

Vermont Foodbank is seeking \$1.5 million in Budget Adjustment FY26 funding to fully fund the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters local food purchase program.

Vermonters continue to experience food insecurity at a rate that has increased in recent years. **The State can support neighbors with the food they need today and support Vermont farm viability by fully funding the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters (VfV) program with an additional \$1.5 million now.**

Local Food Purchase and Distribution

Through this program, the Vermont Foodbank purchases Vermont-grown food directly from farms and distributes it through Vermont Foodbank's network of food shelves and meal sites, as well as program partners such as housing sites, hospitals, and schools. Purchasing happens in three ways:

- **Large-scale direct purchasing:** The FY26 appropriation of \$500k has been used to purchase food from larger farms, helping to fill shelves at Vermont Foodbank's food shelf partners and feed neighbors. Additional funding would allow us to purchase more food with state dollars.
- **Grants to Network Partners:** allow partners to purchase smaller quantities of local food from smaller-scale farms. Additional funding would allow Vermont Foodbank to fund this portion of the program with state dollars.
- **Culturally Responsive Foods:** Produce purchases from key partners support the distinct needs of neighbors in communities with distinct cultural food needs. Additional state funding would allow us to support this portion with state dollars.

The Legislature can sustain this program, creating economic investment for 200-300 Vermont farms and providing fresh food for neighbors, with an additional \$1.5 million appropriation in the Budget Adjustment Act.

