

Dear Policy Makers,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to ensure people in Vermont facing hunger have access to the food they need during this crisis. As food insecurity levels skyrocket here and across the country, it has been humbling to work with you all to meet the need in Vermont.

Thanks to the \$4.7M of Coronavirus Relief Funding appropriated to the Vermont Foodbank, we have been able to keep food on the table for tens of thousands of people facing hunger right now.

This funding has made the difference:

- It helped support our state's participation in the Farmers to Families food box program, bringing 5,568,670 pounds of fresh produce, meat, and dairy products to our Vermont neighbors between May and December 2020.
- It helped the Foodbank more than double its distribution of food during the pandemic to meet the increased need.
- It is providing more than \$600,000 in grants to support local food shelves, meal sites, and community partners throughout the state to feed people in their communities.
- It is funding more than \$720,000 in purchases of food directly from VT farmers, providing a consistent market and ensuring fresh, local produce, meat, and dairy products are available to everyone in our state.
- It has helped to meet the increased need while taking the necessary measures to keep staff, volunteers and the people we serve safe and healthy.

Together we have made an incredible impact for people in Vermont. But don't just take our word for it--here's what some of the partners and individuals supported by this funding have to say:

- "I attended the VeggieVanGo at Grace Cottage Hospital, I've gotten help from the Foodbank a lot. Everyone there were just angels! People were so nice and we got so much food; two dozen eggs and all the produce. I really needed that. I can't remember the last time I was able to go to the grocery store, what was it, back in March maybe. I love these people [the Vermont Foodbank staff and program volunteers]! I appreciate it SO much! The Foodbank does so much for me. Thank you." *—an attendee of a food distribution stocked with fresh, local food thanks to this funding*
- "We are experiencing an increase in the number of people requesting food support. In addition, families with students at home are needing extra support. Senior citizens are needing food delivered as they are staying home due to the pandemic. All of these factors have increased the need for our services." *—Cynthia Stuart, CEO of Faith in Action (a partner food shelf who received grant funds through this appropriation)*
- "As soon as the colleges shut down, the college market just went — our sweet potato sales just dropped right off. The Foodbank coming in and buying an additional 10,000 pounds was helpful. That was important." *— Timothy Hughes-Muse, Co-owner of Laughing Child Farm in Pawlet, VT*

As the end of the year approaches, and with it the state's access to CARES Act funds, we know that the hunger crisis will not be over. With 1 in 3 Vermonters facing food insecurity during the pandemic began, we look forward to working alongside you in the coming months to continue to ensure that help is there for our neighbors struggling through this extraordinary time.

With gratitude,

John Sayles
CEO, Vermont Foodbank