Dear Friends,

More than ever in the history of the Food Bank, last fiscal year exhibited the power of community and our commitment to work together to create a hunger-free Western Massachusetts. In our 41st year of existence, we picked up and moved our belongings from our small but versatile home in Hatfield to our much larger and more efficient new Food Bank in Chicopee. So many stakeholders from across our region rallied behind us to raise the funds necessary to build a state-of-the-art food distribution center, and to successfully relocate to it last September on schedule and within budget. We look back in amazement at this accomplishment and know we couldn’t have done it without you – our member food pantries and meal sites, donors of funds and food, staff, volunteers, legislators, and many other business and community partners.

The purpose of our move and our new Food Bank was and is to have the capacity to provide more healthy food to more people for decades to come. History has shown us that market and societal failures are stubbornly persistent during both the downs and ups of our economic system. Deep recessions like the ones during the pandemic and the Great Recession of 2008-09 (and its lingering effects for many years thereafter), caused large numbers of individuals to become food insecure and many to face hunger. And, even in good times, the benefits of a strong economy are not distributed equitably and do not trickle down to communities and people that have been ignored for decades either because of de-industrialization and/or systemic divestment.

Fortunately, community investment in the Food Bank during the pandemic and specifically in our Feed, Lead, Strengthen capital campaign, was tremendous! 246 households, businesses, foundations, and government invested more than $30 million in our new home in Chicopee. Now, we have more capacity to receive, store and distribute more healthy food to people when and where they need it.

Our state-of-the-art warehouse has increased safety for our hard-working and trusted staff and volunteers. Its design has dramatically improved efficiencies, resulting in a much higher velocity of healthy food flowing through it to individuals who seek a hand up. Our new Community Room is already hosting in-person and livestream meetings, educational and networking events, and healthy meals cooking demonstrations and samplings in our kitchen.

In our pursuit of a Western Massachusetts where everyone always has access to nutritious food, we have begun to broaden and deepen our partnerships across all four counties with the:

• business community to collaborate on eliminating barriers to employment

• public transportation community – both riders and planners – to advocate for more accessible, affordable, and reliable public transport, and

• black and brown communities to improve healthy food access while also listening to their solutions to end hunger

We are so grateful to all of you for your continued commitment to our cause. We urge you to get even more involved. If you haven’t already, we invite you to visit our new home in Chicopee so you may see with your own eyes the tremendous impact of your investment in our mission... seeing is believing. Together, we end hunger!

Andrew Morehouse  
Executive Director

Charlotte Boney, M.D.  
President

Dear Friends,
The Food Bank has a history of developing innovative ways to reach populations that are overlooked by traditional food assistance programs. In 2023, as part of a state-wide coalition, we successfully advocated for $1M in state funding for the Hunger Free Campus initiative — a major first step towards passing permanent legislation. Food insecurity has a direct impact on students’ well-being and their ability to succeed in college and beyond. In 2019, a HOPE Center study found that 37% of the state’s public university students were food insecure. Studies in the American Society of Nutrition and the Community College Journal of Research and Practice document that students facing food insecurity experience poorer sleep, higher stress levels, and lower grades than their peers.

Understanding that the best way to reach college students is where they live, study, and work, the Food Bank has partnered with colleges and universities for many years. We have provided outreach and application assistance for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides funds to purchase food under strict income eligibility guidelines. However, Feeding America regulations prohibit food banks nationally from distributing federally funded food and donated food to any entity other than charitable and faith-based institutions. After years of strategizing, the Food Bank created a new membership model for college pantries that relies only on state-funded food and started accepting applications in 2023. The Food Bank has since welcomed five college food pantries as members of our region’s food assistance network.

1 The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University, “2019 #RealCollege Survey Results, 2020.”
3 Maroto, Snelling, and Linck, “Food Insecurity among Community College Students: Prevalence and Association with Grade Point Average, 2015.”

Confronting College Hunger

| SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE |
| Ram Mini Mart |
| MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS |
| MCLA Food Pantry |
| GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE |
| Corner Market |
| BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE |
| Campus Cupboard |
| BAY PATH UNIVERSITY |
| Wildcat Pantry |

Volunteers Make a Huge Difference

Coupled with the heart and soul of our Food Operation team is the beat of our community volunteers. Last fiscal year, more than 700 passionate individuals devoted 7,000 hours to our mission, leaving a lasting impact across the region.

From sorting food in our warehouse to rolling up their sleeves on our Cultivating for Community regenerative farming and education initiative on the Food Bank Farm, volunteers poured their energy into making a difference, sifting through 500,000 pounds of donated food and helping us harvest almost 7,000 pounds of fresh organic produce — all destined for local member food pantries to help nourish individuals and families living with food insecurity.

