



## Connecticut Foodshare: About Us

Connecticut Foodshare is a statewide food bank. We provide food and support to a partner network that serves neighbors experiencing food insecurity all across the state. Our partner network includes over **460 agency partners** that run and operate their own food assistance programs, including food pantries, community kitchens and emergency shelters. Additionally, Connecticut Foodshare runs direct programming in communities across the state to help fill in gaps through **111 Mobile Pantry host sites** and **65 Senior Food Box (CSFP) host sites**.

### How Food Gets from Connecticut Foodshare to Neighbors in Connecticut

Most food gets to neighbors through two ways: through **agency partners** and through **mobile pantry** distributions.

#### **Agency Partners**

*Food pantries, community kitchens, and emergency shelters run and operated by local organizations*

1. Connecticut Foodshare receives food from donors to our warehouse.
2. Food is inventoried by our warehouse team and added to our online agency shopping portal.
3. Agency partners place orders online.
4. Our warehouse team picks each order and stages it for agency partner pick-up or delivery.
5. Agency partners come to our location to pick up their order at a designated time, or their order is delivered at a designated time. Additionally, agency partners can access local food donations directly from select grocery stores through our Retail Rescue Program.
6. Agency partners receive food.
7. Agency partners distribute food to neighbors directly.



## **Connecticut Foodshare Mobile Pantry Program**

*A community program run by Connecticut Foodshare, where we bring our Mobile Pantry trucks and food to host sites to help fill in gaps.*

1. Connecticut Foodshare receives food from donors to our warehouse.
2. Fresh food that needs to get to neighbors quickly is transferred to our sortation room.
3. Volunteers sort food. General rule: if you wouldn't eat it, discard it. Discarded food goes to pig farmers or a bio-fuel facility.
4. Good food is refrigerated for 1-3 days before going out on a mobile pantry to one of our 110+ sites. Each Mobile Pantry site is visited on a set schedule. For dates and times of Mobile Pantry locations, neighbors can use this [map](#) or text FOODSHARE to 85511 and follow the prompts.
5. Neighbors get food from mobile pantry sites, no questions asked.



## Frequently Asked Questions about Connecticut Foodshare

November 2025

### What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity is defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. This can be a temporary situation for a household or can last a long time. Food insecurity is one way we can measure how many people cannot afford food. According to estimates from Feeding America, more than 516,000 (1 in 7) Connecticut residents struggle with hunger; more than 122,000 (1 in 6) children are food insecure. This reflects a 40% increase in food insecurity since 2020, and the need continues to rise.

Food insecurity exists in every town and city in Connecticut, affecting people from all walks of life. Millions of people in America are just one job loss, missed paycheck, or medical emergency away from hunger. But hunger does not affect everyone equally - some groups like children, seniors, and Black, Indigenous, and other people of color face hunger at much higher rates. For more information and Connecticut food insecurity data, visit [Hunger in CT | Connecticut Foodshare](#).

### What is Connecticut Foodshare's mission?

To deliver an informed and equitable response to hunger by mobilizing community partners, volunteers, and supporters with an eye towards our vision of a thriving community free of hunger.

### Who are the partners in Connecticut Foodshare's network?

Connecticut Foodshare's agency partner network consists primarily of food pantries, community kitchens, and emergency shelters.

### What does it mean when you say, "we center our neighbors in all our work?"

We support our programs in providing neighbors with a safe, reliable, accessible, welcoming, and dignified experience when seeking food assistance. We engage neighbors who have lived experience with hunger so that they participate in shaping our work in the community.

### How do neighbors access food from Connecticut Foodshare?

Neighbors can access food at their local food pantry, community meal center, or at one of Connecticut Foodshare's Mobile Pantry sites. Connecticut Foodshare **DOES NOT**



distribute food to individuals from our warehouses. Individuals are encouraged to visit the [Get Help](#) section of Connecticut Foodshare's website to find food assistance near them.

### **How is Connecticut Foodshare responding to the federal government shutdown?**

Connecticut Foodshare has taken emergency action to ensure our community has access to the food it needs during the federal government shutdown. In October, Connecticut Foodshare's Board of Directors authorized \$1 million from its strategic reserves to support this emergency response. These funds supported additional food distributions for affected federal employees (including TSA workers at Bradley and Tweed Airports, and federal contractors in New London County) as well as increased food for our network of over 600 agency partners and programs that provide food across the state. Additionally, with \$3 million in emergency funding from the State of Connecticut, Connecticut Foodshare purchased additional food to support our statewide partner network.

