

2025 Briefing Vermont Foodbank February 12, 2025

John Sayles

jsayles@vtfoodbank.org



About Vermont Foodbank

- **The mission of Vermont Foodbank** is to gather and share quality food and nurture partnerships so that no one in Vermont will go hungry.
- **Vermont Foodbank is the largest and only statewide Food Bank** serving all 14 counties in Vermont.
- **VF operate three distribution centers:**
 - **Barre** - our largest distribution center serving northern and central Vermont (Orange County & north)
 - **Brattleboro** - serving southern and eastern VT (Windsor, Windham, Bennington)
 - **Rutland** - serving central and western VT (Rutland & Addison)

VT Foodbank by the numbers

IMPACT

More Than



72,000 People
Served Each Month,
on Average

More Than



14.5 Million Pounds of
Food Distributed

More Than



299 Vermont Farms
Supported

More Than



215 Network Partners
Shared Food with
Neighbors

Where the Food Comes From

FEDERAL FOODS



Commodity Supplemental
Food Program (CSFP)
The Emergency Food
Assistance Program (TEFAP)

DONATED FOODS



Local Farm Gleaning
Corporate & Individual
Donations

PURCHASED FOODS




Vermont Farms &
Food Producers
Feeding America
Food Vendors





Where the Food Goes



CSFP provides food to income-eligible adults over age 60.

NETWORK PARTNERS represent 225 food shelves, meal sites, and community organizations across Vermont.

VEGGIEVANGO FOOD DISTRIBUTIONS are held at partner schools and hospitals to directly distribute fresh foods to people who need and want it.

SASH PRODUCE DROPS deliver fresh produce to people at SASH housing sites throughout Vermont.

BACKPACK PROGRAM provides kids in partner schools with food to bring home when school is not in session.

Learn More at vtfoodbank.org

Federal-State-Vermont Foodbank partnership

Vermont Foodbank is the agency designated to carry out several federal food programs in collaboration with state agency staff:

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) - in collaboration with the Agency of Education. The program provides USDA foods to qualifying households through our network of food shelves and meal sites. Food is federally funded, but federal funding has not kept up with storage and distribution costs.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) - in collaboration with Agency of Human Services, Department of Aging and Independent Living. Program provides a monthly food box of USDA foods to adults over 60 with qualifying income.

3SquaresVT Application Assistance - Vermont Foodbank is the only statewide application assister helping neighbors sign up for 3SquaresVT.

SNAP Education - Vermont Foodbank carries operates VT Fresh, the Vermont version of SNAP Education making fresh food more accessible to people through recipes and cooking demonstrations.

Comparison of Eligibility

TEFAP, CSFP, 3SquaresVT

Household/ Family Size	130% FPL (CSFP)	185% FPL (3SVT)	300% FPL (TEFAP)
1	\$19,578/yr \$1,631.50/mo	\$27,861/yr \$2,321.75/mo	\$45,180/yr \$3,765/mo
2	\$26,572/yr \$2,214.33/mo	\$37,814/yr \$3,151.17/mo	\$61,320/yr \$5,110/yr
4	\$40,560/yr \$3,380/mo	\$57,720/yr \$4,810/mo	\$93,600/yr \$7,800/mo

- Donated Food is available for everyone with no restrictions
- Purchased food is available for everyone with no restrictions

Where does food come from?

Donated Food

About 60% of food Vermont Foodbank comes from donations, from sources like:

- Local & regional grocery retailers
 - Includes Fresh Rescue, keeping food out of landfills and shelf-stable grocery foods
- Larger wholesale donations from manufacturers
- Donated food has no limitations on who may receive it.
- Community Food Drives

