

# Feeding People, Fueling the Economy

Food Bank Coalition leverages local resources to address hunger

Up to one in three adults and nearly half of households in Massachusetts face food insecurity at some point each year, making the work of the Food Bank Coalition of Massachusetts essential. Its four regional nonprofits share and deploy more than \$30 million in annual funding from the Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP) to support more than 900 local food pantries, meal sites and shelters across the commonwealth.

“Working together with our counterparts at the other three food banks helps us amplify the voices of the people we are all serving,” says Debbie Callery, executive director at Merrimack Valley Food Bank in Lowell. “Whenever possible, MEFAP funding is spent locally, with local food manufacturers like Teddie Peanut Butter, local growers and local distributors.”

More than half of MEFAP funding stays in Massachusetts, doing more than feeding those in need. “It’s really an economic stimulus program,” says Catherine D’Amato, president and CEO of The Greater Boston Food Bank. “The money is going to local growers, manufacturers or vendors right here in Massachusetts and distributing food through agencies serving 351 cities and towns across



From top: Food Bank of Western Massachusetts; Merrimack Valley Food Bank; Greater Boston Food Bank; Worcester County Food Bank

the commonwealth. While designed to feed people, it’s also helping others along the way to sustain their families, businesses and communities.”

Last year MEFAP funding went to 42 core food vendors, including two offering local seafood, and its Massachusetts Grown initiative supported 21 farms providing fresh local produce regionally during the growing season.

“MEFAP represents 34% of our total inventory, or half a million pounds per month,” says Andrew Morehouse, executive director of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts in Chicopee. “Twenty percent, or 100,000 pounds per month, is fresh produce and dairy from western Massachusetts



farmers through the program.”

“Distributing millions of pounds of healthy food helps, but it takes more than donated food to end hunger,” adds Jean McMurray, CEO of Worcester County Food Bank in Shrewsbury. “Food insecure families could be any of us, as well as our neighbors who live next door, around the corner and across town. They are people of all backgrounds and life experiences.”

## Find more online

Those in need of food or vendors/growers interested in providing food may contact The Food Bank Coalition of Massachusetts via The Greater Boston Food Bank at [gbfb.org](http://gbfb.org).