Our volunteer efforts extended beyond our farm and warehouse. At marquee events like Will Bike 4 Food and March for the Food Bank, their work and enthusiasm helped us raise $739,000 — the equivalent of 2.2 million meals.

Even as we transitioned from Hatfield to Chicopee, our volunteers remained steadfast. Their unwavering support underscores the resilient spirit of our community. From schools to businesses, dozens of organizations turned volunteer days into experiences of shared purpose and team building.

We offer our deepest gratitude to every individual who lent their time and spirit to the Food Bank. Their tireless efforts fuel our mission every day. We eagerly welcome new faces to join our cause, inviting all to discover the transformative power of community compassion in action.
Nutrition and Healthy Eating

In 2023, the Commonwealth awarded the Food Bank a five-year “SNAP-Education” contract to provide nutrition education services. Our Nutrition team launched the federal “Create Better Health” curriculum, emphasizing healthy eating and physical activity based on MyPlate and the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines. We reached over 1,500 individuals with recipes, food samplings, and other nutrition education handouts at Mobile Food Bank and Brown Bag sites, and member food pantries.

Additionally, we conducted 60 to 90-minute nutrition workshops and cooking demonstrations, primarily at senior centers in Hampden and Hampshire counties. With a second Nutrition Coordinator onboard last August, we expanded outreach to recovery centers, schools, and senior housing sites across Western Massachusetts.

Collaborating with the Food Assistance Navigation team that supports individuals struggling to put healthy food on their tables, we also hosted virtual workshops for participants experiencing food insecurity and living with chronic health conditions. These workshops, offered in both English and Spanish, covered MyPlate guidelines, nutrition labels, grocery shopping, and meal planning, culminating in live cooking demonstrations.

The nutrition team also partnered with our staff at the Food Bank Farm to create informative handouts featuring farm produce, offering cooking tips and recipes for the two member food pantries in Amherst that receive organic vegetables harvested weekly during the growing season. Looking ahead to 2024, we aim to extend outreach to new organizations and deepen collaborations with others, including the Chicopee Public Schools.

Fundraising On the Move

The Food Bank’s inaugural Voices in Food Equity event last May showcased five leaders dedicated to food and social justice in Western Massachusetts. Joining the discussion were Ileana Marie Carrion, Program Coordinator for Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Food Bank Board member; Representative Pat Duffy, State Representative for the City of Holyoke; Liz O’Gilvie, Director of the Springfield Food Policy Council and Interim Director of Gardening the Community; Ashley Sears Randle, a fifth-generation dairy farmer and Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR); and Lee Drewitz, Program Operations Manager at the United Way of Pioneer Valley. The conversation was moderated by Food Bank Board member Ariana Williams, who is also a Baystate Health Strategic Grant Writer. Supported by local businesses, the event in Holyoke drew 75 community members passionate about creating a more equitable food system for people in Western Massachusetts. Future events in 2024 are being planned for June in Hampden County and August in Berkshire County, with a focus on youth hunger.

Last year, our Agency Relations team organized one ice cream social in each county for our member pantries and meal sites. Approximately three dozen members of staff, volunteers, and board members attended. We forged meaningful connections, gained insights into their programs, and witnessed wonderful socializing, networking, and sharing among attendees. Pictured: The Food Bank’s Kate Pousont Scarborough, Agency Recruitment Coordinator; Michelle Geoffroy, Agency Relations Manager; and Naomi Desilets, Agency Resource Coordinator.

Stop & Shop, returned to Hatfield last September. 350 cyclists of all ages and skill levels pedaled on beautiful Connecticut Valley roads and even braved a brief rain shower along the way. These incredible supporters not only took on 10, 25, 50, and 100 miles — they also collectively helped raise $221,163 to provide the equivalent of almost 700,000 nutritious meals to people confronting food insecurity. This event returns Sunday, September 22nd, with discounted registration opening on May 1st.

Last November’s 14th Annual March for the Food Bank from Springfield to Greenfield raised $517,194 — the equivalent of more than 1.5 million meals — with continued exceptional promotion from WRSI-93.9 The River radio station. Led by New England Public Media’s Monte Belmonte, Massachusetts Congressman Jim McGovern, and Food Bank Executive Director Andrew Morehouse, students, legislators, community leaders, donors, food bank staff, and advocates marched for two days, stopping along the way at member food pantries to express our gratitude for their partnership and to hear their stories. Cheered on by school students, residents, and local businesses, the March culminated with a celebration at Hawks and Reed in Greenfield, with food from Stone Soup Café and Cocina Lupita.
Meeting the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow

"The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts’ new state-of-the-art facility will allow us 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 ... 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."