United States Department of Agriculture Food

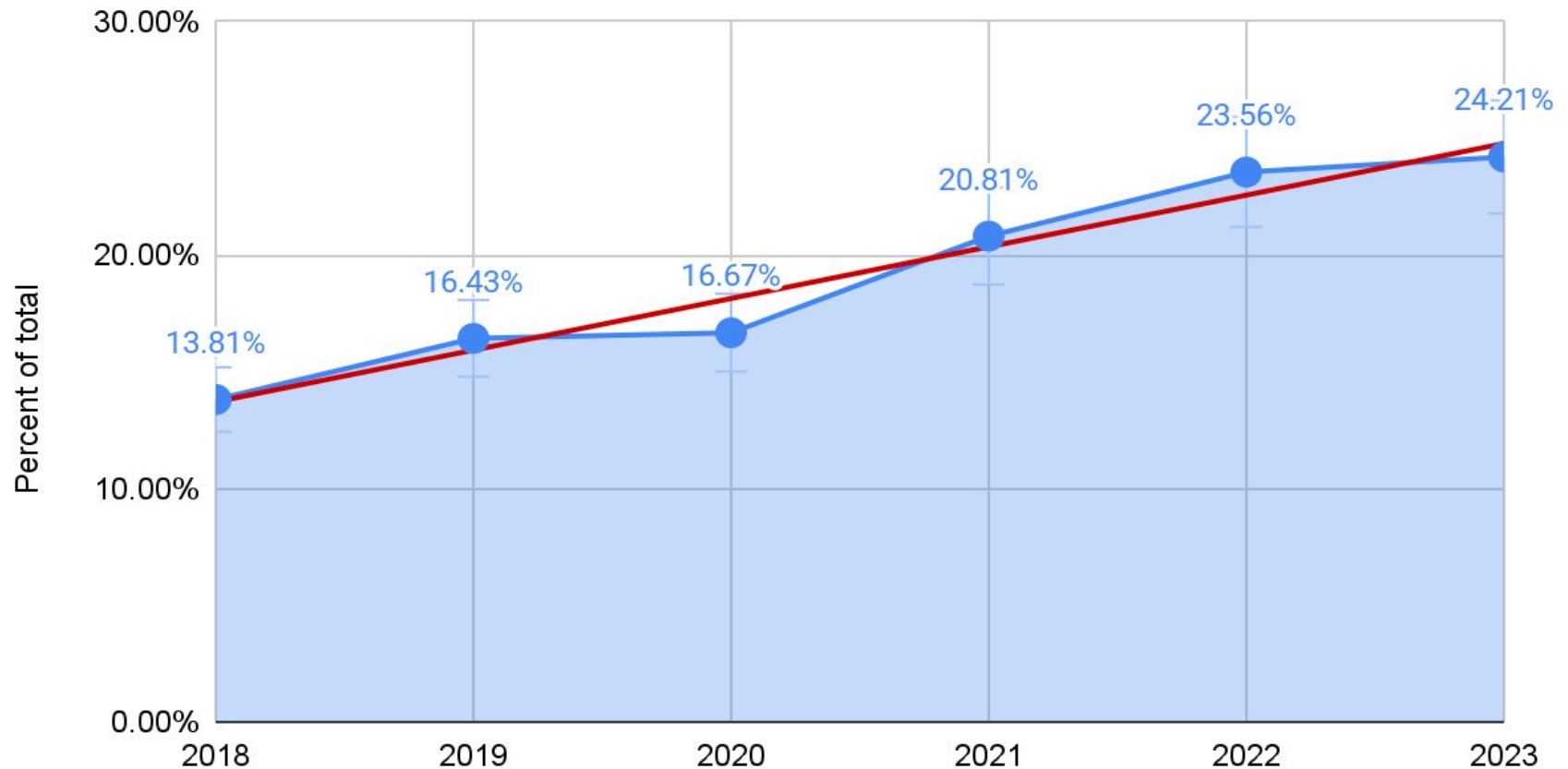
About 15-20% of the food distributed comes from the USDA, used to be called Commodity Food.

- Food for The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- Food for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- Program eligibility guidelines mean not everyone can access this food and about 70-85 partners carry this food at any time due to requirements, administrative burden, and dignity of shopping experience for neighbors.

Purchased Food

Grocery Foods & Produce are purchased to offer a variety of options to help keep shelves stocked and food on tables.

