

Kernels

Gratitude Edition 2024





Working Collectively Toward Community Well-Being

Welcome to the new year, and all the hope and inspiration it brings. In almost 15 years of leading the Vermont Foodbank I have never been so challenged by the work, or so inspired by the communities we support and collaborate with.

As the annual report shows, your Foodbank is strong—culturally, operationally, and financially. After four years of dramatic change, I’m starting to see a “new normal” emerge here in Vermont: one where the next generation is engaged in running food shelves and meal sites across the state, where food is seen as one strand in a web of resources that all humans need to thrive, and where we work collectively to achieve community-wide prosperity.

In this issue of *Kernels*, our annual Gratitude Report, we’re lifting up a few of the many, many people (including you!) who engage in the collective work of nourishing our

communities today and striving for a Vermont where hunger is gone for good.

Here at the Foodbank, we’re grateful to friends and neighbors for sharing gifts of all kinds—time, experience, food, funds, and partnership, just to name a few—all in the spirit of communal well-being. Thank you for being on this long and rewarding journey with the rest of your Vermont Foodbank family. Your support fuels our optimism.

John Sayles
CEO

The Gift of TIME

Fred volunteers at Vermont Foodbank’s free, fresh produce distributions. He recently completed his statewide tour of volunteering at all 21 fresh produce distribution locations!



This past year, **696 volunteers** dedicated **7,192 hours** to help get nourishing food to neighbors—the equivalent of **3.5 full-time staff members**.

“Initially, I volunteered at the Barre [fresh produce distribution], given it was a convenient walk over to the location, and I had been involved in meal delivery to displaced folks in area motels. It got me out of the house during COVID. I can trace food deliveries back to my upbringing when my mother led the city Meals on Wheels program in Syracuse.

“I’m grateful that I can contribute to my neighbors’ needs and health, broadly across the state, and it doesn’t take more than a couple of hours a month—if you volunteer at just one location—to do it.”

~Fred

FROM THE FOODBANK TO NEIGHBORS HOW IT ALL WORKS

Vermont Foodbank procures food from various sources such as:



donations from local farms, grocery stores, and individuals,



purchases from Vermont producers, food vendors, and Feeding America, and



participation in federal food programs that the Foodbank administers.





