

To: House Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry Committee

From: Emmet Moseley, Addison Food Hub Supervisor, Feeding Champlain Valley/CVOEO

RE: 3SquaresVT Awareness Day

Date: February 5th 2026

Hello Chair Durfee and committee members,

Thank you for having me here today to talk to you about my work and how you can support the work so many of us are doing to keep our neighbors fed.

My name is Emmet Moseley. I live in Lincoln and I am the Addison Food Hub Supervisor at CVOEO's Feeding Champlain Valley. Feeding Champlain Valley is CVOEO's network of food security programs across Addison Chittenden, Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. The network consists of 4 food pantries, three hubs fulfilling online orders for home delivery and community pick up and a commercial kitchen producing hot meals and packaging meals for distribution. In 2025 these programs provided nutritional support to over 12,000 people from our most dense, diverse urban areas to our most rural mountain hollows. We are the largest direct service hunger relief provider in the state.

I'm here today to ask that you support the Vermont Foodbank's request for a \$5 million total appropriation in FY27, including \$2 million to support their network of partners, \$2 million for the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters local food purchasing program, and \$1 million for Ready Response to ensure food access in disasters and emergencies.

I have worked in Vermont's Food Security field for the last 15 years as a gleaner, 3 Squares outreach worker, food educator, chef, delivery driver, administrator and logistics supervisor. I have visited over 100 meal sites and food pantries in that time. I have sat in people's living rooms doing my best to help navigate the bureaucracy which feels as though it's mobilized to prevent access to basic nutritional support rather than facilitate it. I have served hot meals to folks staying in motels and been served meals as I stopped into farmworker housing to deliver groceries and diapers.

Throughout my years in the field, I have seen the continuation of a long-term trend year after year. Food pantries like the one I oversee in Middlebury are no longer only occasional or emergency supports for people suffering an unexpected job loss, medical emergency or loss of housing, though they certainly also fill that purpose. More and more, food pantries are a regular strategy for Vermonters to meet their basic needs in the face of rising costs for housing, food, healthcare and utilities. According to research conducted by Dr. Meredith Niles et al. at UVM and the University of Maine in 2024-25 95% percent of Vermont households who utilize food pantries contain someone working, in school, retired or disabled. Additionally, nearly 70% of food pantry visitors across Vermont also receive 3 Squares benefits. These numbers merely

underscore the reality that those of us who work in the field see every day, the community members who come through our door rely on our support as part of their monthly budget.

Once you understand the role that the hundreds of community organizations across the state, like mine, play in the lives of the estimated 70,000 Vermonters who visit us each month, you see how critical it is that we provide our visitors with fresh, healthy and, wherever possible, local food. One of the truly hopeful things I've seen during my career is how our charitable food and agriculture systems have responded to this new reality. In 2025 Feeding Champlain Valley spent close to \$100,000.00 on local produce, meat and dairy products for our clients. About half of those funds were passed through Vermonters Feeding Vermonters. The infrastructure within the charitable food system for storing, transporting and distributing, nutritionally dense, fresh and local foods has developed to the point where Feeding Champlain Valley was able to distribute over 300,000 pounds of produce alone in 2025.

I want to see this momentum continue, for us as charitable food providers to continue to provide our clients with the highest quality food possible and support our local farm economy at the same time. Vermont farmers have proved their generosity for years. They have invited us as gleaners into their fields to harvest crops before they are plowed under, they have donated their time and products to help support their neighbors, even as they struggle to stay financially viable in the face of high costs and an increasingly unforgiving climate. For us in the charitable food sector to continue to provide the nutritious food our clients need, we must ensure that our farmers are fairly compensated for the products they provide. For these reasons I urge you to fully fund the Vermont Foodbank's request for a \$5 million total appropriation in FY27, including \$2 million to support their network of partners, \$2 million for the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters local food purchasing program, and \$1 million for Ready Response to ensure food access in disasters and emergencies. Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.