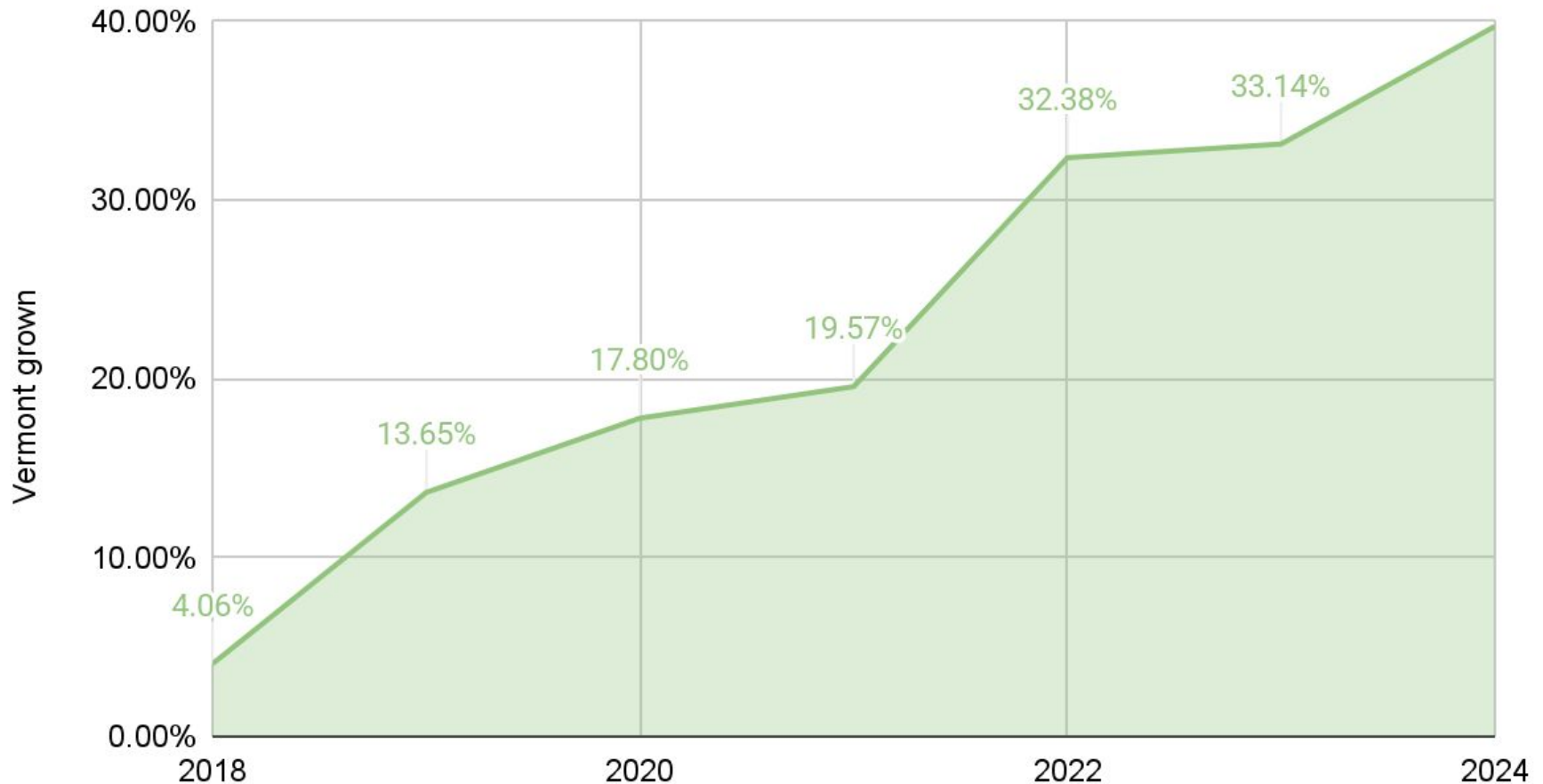
Purchased pounds as % of total pounds distributed



Purchased Food

Local Vermont food has been a significant quantity of purchased food thanks to investments in Vermonters Feeding Vermonters from the Legislature and State of Vermont.