### **How did the \$3M in funding from the State of Connecticut help Connecticut Foodshare during the SNAP crisis?**

SNAP is our nation's first line of defense against hunger. For every meal provided by a food bank, SNAP provides 9. Food banks cannot fill this entire gap, but with generous support from the State of Connecticut and our community, we are doing all we can to bolster the amount of food available through our statewide partner network to help neighbors through this crisis.

Connecticut Foodshare is grateful to the State of Connecticut for the \$3 million in emergency funding that supported additional food purchases and distribution during the first two weeks of November, when SNAP benefits were disrupted due to the federal government shutdown. This funding helped bolster the food supply for the entire Connecticut Foodshare partner network, including 111 Connecticut Foodshare Mobile Pantry sites, 468 agency partners, and the Gemma Moran Food Center serving programs in Southeastern Connecticut. Allocations to agency partners were based on program size, using monthly service data reported to Connecticut Foodshare.

### **How long will it take for the food purchased with the extra funding to get to neighbors?**

Connecticut Foodshare is purchasing food using the \$1 million released from its capital reserves in early October and the \$3 million in emergency funding from the state released during the last week of October and first week of November. There is a two-week lead time from the purchase of food to receiving that food at our warehouse. From there, food is loaded onto our Mobile Pantries and placed online for food pantries to order.



## Where does food come from?

Connecticut Foodshare secures food from several different sources. This includes food that is donated, food that is made available through the state and federal government, and food that is purchased. The following figures reflect the Fiscal Year 2024, from July 2023 to June 2024.

**Donated Food:** Most of the food that Connecticut Foodshare distributes is donated (63%). Our Food Sourcing Team works with local food distributors and manufacturers to secure donations of excess food items that will not be sent to retailers for a variety of reasons. This food is picked up by our fleet of trucks and brought back to our warehouse or delivered to us by the donor. We are grateful to partner with over **400 food donors**, from small farms to large retailers like Stop & Shop, Big Y, and many others. Last year, more than 36.6 million pounds of 47 million pounds we received were donated.

**Government Food:** About one-third of the food that Connecticut Foodshare distributes comes through federal and state government programs (31%). **Most (88%) of the government food comes from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) – a federal program that provides food to Connecticut households with incomes at or below 300% of the federal poverty level.** TEFAP is a federal program. In Connecticut, the Department of Social Services (DSS) contracts with Connecticut Foodshare to administer TEFAP. Connecticut Foodshare distributes TEFAP to eligible food assistance programs that directly serve the public, including agency partners that run food pantries, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters. The USDA purchases nutritious food from U.S. growers and producers, and food banks are allocated a set number of credits to place orders for this TEFAP food. Additionally, **6% of government food is for the federal Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), a federal program that supplies a monthly box of food to seniors with low incomes.** CSFP is a federally funded program that works to improve the health of low-income seniors (at least 60 years of age) by supplementing their diets with nutritious food. Connecticut Foodshare distributes nearly 3,000 boxes each month through 65 sites. Each participant receives one box with a variety of non-perishable foods and one pound of cheese per month. Connecticut Foodshare collaborates with local community partners to distribute the food and manage the individual application process. **4% of government funded food comes from the Connecticut Nutrition Assistance Program (CT-NAP), which is money from the state to buy food to distribute to agency partners at no cost. 2% is from the federal Local Food Purchasing Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA).** However, this funding was eliminated by the Federal government in early 2025.



**Purchased Food:** About 6% of the food Connecticut Foodshare distributes is purchased for our Grocery Purchasing Program (GPP), which provides food we purchase to agency partners at prices at or below wholesale. Our network team collects feedback from agency partners to find out the top items they're looking for, and we base our purchases on that feedback. We purchase by the tractor trailer load, often direct from manufacturers, so we're able to purchase at a very low cost and we pass that savings through to the agency partners **at no markup**. With this program, we also can bring in more of those culturally connected food and high-demand items that aren't typically available in donated food.

