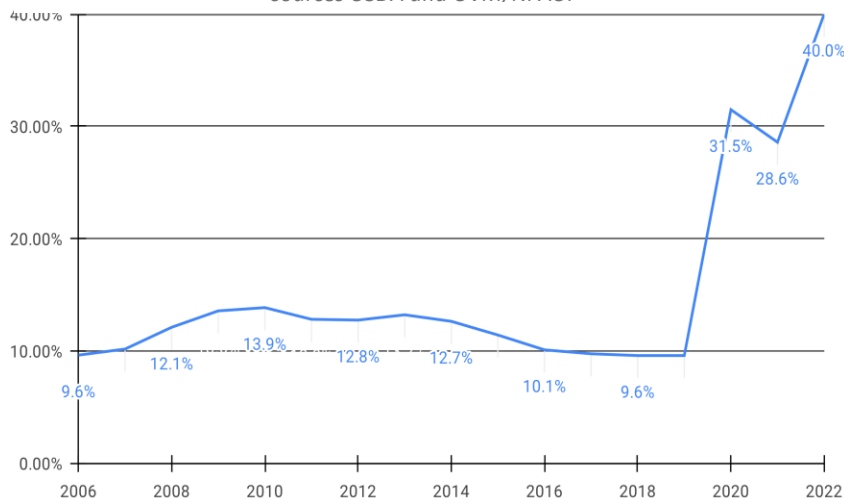


## Vermont Foodbank Base Funding Request

The Vermont Foodbank is seeking \$3 million dollars in base funding to address the sustained, increased need for access to food in communities throughout Vermont. This includes an increased need for food purchasing, distribution, and services due to forces like record-high inflation and continued challenges related to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Chart 1: Food Insecurity Rates in Vermont 2006-2022**

sources USDA and UVM/NFACT



The following request was created using projected expenses based on levels of food insecurity from recent UVM and USDA data regarding COVID recovery and food insecurity. The data shows that **in the past year, 2 in 5 people in Vermont have experienced food insecurity**. This data supports what the Vermont Foodbank and its partners have been seeing in communities across the state – a sustained high demand for charitable food. **Increased funding will support increased capacity to meet the persistent, higher need.**

**Before the pandemic, the rate of food insecurity was *decreasing* in Vermont.**

However, in 2019 food insecurity rates had barely returned to the rates we saw before the Great Recession in 2008. It took a decade for food insecurity rates in Vermont to recover to pre-recession levels. **The COVID-19 pandemic reversed the trajectory of food insecurity, and in 2020, we saw a steep increase in the rate of food insecurity in Vermont. We anticipate it will take at least another decade for Vermont to recover to pre-pandemic food security rates.**

During the pandemic, increased federal and state supports including funding for food boxes, higher SNAP benefits, and stimulus funds supported people across the state and helped to keep people fed. As those benefits and supports ended, and costs of everyday essentials has increased, **we have seen food insecurity increase to levels that are even higher than they were at the height of the pandemic.** To continue to support people across Vermont, Vermont Foodbank requests \$3 million in ongoing general funding to support increased food purchasing and distribution to people in Vermont experiencing food insecurity through our network of 300 network and community partners.

This ongoing support is needed to address the current rate of food insecurity, which is higher than it was even during the height of the pandemic.