Vermont-grown food as % of purchased food



From our Neighbors



"This is a really special thing that the Vermont Foodbank does for our communities. I know some people who wait all month for this just to feel that sense of security to know food will be in the fridge and on the table. It's really helpful & I'm so blessed to be a recipient of such nutrition and help from VVG." ~ Neighbor using VeggieVanGo

"In order to eat properly, like you should when you're diabetic, it would cost a lot of money." ~ Neighbor

"The Vermont Foodbank is vital is helping our neighbors and their families stay fed. We would not be able to provide the food we do, in the quantities that we do, without the Foodbank. There are so many people in need, with the rising costs of living and food, and its especially important we continue to be able to aid our families." ~ Pittsford Food Shelf

Hunger in Vermont



Food Security Disruptions: after the COVID-19 pandemic

Experiences and Ongoing Challenges of Food Insecure Households in Vermont and Maine

Rebecca C. Mitchell¹, Janica Anderzén²,
Emily H. Belarmino^{1,3}, Farryl Bertmann¹, Sam Bliss^{1,3}, Jennifer S. Laurent¹,
Jonathan Malacarne², Ashley C. McCarthy⁴, Scott Merrill^{1,3},
Sarah Nowak¹, Rachel E. Schattman², Kathryn Yerxa², Meredith T. Niles^{1,3}



1- University of Vermont

2- University of Maine

3- Gund Institute for Environment, University of Vermont

4- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service

Key Findings

1. The majority of food insecure (FI) households continued to face food access challenges closely tied to household finances, and at least 1 in 4 also struggled with transportation and time poverty challenges.

2. FI households had up to 8 times greater prevalence of adverse financial events during and since the financial shock of the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to food secure (FS) households.

3. On average, FI households experienced 3 adverse financial events over the past 4 years, compared to 1 among FS households. More than 1 in 4 FI households missed utility payments, had new credit card debt, only paid credit card minimums, were unable to pay medical bills/debt, missed rent payments, or took on additional work to cover costs.

4. The majority of FI households employed multiple strategies to mitigate the effects of inflation, which likely impacted food and nutrition security including purchas-

ing cheaper food, less produce, fewer animal products, and less food overall.

5. FI households faced greater challenges than FS households in accessing healthcare, with at least 1 in 4 lacking transportation, money for medical visits, or being unable to get an appointment.

6. Respondents in FI households had twice the rate of anxiety and/or depression compared to FS households (62.3% compared to 31.2%), but only 34.0% of FI respondents had received mental health therapy in the last 12 months.

7. These findings suggest that FI households faced greater financial shocks in the last few years, which affected food acquisition, food security, and health in complex, interconnected ways. Attention to ongoing financial, transportation, and healthcare access and affordability challenges are critical in assisting households that continue to struggle with food insecurity and may not recover from shocks as well as food secure households.