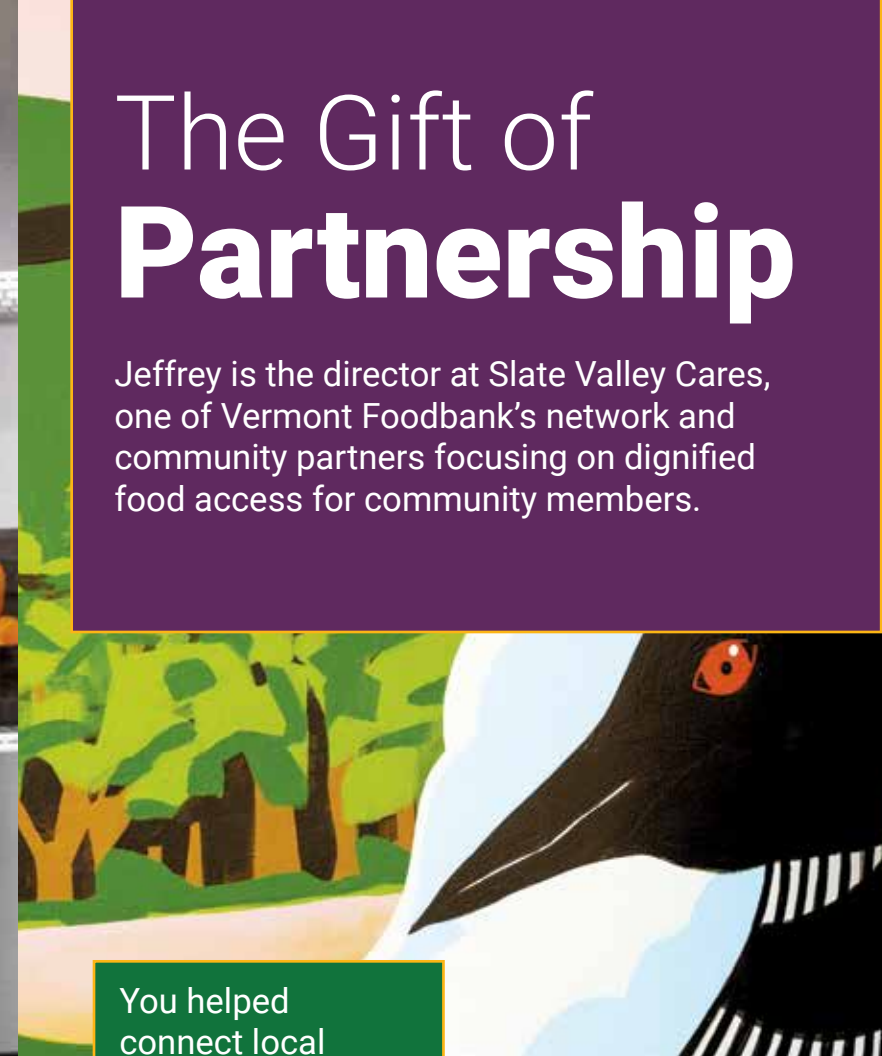
The Gift of Expertise

Elysia is a community consultant for Vermont Foodbank. She brings her expertise and experience to help improve services and increase access to food for folks in her community.

Last year, your support helped make **270 free, fresh produce events** possible, serving a total of **90,278 households**.

“**Not only do I have lived experience with food insecurities, I feel that every person should have access to nutritious food without any hassle.** It is a basic survival necessity for humans and should not have to be earned. With a family of seven, soon to be eight, I want to be able to offer my family food that is going to nourish them, and I feel that most parents share that same desire.

“I enjoy showing my gratitude rather than speaking of it, normally by returning a favor within my own abilities.”
~ Elysia



The Gift of Partnership

Jeffrey is the director at Slate Valley Cares, one of Vermont Foodbank’s network and community partners focusing on dignified food access for community members.

You helped connect local communities with fresh food and pantry staples through support of **353 community partners and food access sites** across Vermont.

“This past year, our organization underwent significant changes. We not only renamed ourselves but also redefined our work.... We introduced the term ‘Right to Food Center’ to capture this change. Our community embraced these changes with pride, finding a sense of belonging. **Now, people shop here with dignity, feeling respected and heard.**

“I am truly grateful for the chance to serve my community in a very special way. Thanks to my colleague, dedicated volunteers, and board members, this work thrives. Our community members, in their vulnerable moments, trust us for support, a gift we deeply value.”
~ Jeffrey

Food is sorted, packed, and stored at our three distribution centers, then delivered statewide.



Food is delivered to a network of community partners that then distribute it to neighbors. These partners include:



- hospitals, health care centers, housing sites,
- food shelves, meal sites,
- schools, and community centers.



And food is shared directly with neighbors at distributions hosted by the Foodbank and partner sites.



Neighbors received about **6.2 million pounds** of fresh food last year.

Neighbors are able to eat and enjoy nourishing food that supports the well-being of themselves and their loved ones.



Last year, we distributed more than **12.6 million pounds** of food to neighbors.





The Gift of Support

Sara is a monthly donor to Vermont Foodbank and a regular volunteer at her local food shelf and shelter. Her consistent support helps provide reliable food and services that neighbors can count on.

Last year, 17,827 caring food, fund, and product donors—like you and Sara—helped make sure nourishing food and services were available when Vermont neighbors needed it.

“Although I’ve known for a long time that many people in Vermont struggle to feed themselves and their families, it was when I volunteered at a local homeless shelter and food pantry that I came face-to-face with that reality. It was a deeply unsettling experience for me. The Vermont Foodbank is a critical partner in the effort to address the complex, outrageous fact that so many people simply don’t have enough to eat.

“I am grateful to live in a community where there is a fundamental commitment to the well-being of everyone. It’s a commitment that needs to be protected and sustained both politically and personally.”

~ Sara

Getting food into neighbors’ hands is only possible because of help from **you**.

Thank you for helping make sure everyone in Vermont has the food we all need to thrive.