— CONGRESSMAN JAMES P. MCGOVERN (D-MA)
Local Farm-to-Table Partnerships

In 2023, the Cultivating for Community team and dedicated volunteers expanded our minimal-till regenerative farming and education initiative on the Food Bank Farm in Hadley. They created 45 new planting beds and increased our growing area to 1.3 acres (about half the area of a Manhattan city block). The harvest totaled more than 7,000 pounds (about the weight of an elephant) that was all donated to two-member food pantries in neighboring Amherst. Welcoming our new farm manager onboard brought fresh perspectives and initiatives, including wood chip footpaths and perimeter borders to mitigate weed growth, and more cover-cropping and silage tarping to renourish and protect soil from erosion during the winter months, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Cultivating for Community thrived with the support of 415 enthusiastic volunteers who contributed 1,377 invaluable hours. Community engagement flourished with diverse events from an Earth Day workshop and a series of Family Farm Days to an instructive Building Raised Garden Beds workshop. We cultivated strong ties with local schools such as Four Rivers Charter School, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Deerfield Academy, and The Academy at Charlemont, empowering students through hands-on experiences. Our Farm to School partnership with Springfield and Chicopee Public Schools enabled students to gain a deeper understanding of where some of the food they eat comes from. This is because partner farmers Joe Czajkowski and Gideon Porth, who rent the remaining 25 acres of farmland on this Food Bank Farm, sell some of their harvest grown on it to these schools. Combined, they also provided 25,000 pounds of organic vegetables to the Food Bank in lieu of cash rent. Ben and Liz Perrault of Mountainview Farm CSA, who rent farmland on our first Food Bank Farm also in Hadley, provided 45,000 pounds of organic vegetables between donated and contracted pounds. Finally, a community of 38 local farmers, including our farmer partners, donated 326,000 pounds of vegetables to the Food Bank!

Policy Priorities to End Hunger

Our Advocacy team played a pivotal role in shaping systemic change and confronting the underlying causes of food insecurity in 2023:

- **Voter Registration Drive**
  Launched to empower citizens to exercise their civic duty and have their voices heard on issues that impact their lives.

- **Cliff Effect Pilot Program**
  Successfully advocated for its passage to address barriers faced by individuals transitioning out of public assistance programs.

- **Western Massachusetts Transit Advocacy Network**
  - Hosted a forum in June to share best practices for improving transportation options in Western MA.
  - Advocated for and helped win increased funding for RTA across the state (from $94M in FY23 to $150M in FY24).
  - Funding will improve access for people facing barriers to mobility and economic stability.

- **Hunger-Free Campus Initiative**
  Co-led a statewide coalition that succeeded in securing $1M in the current state budget to provide critical resources for colleges and universities to address food insecurity among students.

- **New Legislator Orientation**
  Provided newly elected officials the opportunity to talk with staff and gain insights about the challenges and opportunities facing our region.

Through public advocacy, education, and action, we can create a more just and equitable food economy for everyone.
Since 1982, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts has been working to end hunger and create food equity for all.

Fiscal Year 2023: October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023

13.3 Million lbs. = 11 Million Meals

Food Distribution
- 49% NON-PERISHABLES
- 26% FRESH FRUIT & VEGETABLES
- 13% MEAT
- 7% DAIRY
- 5% OTHER PERISHABLES

Individuals Served By County (Monthly Average)
- Berkshire: 20,212
- Franklin: 9,693
- Hampshire: 26,975
- Hampden: 42,305

Food Insecurity Rate
- 9.6% Food Insecure Individuals
- Total Four County Population: 828,249

Meals Provided By County
- Hampshire: 2.1 MILLION
- Hampden: 5.7 MILLION
- Franklin: 1.2 MILLION
- Berkshire: 2 MILLION

Over 20 Local Farms Donate to the Food Bank

$1 Donation = 3 Meals

Nutrition Education
- 62 Events
- 1,452 Participants

SNAP Outreach & Enrollment
- 169 Outreach events
- 856 Applications filed

Our 250+ Western Mass Partners
- Food Pantries
- Meal sites
- Non-Emergency sites
- Shelters
- Mobile Food Banks
- Brown Bag sites
### Income

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$19,174,947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individuals &amp; Corporate Donations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Grants</td>
<td>$4,957,153</td>
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<td>Government Grants</td>
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<td>Member Programs</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### Expenses

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<td>Programs</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### Statement of Financial Position

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<td>Fixed Assets (net)</td>
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<td>Other Assets</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Accounts Payable</td>
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<td>Other Current Liabilities</td>
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<td>Long-Term Liabilities</td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$61,284,310</strong></td>
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Fiscal Year: October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023
OUR DONOR LIST IS ONLINE

To ensure that we are efficiently investing our resources, we’ve published on our website our list of individual, corporate, institutional, and food donors. Please visit foodbankwma.org/AR23

Thank you to all our donors who continue to support our mission.