Food Security Disruptions: after the COVID-19 pandemic

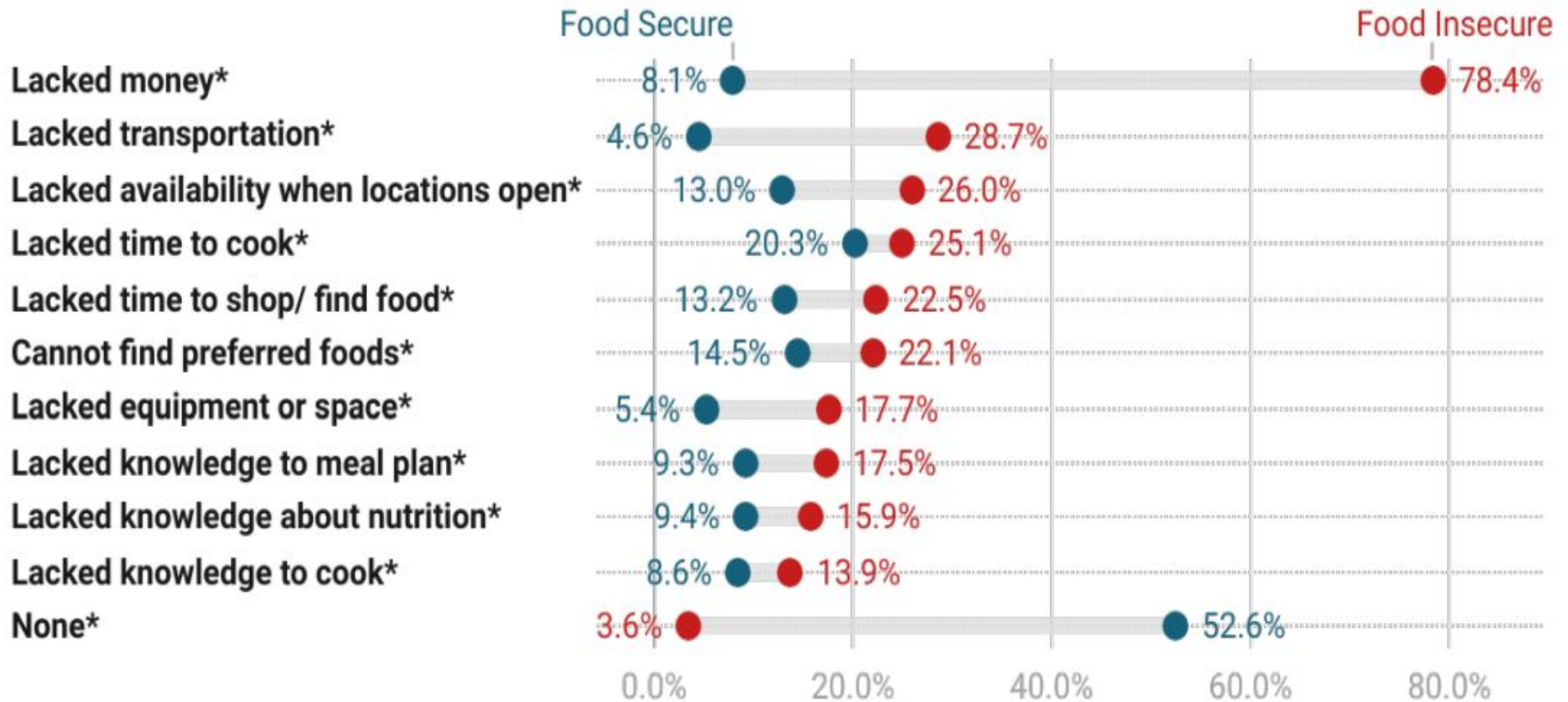
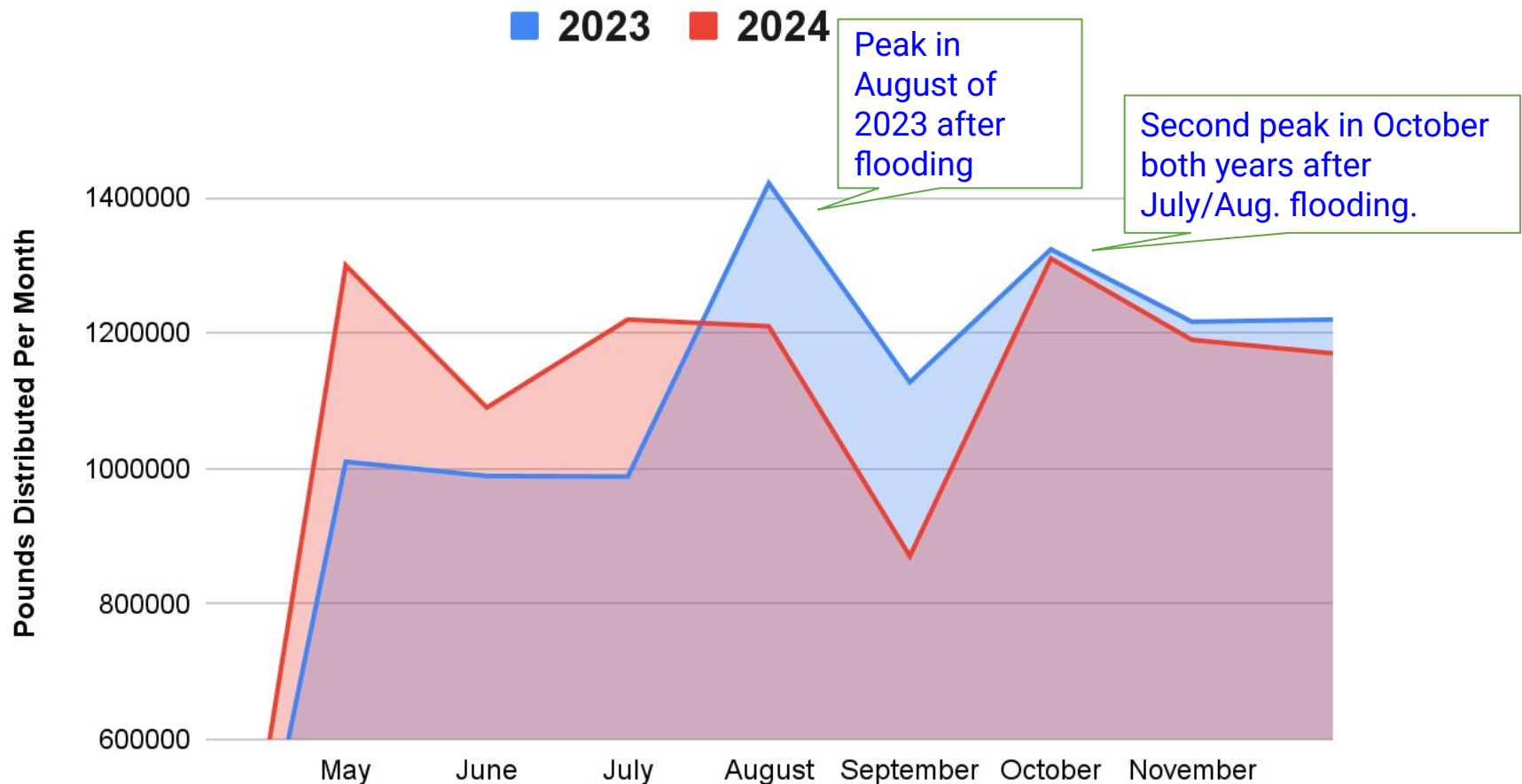


