

FOOD BANK

OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

TOGETHER, WE END HUNGER

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Deb Ondo, Communications and Engagement Manager

Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

debo@foodbankwma.org

Phone: 413-419-0170

FOOD BANK OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF ITS NEW FOOD DISTRIBUTION CENTER IN CHICOPEE

December 14, 2023 [Chicopee, MA] - The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts celebrated the grand opening of its new facility Thursday, December 14, and was attended by hundreds of donors and community partners, including Congressmen Richard Neal and James McGovern. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey, along with Feeding America CEO, Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, sent their congratulations via video.

“The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts’ new state-of-the-art facility will allow their dedicated team to provide greater access to healthy, nutritious foods to thousands more of our neighbors in need and expand service routes to partners throughout the area,” **said Congressman James P. McGovern (D-MA)**. “I’m proud of the food banks’ 40 years of history serving our community and their continued leadership on the national stage in our movement to end hunger now.”

The new, larger, greener food distribution center, located at 25 Carew Street in Chicopee, is twice the size of its previous Hatfield location, with an additional 18,000 square feet (about four times the area of a basketball court) in the warehouse alone. Floor to ceiling warehouse racks and expanded refrigeration and freezer sections enhance efficiencies and enable the Food Bank to store and distribute more healthy food than ever before to 175 member food pantries, meal sites, and emergency shelters of the food assistance network across all four counties of Western Massachusetts.

“The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts is at the forefront of efforts to combat food security amongst low-income families and communities throughout our region. I am thrilled to join Andrew Morehouse and his team as we celebrate the next chapter in what has been the remarkable story of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts,” **said Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA)**. “This project is also a reminder of the critical role the New Markets Tax Credit Program plays in incentivizing community development and economic growth in underserved communities. Ensuring continuity of this program has been one of my

top priorities on the Ways and Means Committee, and the Food Bank is just one of the many success stories that have been the benefactor of the New Markets Tax Credit.”

The new site also features a dedicated community space with a working kitchen for cooking and nutrition classes, and other educational events. Other efficiencies include electric charging stations, and an expanded member pick-up area, along with ample parking for staff and volunteers. In 2024, the Food Bank will add a solar array on the roof and a canopy over part of its parking, along with back-up battery storage which will fully support all electricity needs of the building.

“I want to express my gratitude to our incredible community of supporters and donors who made our vision a reality,” **said Food Bank Executive Director, Andrew Morehouse.** “For the first time in many years, we now have the capacity to provide more healthy food to more people facing food insecurity when and where they need it.”

In January 2021, the Food Bank launched its Feed, Lead, and Strengthen Capital Campaign to raise funds to build and equip a larger, greener distribution center in Chicopee, Massachusetts. Over \$30 million dollars was raised through the generosity of government, corporate, and individual donors.

Located in Hampden County, the Food Bank sits in the most strategic location available to advance food security in all the rural, suburban, and urban communities of Western Massachusetts.

The Food Bank’s new address is 25 Carew Street, Chicopee, MA 01020. The main phone number is 413-247-9738.

About the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts: *Since 1982, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts has been a community partner to end hunger. We provide healthy and culturally responsive food directly through our own programs (Mobile Food Banks and Brown Bag: Food for Elders), and through the food assistance network in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties. These independent pantries, meal sites and shelters are on the front lines providing food and resources to individuals, families, seniors, children, veterans, and people with disabilities, so they may lead healthy and meaningful lives. The Food Bank partners on public education and advocacy to address systemic issues that lead to hunger, operating with the belief that everyone has a right to healthy food.*



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