMONTERS.** It is increasing the daily consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by Vermonters.
2. **SECURITY FOR FARMERS.** It is increasing the stability of the participating growers.
3. **STRONGER VERMONT ECONOMY.** For every dollar (\$1) spent on local produce contributes an additional (\$.60) added to Vermont's economy.

Thank you.

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