Figure 5. Food access challenges indicated by respondents, by food security status. * indicates a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$).

What we know - pounds distributed

Disruptions of all types impact what our neighbors need

Most recently, flooding has caused sharp increases in the need for food in communities across the state.



Systemic Challenges

Impacts on food security are some of the **longest-lasting after-effects** of disasters & disruptions.

Right now, government **must support the charitable food system** to improve food security for everyone in Vermont.

While, together, we continue the work for **permanent, dignified, and sustainable food security solutions**.

The State of Vermont can make policy choices to ensure food security for everyone who lives here.

What you can do:

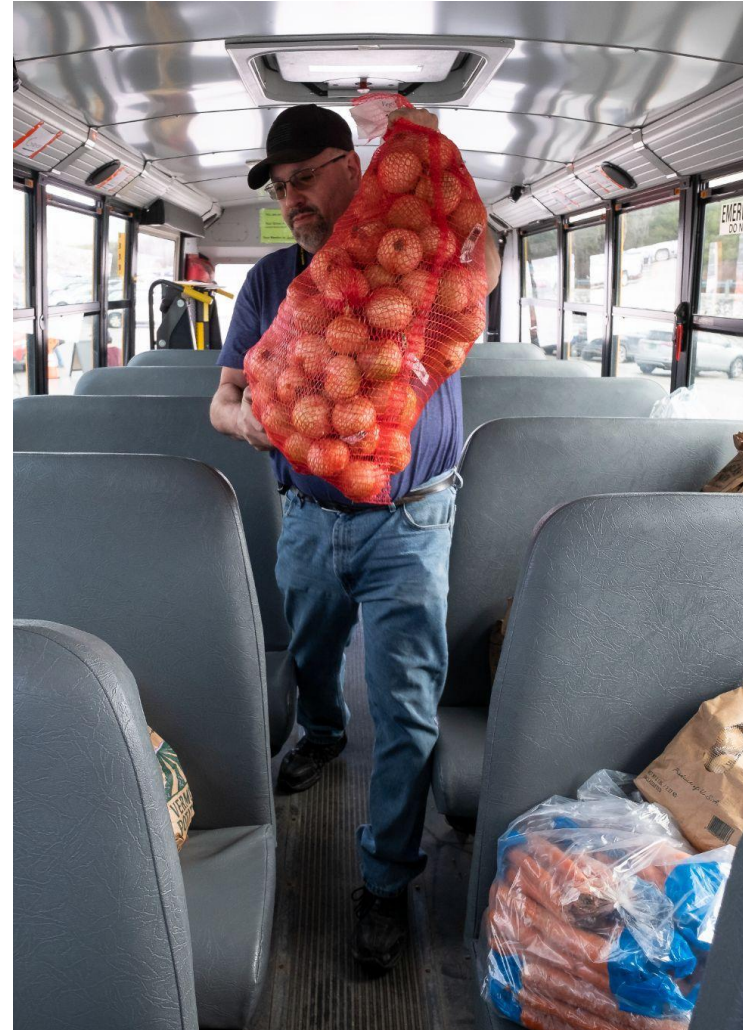
The Vermont Foodbank (VF) is seeking **\$5 million total in FY26 from the State of Vermont:**