### **What is Retail Rescue?**

Outside of the donated food we receive at our warehouse, we also have a team that builds relationships with individual retail grocers that enable us to “rescue” food that retailers pull from shelves as they near the end of their saleable (“best by”) dates. That would otherwise go to waste that instead goes directly to our agency partners. Nearly **14 million pounds** of food across every category was rescued last year, and a majority goes from stores directly to our agency partners so they can get it quickly out to the community. Local volunteers are integral in this process to maintain grocer relationships and transport the donated product.

### **How does TEFAP work?**

If a food pantry distributes TEFAP, it screens all visiting neighbors for eligibility at intake. Individuals do not need to apply for TEFAP food. Eligibility for TEFAP at a food pantry is determined based on verbal self-attestation of income within range and following, with no proof required: name, town of residence, number in household, if they reside in CT, and if they meet TEFAP income requirements. If a soup kitchen or emergency shelter prepares meals with TEFAP, there is not a means test; individuals receiving prepared meals at an emergency shelter or soup kitchen are automatically considered TEFAP eligible.

### **How has TEFAP been impacted recently?**

The federal government has cancelled 36 loads of TEFAP food for Connecticut Foodshare. This is equivalent to roughly 1.4 million pounds of food valued at \$1.7 million. The food was expected to arrive at Connecticut Foodshare primarily between May and August 2025 and included milk, fish, chicken, pork, and turkey deli meat among other items.



During the government shutdown, food banks cannot place orders for TEFAP food which could have long-term negative impacts on food supply. TEFAP food is typically ordered months in advance, so food banks will face potential shortages in the coming months.

### **What is CSFP?**

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program is a federally funded program that works to improve the health of low-income seniors (at least 60 years of age) by supplementing their diets with nutritious food. We distribute nearly 3,000 boxes each month through 65 sites. Each participant receives one box with a variety of non-perishable foods and one pound of cheese per month. Connecticut Foodshare collaborates with local community partners to distribute the food and manage the individual application process.

### **Do agencies get all their food from you?**

While most agency partners source the majority of the food they distribute from Connecticut Foodshare, we cannot supply every program with 100% of their food. They have other sources like food drives, food purchased with donations, or other food sourced from other nonprofits that supply food.

### **Does Connecticut Foodshare choose how much food agency partners receive?**

No. Each agency partner can choose the amount of food they order from Connecticut Foodshare's online ordering platform depending on the amount of product available and what their program needs. When an agency places a food order, they consider how many neighbors they serve, what their program needs, and their storage capacity. Product is subject to supply and demand. With growing demand and a limited food supply, agencies are not always able to order all of the types of items they want or in the quantities they want.

### **Does Connecticut Foodshare “own” the agency partners in their network?**

No. Each agency partner is its own organization with its own leadership. Agency partners enter into a formal agreement with Connecticut Foodshare and gain access to food, guidance, and other support to advance our shared mission of alleviating hunger. Connecticut Foodshare's partnership guidelines uphold standards set by Feeding America, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for donated product, the Connecticut Department of Social Services, and our organization to support safe, reliable, dignified, and accessible food assistance.

### **Does Connecticut Foodshare support food pantries everywhere in Connecticut?**

Connecticut Foodshare serves food pantries in every county in Connecticut, ranging from our major cities, suburbs and rural communities. In Southeastern Connecticut, we



distribute food to local agencies through the Gemma Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, a regional food bank that supports 50 agency partners and organizes mobile pantries across southeastern Connecticut.

### **What are the costs involved in partnering with Connecticut Foodshare?**

Connecticut Foodshare may apply fees for certain products or services to help offset some of the costs involved in handling and distributing food to agency partners, following guidance from Feeding America and government contract requirements on allowable fees. This includes a “shared maintenance fee” of up to \$0.19 per pound on donated food and a delivery charge for partners participating in the delivery program. **Thanks to generous support from the community, Connecticut Foodshare has waived these fees through June 30, 2026.** Additionally, through the Grocery Purchasing Program, Connecticut Foodshare leverages our bulk purchasing power to access wholesale pricing to purchase select items in bulk and makes those products available to agency partners at 100% of our cost with no mark-up. This bulk purchasing program allows agency partners to access high-demand items at prices that are much lower than what they could purchase on their own.

