

Maine Food Security Project



Lead Organization: Good Shepherd Food-Bank

Community Need: Over 150,000 people in Maine face the risk of a severe hunger crisis this winter. Children, adults, the elderly – people of all ages and backgrounds. The people at risk include those who today barely scrape by on little or no income; people on fixed incomes; and families unexpectedly thrown into dire economic circumstances.

People are confronting the prospect of record high food and heating bills, job losses and other major challenges to family budgets that are already stretched to their limits. However, no one should ever have to decide between “heating or eating.” And while this winter presents the prospects of a genuine crisis situation for the state, by most predictions high energy and food costs are likely to be a fact of life for Maine families for years to come.

Good Shepherd Food-Bank is Maine’s largest hunger relief organization. We distribute donated and purchased food to soup kitchens, food pantries and other partnering food relief efforts from Kittery to Fort Kent. Annually, over 10 million pounds of food pass through our warehouse operations to our charitable partners statewide, helping to feed 70,000 individuals each month. One dollar to Good Shepherd is multiplied into \$12.50 worth of food for Maine’s hungry.

Project Activities: The Maine Food Security Project represents Good Shepherd Food-Bank’s efforts on several fronts to increase our capacities and the security of our food distribution operations as we prepare for the upcoming winter and the new energy-food realities facing the needy in Maine.

In the immediate term, the project consists of two major components:

1. Emergency Generator Acquisition Project:

The loss of power at the Good Shepherd Food-Bank warehouse in Auburn would be a catastrophic blow to the more than 620 partnering food pantries, soup kitchens, and other food relief programs statewide that depend on us. This vulnerability has become even more critical in face of the anticipated increases in food needs on the part of low-income families and individuals this winter.

One of our top priorities this year is to fund the purchase of an emergency back-up generator that will keep the power on at our main warehouse, a 53,000 sq. ft. facility in Auburn. The freezer at this facility holds 12 trailer truckloads of frozen foods and the cooler holds over 5 truckloads of fresh produce and dairy products. The potential loss of tens of thousands of pounds of food targeted for feeding needy families would represent an unthinkable crisis for food relief efforts this coming winter.

A generator needed to serve as an emergency back-up system for the Auburn warehouse will cost between \$70,000 and \$100,000.

2. Agency Matching Funds Project:

Partnering agencies to the Good Shepherd Food Bank pay a shared maintenance fee for the food supplies they obtain through our warehouses, currently at \$.16/lb. In order to meet anticipated increases in the demand for food for needy families this coming winter, Good Shepherd Food Bank regards the expansion of its Agency Matching Funds grant programs as high priority.

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Under this proven program, GSFB’s partnering food pantries, soup kitchens and other food relief efforts are matched on a 1:1 basis with funds from GSFB, and then further matched with additional grant funds designated for this program. A food pantry in Portland might raise \$5,000 to be placed in their account at GSFB, which is matched 1:1 by GSFB. Then, depending on how much is raised in matching grant funds, the original \$5,000 can be further matched through this designated fund, greatly increasing the food pantry’s purchasing power. Originally established in 2002 by a grant from Sandy River Charitable Foundation, this program has proven to be an invaluable resource and fundraising tool for our partner agencies.

Outcomes / Impact: In preparation for the coming winter and for the long term, the impact of the Maine Food Security Project will be: 1) to preserve the Good Shepherd Food-Bank’s power supply in the event that an emergency energy situation threatens to shut down our vital food storage and distribution systems; and 2) to increase Good Shepherd Food-Bank’s capacity, and the capacities of the food relief agencies depending on us, in order to ensure that no needy Maine family is faced with “heat or eat” decisions.

Total Project Budget: The budget for these two components of are as follows:

- 1) Emergency Generator Acquisition Project: \$70,000 - \$100,000
- 2) Agency Matching Funds Project: \$100,000 - \$150,000 (2-3 grants @ \$50,000). Taking into account the matching funds, a \$50,000 grant would generate a total of \$150,000 and help to underwrite the cost of providing 600,000 meals.

Funds Requested from the Philanthropic Sector: (See budgets and descriptions above.)

Ability to Target Funds: Funds for the Agency Matching Funds Project can be allocated to benefit particular partnering food pantries, soup kitchens and other food relief operations. Matching fund grants can be designated to benefit an individual partnering agency or group of agencies identified by community or region.

Accountability / Reporting: Good Shepherd Food-Bank manages a budget of \$2 million annually and successfully administers numerous grants each year. GSFB will directly administer and provide timely reporting on all grants received.

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