



## Planning & Pivoting: The Food Bank in the face of COVID-19

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From the Executive Director

# Planning and Pivoting: The Food

Dear Friends,

In my 15 years at The Food Bank, we have never experienced anything like we are now – not even during the Great Recession. COVID-19 closed temporarily about a dozen of our 175 local member feeding sites dotted across our region and about an equal number of our 51 Brown Bag sites at senior centers and 26 Mobile Food Bank sites in food deserts. At print, 16 sites remain closed, mostly in Hamden County. The situation is very fluid as circumstances change daily on the ground. Above all else, we have adapted to uphold food and public safety through social distancing, protected food handling and other measures. Many sites have changed their distribution methods to keep visitors safe. Most meal programs are now making meals to go, which patrons can pick up and take with them. Many pantries are also

distributing food outdoors to reduce the risk of the coronavirus spreading to staff and guests.

With unemployment claims skyrocketing, we expect food insecurity – not knowing where your next meal will come from – will grow even more. We have experienced a 20% increase in food distribution since mid-March.

Our job is to provide food assistance to whomever needs it, regardless of their circumstances. All our local feeding partners, and our own direct food distribution, provide food assistance with compassion, respect, and dignity. It is a lifeline for anyone whether they have sought help before or are for the first time.

There should be no stigma in seeking food assistance. Those in need are our neighbors, members of our congregations, our fellow employees, and just about anybody.



**The Food Bank**  
of Western Massachusetts



For regular updates on Food Bank activities, sign up for our newsletter at [foodbankwma.org](http://foodbankwma.org)



*The Food Bank's vision is a western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry and everyone has access to nutritious food.*

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The Food Bank is committed to promoting cultural diversity through its board, staff, volunteers and member agencies. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20250-9410.

*Your name is safe. We have never rented, sold, or loaned our donor list, and we never will. Without our donors, our work would not be possible. We value your support and privacy.*

# Bank in the face of COVID-19



*Volunteers and staff in action (clockwise left to right): packing apples for Mobile distribution, preparing fresh produce at the MLK Mobile Food Bank in Springfield, Operations staff in the warehouse, sorting rescued meat from Big Y World Class Market.*

Our warehouse staff and drivers are very busy receiving, storing, picking, and distributing vast quantities of healthy food to households across our four-county region. Not since the Great Recession, we are now buying tractor trailer loads of healthy food and pre-packaged meal boxes to deliver to communities hit hardest by COVID-19. We are also preparing for the arrival of unprecedented levels of federal food for distribution to our communities.

In addition, our SNAP team is working very hard to keep up with

the increased demand for SNAP application assistance.

We have received an outpouring of support from the community — individuals, businesses, and foundations from our region, across the commonwealth and even nationally. We are grateful for this commitment to our neighbors in need when they and we all need it most. ♦

**Andrew Morehouse**  
*Executive Director*



*This information has been updated at the time of publishing – May 26, 2020.*

Learn more at: [foodbankwma.org/covid-19-update-from-the-food-bank](https://www.foodbankwma.org/covid-19-update-from-the-food-bank)



## The Food Bank opens its second farm

**A**fter years of searching with the support of the Kestrel Land Trust, The Food Bank is now the proud owner of its second Food Bank Farm... and probably the only one of the 200 food banks nationally to do so. This new 142-acre farm in Hadley builds on the success of our first Food Bank Farm also in Hadley. It represents our unique approach to food banking not to rely exclusively on donated food from food retailers and commodities from state and federal governments. Instead, it is an investment in local farmland for farmers to strengthen our local food economy while also providing a reliable source of healthy organic food for those who need it most—especially during these difficult times.

Like the existing 59-acre Food Bank Farm, which we have owned since 1992, we contract local farmers who grow organic vegetables for the community, including households at risk of hunger. In lieu of cash rent, The Food Bank receives a share of the harvest, agreed upon in advance. In this case, instead of partnering with a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmer who sells

shares to shareholders, the farmers of the new Food Bank Farm 2.0 will sell most of their share of the harvest to schools in high-poverty school districts.

Farmers Joe Czajkowski, owner of Lakeside Organics adjacent to this farm, and Gideon Porth, owner of Atlas Farm, are each farming about 20 acres. A small portion of this farm (about 3 acres) is envisioned to become a model farm where volunteer school groups will help grow and harvest organic vegetables while learning about sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, and food access for all. The Kestrel Land Trust retains a trail easement over the farm for walking on designated farm roads that link to the conservation lands in Amherst.

Both farms are under Agricultural Preservations Restrictions thanks to important funding from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. The Kestrel Land Trust secured this funding as well as a significant grant from the Town of Hadley to purchase the farm and sell it to The Food Bank. Similarly, The Food Bank secured the other half of funds to purchase the farm with grants from

the H.P. Kendall Foundation and 1772 Foundation, and significant donations from several anonymous local donors.