### **How is Connecticut Foodshare funded?**

More than half of Connecticut Foodshare’s financial donations come from individuals, businesses, and philanthropic foundations. State and Federal government allocations are generally represented in food commodities or funds directed to specific food purchase programs and represent less than 30% of our total donations in a given year.

### **How can I help support food insecure neighbors in Connecticut?**

If you want to support food insecure neighbors in Connecticut, consider donating money to Connecticut Foodshare, donating physical items or money to your local food pantry, or organizing a virtual food drive in partnership with Connecticut Foodshare. Visit [ctfoodshare.org/ways-to-give](http://ctfoodshare.org/ways-to-give) to learn how to support Connecticut Foodshare. Visit [211](http://211.org) to find a local pantry to support.

### **Can I drop food donations off directly at Connecticut Foodshare?**

Yes, but we encourage individuals to make donations of products directly to their local food pantries. The best way to support Connecticut Foodshare is to contribute financially. We are able to leverage our scale and buying power to purchase food at far lower cost than individual programs.

### **Connecticut Foodshare is a Feeding America member food bank. What does that mean?**



Feeding America is the largest nonprofit in the US working to end hunger in the nation. They support a network of 200 food banks across the country, much like Connecticut Foodshare supports agency partners in Connecticut. Feeding America helps facilitate relationships with financial donors and corporate donors at the national level, like Stop & Shop, ShopRite, and Walmart while also advocating for anti-hunger policies at the national level.

**Who do major retailers like Stop & Shop, Walmart, and others donate food only to Connecticut Foodshare and its partners?**

Feeding America facilitates relationships with major food donors with a national presence like Walmart, Stop & Shop, Shop Rite, and others to donate to its member food banks as part of membership benefits. While these companies do not exclusively donate to Feeding America member food banks, they provide a majority of their food assistance donations to the Feeding America Network.

**Why do you sever relationships with food pantries?**

Each agency partner enters into a formal agreement with Connecticut Foodshare that sets the foundation for our work together to support programming that is safe, dignified and accessible. The requirements in our Agreement uphold the standards set by Feeding America and the rules of the Federal Internal Revenue Services for appropriate handling of donated food. If an agency partner violates their agreement, Connecticut Foodshare will either temporarily suspend partnership while the issue is corrected or terminate partnership, depending on the severity of the issue. In most cases where there is a compliance issue, Connecticut Foodshare is able to work with the agency partner to resolve the issue without terminating partnership.

**What is the difference between a food bank and a food pantry?**

A food bank collects, stores, and then distributes donated food to local food assistance programs (pantries, community kitchens, shelters). Food pantries (and other assistance programs) receive food from food banks and then distribute it directly to neighbors in need. Pantries and other community programs do not operate at the scale that permits them to store large amounts of food at their sites for distribution. Food banks have the scale to efficiently source, store, and redistribute food to a network of local programs providing direct service to neighbors in need.

**How do you interact with other food banks in the state?**

Connecticut Foodshare is the largest and only Feeding America affiliated food bank in the state. We maintain relationships with other food banks in the state. The Gemma Moran United Way/Labor Food Center is a regional distribution partner serving agency



partners in Southeastern Connecticut through food provided to them by Connecticut Foodshare. We do not distribute to other food banks in the state but encourage agency partners to receive food from these additional sources. We cannot provide all of the food for each agency partner and are grateful there are other sources of food to support community-based food assistance programs in Connecticut.

### **How does Connecticut Foodshare distribute Thanksgiving food?**

Connecticut Foodshare is only able to provide Thanksgiving food to our existing network of partner food pantries and meal programs that work with us year-round under formal operating agreements. Our anticipated Thanksgiving foods are allocated months in advance to the existing partner network and we unfortunately do not have turkeys available to distribute to organizations outside of this existing network. Thanksgiving allocations are based on the amount of Thanksgiving product Connecticut Foodshare expects to have available, and on the monthly reports for numbers served that your program provided for the most recent fiscal year (July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025). Our goal is to divide our anticipated Thanksgiving donations proportionally across the network. Neighbors looking for Thanksgiving meals should contact their local pantry to learn about their sign-up process.