

FOOD BANK

OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
TOGETHER, WE END HUNGER

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15th Annual March for the Food Bank Kicks Off Monday, November 25th from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center in Springfield, MA

November 21, 2024 [Chicopee, MA] – Fifteen years ago, Monte Belmonte pushed an empty shopping cart from Northampton to Greenfield, hoping to raise \$5,000 for the Food Bank. Instead, he raised \$13,000, sparking a movement that has grown into the **three-county, 43-mile March for the Food Bank**.

The **15th Annual March for the Food Bank** will take place on **Monday, November 25, and Tuesday, November 26**. This year’s two-day trek from Springfield to Greenfield will once again be led by **NEPM’s Monte Belmonte, Congressman Jim McGovern, and Food Bank Executive Director Andrew Morehouse**. As the Food Bank’s largest annual fundraiser, the event plays a vital role in supporting its mission and raising awareness about food insecurity across the region.

“Every step we take in this March represents our commitment to ensuring no one in our community faces hunger,” said **Andrew Morehouse, Executive Director of the Food Bank**. “More than 120,000 individuals seek food assistance every month – higher than during the height of the pandemic. This annual community event demonstrates the power of community. Everyone benefits when everyone is food secure.”

This year’s fundraising goal is **\$500,000 or the equivalent of 1.5 million meals** for families across Western Massachusetts. Already, more than **\$101,000** has been raised. Reaching the \$500,000 goal will also achieve the March’s **15-year cumulative total past \$4 million**.

Food Bank Development Director Jillian Morgan added, “The outpouring of support this year is phenomenal. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of everyone who registers and fundraises alongside us, as well as our incredible sponsors. This event would not be possible without them!”

Media sponsors, **WRSI 93.9 The River and New England Public Media** will air special programming on food insecurity and hunger leading up to and during the march. People can donate by phone at **888-323-4673 on Monday from 7:30am to 5:00 pm and Tuesday, from 7:30 am – 6:00pm**, or anytime online at **marchforthefoodbank.org**.

Monday's kick-off:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, located at 3 Rutland Street in Springfield.

Welcome: 6:35am - 6:38am

Attorney Maurice Powe, Board Chair, Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center

Speakers: 6:38am – 7:00am

- 6:38am- 6:41am: Congressman Richard Neal, House of Representatives, Massachusetts 1st Congressional District
- 6:41am- 6:44am: Congressman Jim McGovern, House of Representatives, Massachusetts 2nd Congressional District
- 6:44am- 6:47am: Matt Bannister, Senior Vice President, PeoplesBank
- 6:47am-6:51am: Monte Belmonte, March Leader, New England Public Media
- 6:51am-6:55am: Andrew Morehouse, Executive Director, Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
- 6:55am-7:00am: Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center Performance
- 7:00am – Marchers head out!

Local legislators and community partners are also scheduled to join the march as follows.

- 9:15am: Chicopee Mayor John Vieau and Representative Shirley Arriaga at the Chicopee City Hall
- 10:30am: Representative Pat Duffy at Lorraine's Soup Kitchen and Pantry in Chicopee
- 12:00pm: Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia at Fame in Holyoke
- 3:30pm: Northampton Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra will walk from the Holyoke/Northampton line on Route 5 to WRSI in Northampton

Tuesday:

The March leaves at 6:00am from Congressman Jim McGovern's office on 84 Pleasant Street, Northampton with Northampton Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra and Senator Jo Comerford.

- 9:00am: Representative Mindy Domb at Worcester Dining Common in Amherst
- 6:00pm: Greenfield Mayor Virginia "Ginny" Desorgher at Greenfield Common

Details for both days can be found [here](#).

The March for the Food Bank is supported by hundreds of individuals and dozens of local businesses including Alekman DiTusa, LLC; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts; Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company; CoBank; Dean's Beans Organic Coffee; Eversource; Greenfield Savings Bank; Innovative Industrial Properties; Instacart; M&T Bank; Northeast Solar; and PeoplesBank.

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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 nutritious and culturally responsive food directly through our own Mobile Food Bank and Brown Bag food distribution sites, and through the food assistance network in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties. This network is comprised of more than 190 independent member food pantries, meal sites and shelters that are on the front lines providing nutritious 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 barriers that cause hunger. We believe everyone has a right to healthy food.*