- **\$1.75 million** in base funding for Responsive Readiness
- **\$3.25 million** for food purchase and distribution & and to support network capacity for our network partner food shelves and meal sites

Vermont Foodbank Request

Responsive Readiness:

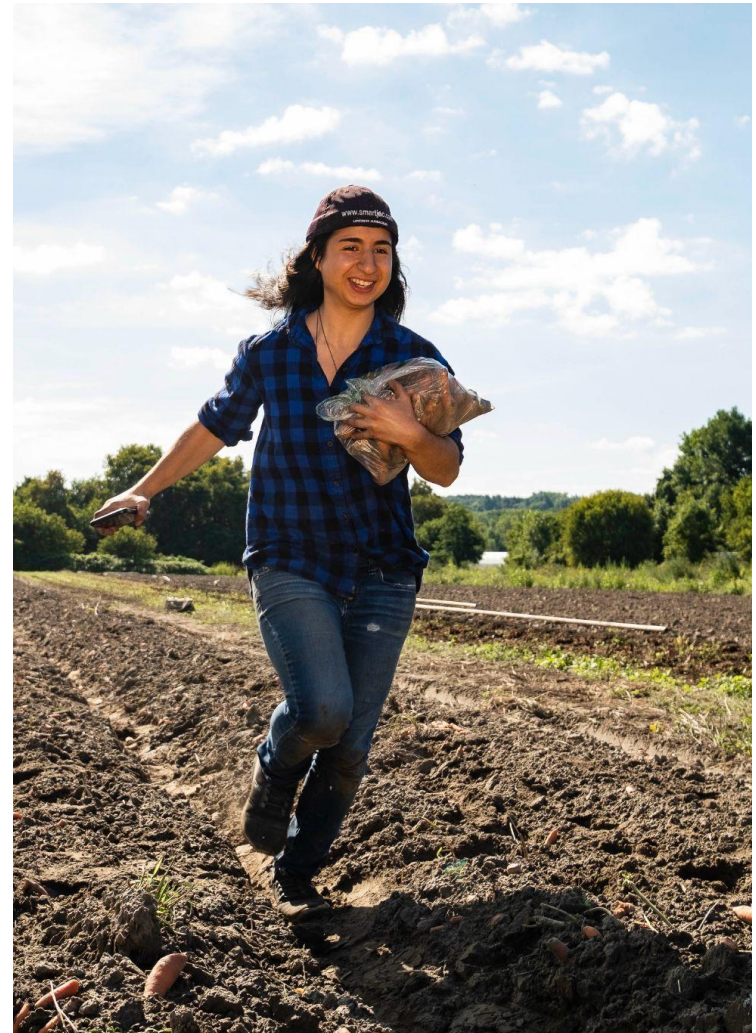
- Vermont Foodbank seeks to formalize an agreement with the State with a **\$1.75 million base budget appropriation through Vermont Emergency management.** This will ensure that our warehouses are stocked, our fleet is ready, and that we and our network are resourced to meet challenges today and ready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



Vermont Foodbank Request

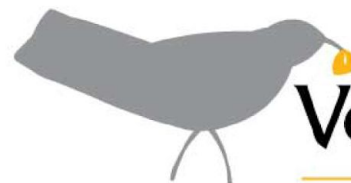
Food Purchase & Distribution:

- **The State can support neighbors with the food they need today, 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.



Thank you!

We look forward to working together to create a more food secure Vermont.



Vermont Foodbank
— vtfoodbank.org