

Barbara Edelman, *Manager of Special Projects – COVID Response and Recovery*

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she/her pronouns

My name is Barbara Edelman. I live in St. Johnsbury and I work for Northeast Kingdom Community Action, where I connect with more than 50 food relief efforts run by organizations in our region. Many of these organizations rely heavily on the Vermont Foodbank to be able to offer nutritious food to folks who cannot make ends meet. People like Elysia, whose husband has a “good job” but not good enough to keep their family well-fed. Elysia told me that – when she heard their SNAP Emergency Allotments will end next month – she challenged herself *this* month to feed her family on the reduced amount she soon will be receiving... and she could not do it. She is panicked.

Like Elysia, **40% of the people you serve experienced food insecurity last year.** Finding a way to address the root causes of this awful statistic keeps many of us – and, I suspect, many of you – up at night. In the meantime, though, we all have a moral obligation to make sure our neighbors can adequately feed themselves and their families *now*... and you are in one of the best positions to do so by establishing a base appropriation of \$3 million in the FY24 state budget for the Vermont Foodbank – one of your most effective partners in this hard work!

I respect that you're being asked to juggle many needs. I only ask that your response to *this* request reflects the importance of making sure the most basic need of your constituents – to be well-nourished – is met.

Would you please spend my remaining seconds to silently reflect on this request..... Thank you.