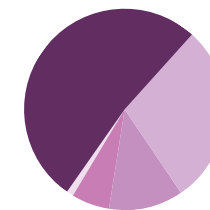
2023 Annual Report

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FY23

Revenue

Food contributions	\$17,932,261
Financial contributions.....	\$9,945,295
Grants	\$4,280,282
In-kind contributions	\$37,334
Sales of purchased food.....	\$2,031,603
Membership fees	\$17,000
Other income/net gain on investments/loss-disposal of assets	\$516,702
TOTAL REVENUE.....	\$34,760,477

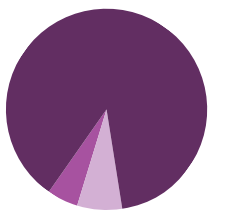
Food contributions 52%
Financial contributions 29%
Grants 12%
Sales of purchased foods 6%
Other income 1%
In-kind contributions <1%
Membership fees <1%



Expenses

Food distribution.....	\$32,859,936
Management and general	\$1,666,251
Fundraising expenses.....	\$2,655,369
TOTAL EXPENSES.....	\$37,181,556
Change in net assets.....	<u>\$(2,421,079)</u>
Net assets beginning of year	\$35,895,255
NET ASSETS end of year.....	\$33,474,176

Food distribution 88%
Fundraising expenses 7%
Management & General 5%



CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FY23

Assets

Cash and marketable securities	\$20,532,580
Receivables	\$1,437,571
Prepaid expenses.....	\$86,467
Inventory	\$2,562,413
Property and equipment, net and right-of-use asset.....	<u>\$11,127,345</u>
TOTAL ASSETS.....	\$35,746,376

Liabilities

Accounts payable	\$604,968
Accrued expenses.....	\$404,772
Lease liability.....	<u>\$1,262,460</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$2,272,200

Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions

Undesignated	\$17,510,274
Property and equipment	\$9,864,885
Board designated.....	<u>\$5,300,000</u>

TOTAL NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS..... **\$32,675,159**

With donor restrictions

\$799,017

TOTAL NET ASSETS **\$33,474,176**

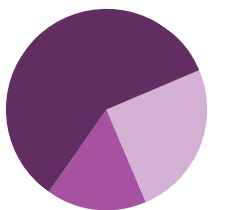
TOTAL LIABILITIES

AND NET ASSETS **\$35,746,376**

Food Sources in Pounds

Donated product.....	7,434,078
Federal assistance programs	1,971,578
Food purchase	3,207,060
TOTAL	12,612,716

Donated product 59%
Food purchase 25%
Federal assistance programs 16%



2023 Board of Directors

Mitzi Johnson, Board Chair	Bruce Nash, MD
Amy Davenport	Dr. Jacob Park
Will Eberle	Melissa Roberge
Mike Hourigan	Liz Ruffa
Penrose Jackson, Vice Chair	Martha Trombley Oakes

The mission of Vermont Foodbank is to gather and share quality food and nurture partnerships so that no one in Vermont will go hungry.



Update on Hunger and Food Access in Vermont

The start of a new year offers us a chance to reflect, as well as look to the future. This past year was a difficult one for many people living in Vermont, especially neighbors experiencing hunger and poverty.

Many people were already reeling from high inflation, on top of economic upheaval from COVID-19, when this past spring the need for food became starker. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as SNAP, 3SquaresVT, or “food stamps”) Emergency Allotments ended in April 2023, reducing food benefits by an average of \$500 per month for 40,000 Vermont households. Food shelves and meal sites saw a marked increase in visits.

Then, catastrophic flooding over the summer placed additional strain on neighbors—adding pressure on the charitable and emergency food network.

In response, Vermont Foodbank has been providing additional food and funds to our network and partners. In the month following the initial flooding, we distributed 44% more food than the prior month.

We know there is a long tail to disaster recovery and many people will need help for months, maybe years, to come.

This level of need is beyond what our network of community organizations was built to address.

We’re continuing the work of making sure folks have nourishing food. But as we look to the future, we know we can’t do it alone. **To ensure everyone in Vermont has enough to eat today and long-term, we need help—help from the state and federal government and community members like you.**

Here are a few ways you can support your community and make sure that nourishing food is available to neighbors statewide:

- **Advocate** for policies that can end hunger for good. Sign up for advocacy alerts at vtfoodbank.org/advocacy.
- **Volunteer** with Vermont Foodbank or your local food shelf or meal site. You can find a list on our website at vtfoodbank.org.
- **Donate** to Vermont Foodbank or your local food shelf or meal site. And, if you’re able, consider providing steady, reliable support to neighbors experiencing hunger by becoming a monthly donor.

Most importantly, if you find yourself in need of help accessing food for yourself and your loved ones, please be in touch. Our contact information is below, and our website is available in eight languages common to Vermont.