

FOOD SECURITY IN WORCESTER COUNTY

This year, Greater Worcester Community Foundation expanded its investment in food security through direct grants, long-term funding and regional systems change.

Worcester County Food Bank Fund to End Hunger

Established in 2011 by Worcester County Food Bank, the Fund to End Hunger supports nonprofit organizations working toward a hunger-free Worcester County. This year, the Fund received **a record number of applications** as food-serving organizations faced growing demand.

With support from an anonymous gift made through Greater Worcester Community Foundation, the Fund doubled in size this year, supporting food pantries, meal programs, community fridges, gardens and nutrition initiatives across Worcester County.

RECENT INVESTMENTS

$229,000
awarded

42
organizations supported

"The volume of applications underscores the reality that many households continue to struggle with the rising costs of food, housing and other necessities."

50th Anniversary Impact Grants

Through a 50th Anniversary Impact Grant, the Foundation is helping the United Way of North Central Massachusetts develop a regional food transportation network.

The initiative will improve how food moves between the Worcester County Food Bank and the 23 food pantries in North County that receive food distribution from the Food Bank, creating a stronger system to address food insecurity across the region.

$250,000
to the United Way of North Central Massachusetts

WHY IT MATTERS

In Worcester County...

83,300
residents are living in poverty

32%
households are housing cost burdened

29,000
households do not have access to a vehicle

131,608
residents use SNAP each month

Data from Worcester County Insights
worcestercountyinsights.org

Food security takes many forms



IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Food pantries, meal programs and community fridges help address residents' immediate food needs while ensuring families can access nutritious food close to home.

Thanks to the **Fund to End Hunger**'s one-time expansion this year, **El Buen Samaritano** received $20,000, the largest grant in the Fund to End Hunger's history. The grant supports its new Lincoln Street Food Pantry, helping expand food access in a neighborhood facing rising costs and limited grocery options.

The Foundation's signature **Community Grants** program also provides funding for food security through the Basic Needs focus area. In 2025, the program awarded $496,000 to 34 projects and organizations working to address basic needs.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Nonprofits addressing food security need support to be sustainable, such as funding for equipment and storage.

This year, the **Fund to End Hunger** supported capital improvements to **Community Harvest Project** to replace a tractor and purchase a new loader for its Volunteer Farming Program in Harvard, and invested in an improved waiting area and expanded shelving at the **Grafton Food Bank**.

With support from the Fund's expanded funding this year, the **Boys & Girls Clubs** of **Worcester** and **Webster-Dudley** and the **Quinsigamond Village Community Center** will receive multi-year grants to sustain their food programs, storage, and distribution operations.



LONG-TERM SYSTEMS

Food security depends on more than food availability. Transportation systems help ensure food reaches the people and communities that need it most.

In 2022, the Foundation distributed $2 million from a federal **Community Development Block Grant** to 16 nonprofits, helping them acquire supplies, equipment and trucks to support hunger relief work.

This year, the Foundation provided a $250,000 grant to the **United Way of North Central Massachusetts,** which is developing a North County Regional Food Transportation System to strengthen food distribution and improve access across the region.

Additional resources

Insights Insider: SNAP Benefits

This Insights Insider explores the use of SNAP benefits in Worcester County. Using data from Worcester County Insights, the Worcester Regional Research Bureau analyzed SNAP usage, demographics, and the impacts new eligibility rules and funding cuts could have on the program.



FoodHelpWorcester.org

A project of the Worcester County Food Bank, FoodHelpWorcester.org is an excellent resource for food security support in Worcester and the surrounding areas.

FoodHelpWorcester.org

Contact

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