



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, January 19, 2023

CONTACT: Joanna Warner, JWarner@mdfoodbank.org
O: 443-297-5167

Patrick Severe, patrick@maroonpr.com
C: 667-678-0424

****Maryland Food Bank Hunger Brief****

New Year, Same Challenges as MFB Continues to Meet High Demand for Charitable Food

BALTIMORE – As 2023 begins, the Maryland Food Bank (MFB) continues to see the impact of inflation on its operations as well as Marylanders living both above and below the federal poverty level. From an organizational standpoint, MFB’s purchasing power has been cut by more than half going into the new year due to various economic pressures, most notably the rising cost of food.

“Pre-COVID, the buying power of every dollar donated to our organization could help provide up to three meals, but that has now dropped to one meal,” said Carmen Del Guercio, MFB’s CEO and president. “The dollars we’re getting today aren’t stretching as far as they once did, as the cost of our core food distribution business has gone up significantly. This not only decreases the amount of food we can purchase and distribute, but it also leaves us with fewer dollars to invest in innovative strategies that address hunger hotspots, defined as areas of especially high need, and other programmatic priorities.”

The food assistance MFB provides is more valuable to neighbors than ever, considering the substantial increases of food, housing, and utility costs everyday Marylanders are facing. Below are just a few of the latest data points MFB has been tracking related to the impact of inflation on neighbors in need, based on the food bank’s analysis of Jan. 5 U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey data:

- **Difficulty Paying Usual Household Expenses:** The percentage of Marylanders who are finding it difficult to pay for usual household expenses rose from 25% in Dec. 2021 to 30% in Dec. 2022, meaning **almost 1 in 3 Maryland households** report difficulties paying for usual expenses.
- **Food Affordability:** In Dec. 2022, **1 in 5 Maryland families** (20%) said their children were sometimes or often not eating enough because food was not affordable.
- **Food Insufficiency:** In Dec. 2022, **almost one in three Maryland families** with incomes below \$35,000 experienced food insufficiency (29%). Food insufficiency more than doubled for families with incomes of \$35-\$50,000 month-over-month from 6% in November to 15% in Dec. 2022.
- **Food Price Impact:** **93% of Maryland adults** reported levels of stress due to the increase of prices during the last 2 months.

With Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Emergency Allotments scheduled to expire in February 2023, especially vulnerable Marylanders will likely face even more challenges, as time limits on certain unemployed and underemployed adults return and college students SNAP eligibility revert to more restrictive rules. Given the ongoing rise in grocery prices, these losses will create significant hardships for hundreds of thousands of Marylanders who rely on the federal program and may lose on average \$82 a month in benefits.

About the Maryland Food Bank

The Maryland Food Bank is a nonprofit hunger-relief organization dedicated to feeding people, strengthening communities, and ending hunger for more Marylanders by partnering with local organizations from the western mountains to the Eastern Shore. The food bank’s statewide network of food assistance brings enough resources together to provide

more than 111,000 meals every day (over 40 million meals annually) to hungry children, seniors, veterans, and hard-working families, meeting the immediate needs of hungry Marylanders while simultaneously working to create pathways out of hunger. To learn more about the Maryland Food Bank, visit www.mdfoodbank.org.

###

A Member of **FEEDING
AMERICA**