Kendall Foundation executive director Andy Kendall says, “this purchase demonstrates the power of collaboration of local groups committed to food security, open space, and creating opportunities

for young and expanding farmers. An especially exciting aspect of this collaboration is between The Food Bank and Springfield Public Schools.” The Kendall Foundation’s focus is to strengthen the food system of western Massachusetts and New England by helping local farmers gain market access to schools. ♦

 Learn more at: [foodbankwma.org/food-bank-farm](https://foodbankwma.org/food-bank-farm)

A charity cycling event to benefit The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts



*10th Annual*  
**WILL BIKE  
4 FOOD**  
*2010 - 2020*

Presented by:



Sunday, September 27, 2020

The Lion’s Club Pavilion, Hatfield MA

Register now: [willbike4food.org](https://willbike4food.org)





# THAN

**The following businesses, organizations and foundations  
made a gift of \$1,000 or more between  
January 1 and March 31, 2020**

Alekman DiTusa, LLC	Greylock Federal Credit Union
Atkins Farms	Interprint, Inc
Barings	Keis Consulting LLC
Berkshire Brewing Company Inc.	Merriam-Webster, Inc.
Berkshire Taconic	Meyers Brothers Kalicka, P.C.
Community Foundation	New England MCA
Big Y World Class Market, Inc.	Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
Buffalo Nickle Fund	Pennyfarthing Investment Management, LLC
Charles H. Farnsworth Charitable Trust	PeoplesBank
Church World Service	River Valley Market LLC
Community Foundation of New Jersey	Ro Family Foundation
Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts	S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund
Crane Hill Disc Golf Club	Select Equity Group, Inc.
Danco Modern Furniture and Accessories	Stop & Shop
Dr. Hauschka Skin Care, Inc.	Trinity Health
Emergency Food and Shelter Program	United Way of Hampshire County, Inc.
Fair Share Foundation	USA Hauling & Recycling Inc.
Feeding America	VFW Post 10338 Emergency Food Pantry
Florence Savings Charitable Foundation, Inc.	Vivian and Paul Olum Charitable Foundation
Grace Episcopal Church	Women's Benevolent Society
Greenfield Savings Bank	Your Choice Brands LLC



**The following businesses, organizations and foundations made a gift to The Food Bank in response to COVID-19 Relief\***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| AARP   | Eos Foundation                             |
| Amanda Foundation  | Eversource                                 |
| Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund                             | Feeding America                            |
| Anonymous donor/<br>Boston Foundation                      | Feeding America Jeff Bezos COVID-19 Relief |
| Arbella Insurance Foundation                               | Freedom Credit Union                       |
| Bank of America  | Greenfield Savings Bank                    |
| Berkshire Community  | Joy in Childhood Foundation                |
| Action Council   | Klarman Foundation                         |
| Berkshire Gas  | MassMutual                                 |
| Berkshire Taconic  | National Grid                              |
| Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Inc.        | Price Chopper                              |
| Berkshire UnitedWay/Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation | Smith & Wesson (American Outdoor Brands)   |
| Big Y World Class Supermarket                              | Stop & Shop                                |
| Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA                               | The Antonacci Family Foundation            |
| C&S Wholesale Grocers                                      | Tufts Foundation                           |
| Comcast  | Umass 5 College Credit Union               |
| Commonwealth Care Alliance                                 | Vertex Foundation                          |
| Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts              | Wakefern                                   |
| Country Savings Bank                                       | Webster Bank                               |
|  | Westfield Bank                             |



\*This list reflects gifts given at the time of this publication's print date. Visit [foodbankwma.org/covid-19-crisis-thank-you-for-your-support](https://www.foodbankwma.org/covid-19-crisis-thank-you-for-your-support) for updates.

**The top food donors between January 1 and March 31, 2020**

- |                         |                          |                        |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Big Y*               | 5. C&S Wholesale Grocers | 8. Ocean State Job Lot |
| 2. Stop & Shop*         | 6. Walmart*              | 9. Aldi's*             |
| 3. BJ's Wholesale Club* | 7. Target*               | 10. Costco             |
| 4. Cumberland Farms*    |                          |                        |

*\*multiple stores combined*

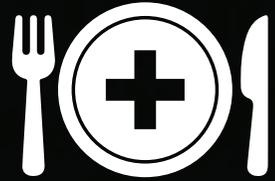
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COVID-19 RESPONSE

Help The Food Bank meet increased need  
[foodbankwma.org/donate](https://www.foodbankwma.org/donate)

or mail: P.O. Box 160 • Hatfield, MA 01038