## Please make sure Vermont Foodbank (VF) and their partners can support food security efforts and ongoing need for charitable food across the state.

The Vermont Foodbank (VF) is seeking \$5 million total in FY26 from the State of Vermont:

- \$1.75 million in base funding for Responsive Readiness
- \$3.25 million for food purchase and distribution

State funding is required to address the sustained, increased need for access to food in communities throughout Vermont and to support our 215+ network of partner food shelves and meal sites who are doing this work on main streets across the state.

**Responsive Readiness:** Vermont Foodbank seeks to formalize an agreement with the State with a \$1.75 million base budget appropriation through Vermont Emergency Management. This will ensure that VF warehouses are stocked, our fleet is ready, and that VF and their network are resourced to meet challenges today and ready to help people recover.

**Food Purchase and Distribution:** Vermonters continue to experience food insecurity at a rate that has increased in recent years. We know the State of Vermont can make policy choices that will ensure food security for everyone who lives here. Some of those policy choices will take time to pass and implement. The State can support neighbors with the food they need <u>today</u>, including food from Vermont farms with the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters program. Through this program, the Vermont Foodbank purchases Vermont-grown food directly from farms and distributes it throughout the Vermont Foodbank network of food shelves and meal sites, and program partners like housing sites, hospitals and schools.

We, the undersigned, request that the legislature support Vermont Foodbank's appropriations request.

Capstone Community Action	В
Barre	S
Our Place Drop In Center	В
Bellows Falls	G
Bible Baptist Church of Bennington	В
Bennington	Le
Greater Bennington Community	В
Services	Т
Bennington	В
His Pantry at Sacred Heart St Francis	н
Bennington	В
Bradford Churches Food Shelf	С
Bradford	В
Orange East Senior Center	Ir
Bradford	В

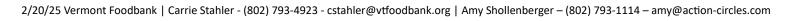
Brandon Area Food Shelf/Brandon Senior Citizens Center Brandon Groundworks Collaborative Brattleboro Loaves and Fishes Brattleboro The Garland School Brattleboro Have-A-Heart Food Shelf - Bristol Bristol Cathedral Square Burlington Intervale Center Burlington

**Cambridge Community Food Shelf** Cambridge **Chester-Andover Family Centre** Chester, Andover The Josh Pallotta Fund and Josh's House Colchester Sid's Pantry Concord **Craftsbury Food Share** Craftsbury **Twin Valley Senior Center** East Montpelier **Gilman Senior Center** Gilman **Grafton Community Church** Foodpantry Grafton Feeding the Valley Alliance Hancock **Praise Chapel Outreach** Hartford **Hinesburg Community Resource** Center Hinesburg **Darling Inn Senior Meal Site Inc** Lyndon

"The need in our community has been steadily increasing over the past 2 years. We rely on the Vermont Foodbank to help us source food to offer in our community. We support the need and are strong advocates for policy change to move the needle for a food secure future for Vermont, but the need for food right now to help our neighbors remains. Supporting this funding for the Vermont Foodbank is essential."

## Natalie Basil

Greater Bennington Community Services



"Our food shelf serves hundreds of Vermonters every month, and the need is only increasing. The cost of food has increased substantially the last three years, and food costs have not gone down. People are waiting at the food shelf as we open it. We serve anyone that walks through the door and needs food - including working families, elderly folks, new Americans. Please support the Vermont Foodbank so that people can get their basic needs met."

## **Mary Joy Patchett**

Richmond Food Shelf & Thrift Store



Lyndon Area Food Shelf Lyndon **Shares Corporation** Lyndonville **Neighbors in Action** Lyndonville, Cabot **Community Food Cupboard** Manchester John Graham Housing & Services Middlebury Family Center of Washington County Montpelier Just Basics, Inc Montpelier Lamoille Community Food Share Morrisville **Kindle Farm School** Newfane **Champlain Islands Food Shelf** North Hero **Putney Foodshelf** Putney **Reading-West Windsor Food Shelf** Reading, West Windsor **Richmond Food Shelf & Thrift Store** Richmond **Roxbury Food Shelf** Roxbury **BROC Community Action** Rutland **Companions In Wholeness** Rutland **NewStory Center** Rutland **Rutland County Parent Child Center** Rutland

Sharon Food Shelf Sharon Sheffield Food Pantry Sheffield Kingdom Community Services St Johnsbury RuralEdge St Johnsbury Thetford Food Shelf, Inc Thetford Townshend Community Food Shelf Townshend Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vergennes Vergennes Vergennes Community Food Shelf Vergennes

Vernon Advent Church - Bread of Life Food Pantry Vernon

Waterbury Common Market Waterbury

Our Neighbors' Table Wells

Westgate Housing Inc Westgate

**Upper Valley Haven, Inc.** White River Jct

Williamstown Food Shelf Williamstown

Woodbury/Calais Food Shelf Woodbury, Calais

Woodstock Community Food Shelf Woodstock

Worcester Community Kitchen and Food Shelf Worcester

"Without the Vermont Foodbank's programs, Feeding the Valley Alliance could not provide food to our neighbors in the Upper White River Valley (Rochester, Hancock, Granville mainly). We depend on monthly distributions from the Veggie Van Go program. This program helps us to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to an average of about 40 families per month. Our numbers fluctuate between 35 families and up to 77 families. These are small rural communities (combined pop. of less than 2500) with many senior citizens and working families. Often they don't qualify for aid but still struggle to meet their needs every month. Our distributions provide, much needed fresh food, a little bit of relief, and a moment to share community and reconnect with neighbors at the distributions. For our delivery folks, we are often able to check in on seniors who may live alone or be otherwise isolated. Please consider the downstream impacts of this funding. It does not stop at the Foodbank - the benefits trickle down to rural communities with limited access to transportation and food purchasing choices."

Monica Collins - Feeding the Valley Alliance

2/20/25 Vermont Foodbank | Carrie Stahler - (802) 793-4923 - cstahler@vtfoodbank.org | Amy Shollenberger – (802) 793-1114 – amy@action-circles.com