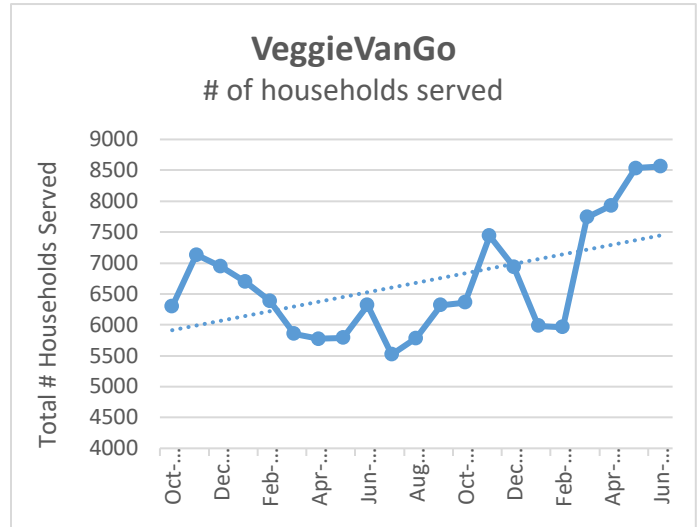


**This funding will:**

- Support increased purchase of foods to meet the sustained, increased need
- Give more support directly to communities through our Network Partners in the form of reduced fees, more food, and increased grant dollars
- Continue the purchase of food from Vermont farms and food producers
- Help to cover increased delivery & distribution costs

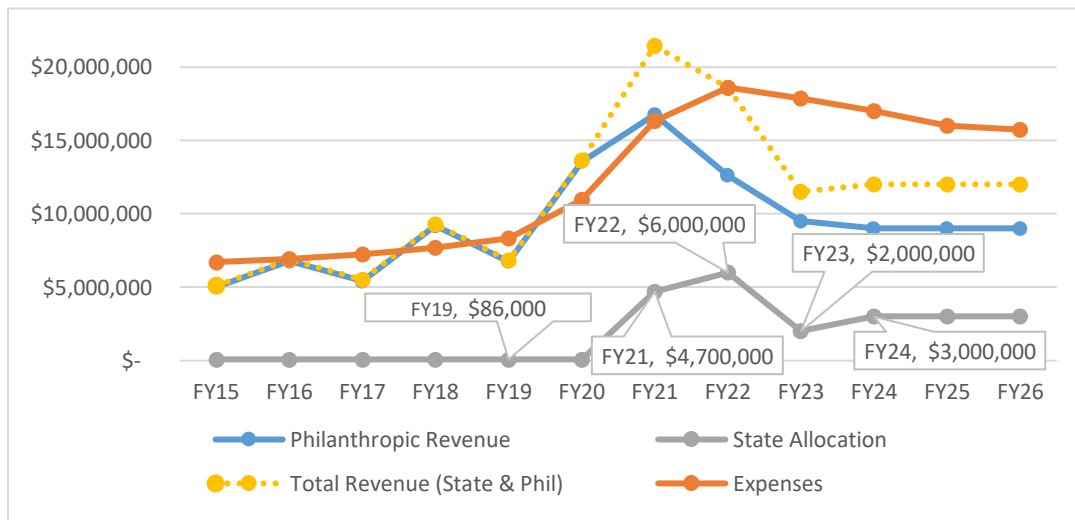
**Benefits of this investment:**

- People living in Vermont who use the charitable food system will have access to food and services they need and want.
- We will purchase produce and other products directly from Vermont farms and producers and distribute directly to Vermont neighbors who need it while acting as an economic support to Vermont farms. In 2021 we were able to distribute 17.6 million pounds of food, of that 4.8 million pounds was fresh fruits and vegetables. There is demand for fresh food across our network.
- By continuing to directly address food insecurity in Vermont, we may help to alleviate the overall burden on state services and continue to refer people directly to more sustainable programs, like 3SquaresVT.



*Chart 2: Our fresh food direct distributions have seen a large increase in participation since February 2022. State support will allow us to continue to provide fresh food at our distributions.*

**The philanthropic sector has stepped up during the pandemic, but philanthropy alone cannot provide the sustained, elevated support needed to address the ongoing high level of food insecurity in Vermont.**



*Chart 3: Food insecurity rates & Foodbank expenses are projected to decrease over the next 4-10 years, but so are philanthropic contributions, leaving a gap that cannot be filled without the support of the State of Vermont.*

**For additional information, contact:** Carrie Stahler, Government and Public Affairs Officer at the Vermont Foodbank, 802-793-4923 or [cstahler@vtfoodbank.org](mailto:cstahler@vtfoodbank.org)