



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 24, 2023

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

Nancy Yasharoff, Nancy@maroonpr.com
C: 202-531-0162

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

MFB Mobile Markets Deliver Hope to Maryland Communities

BALTIMORE – At a time when Maryland families are doing whatever they can to free up resources to pay basic household expenses like medicine, utilities, and rent, the Maryland Food Bank (MFB) is offering relief in the form of the [Mobile Market Program](#), the latest addition to its arsenal of hunger-fighting solutions.

Mobile Market vehicles act as a nimble “grocery store on wheels,” providing nutritious food and fresh produce to food-insecure communities statewide. MFB’s two 26-foot vehicles currently travel to targeted locations in regions the food bank serves, offering a no-cost food shopping experience in communities where residents have limited access to grocery stores and affordable, nutritious food.

“With continued inflation and costs rising for just about everything, we know that more than 1 in 3 Maryland adults are finding it difficult to pay their bills,” said MFB’s Vice President of Partner Logistics & Programs Jennifer Small. “Our Mobile Markets are offering relief to Marylanders who might not otherwise be able to access healthy food as they try to make their limited budgets stretch as far as possible.”

According to [a recent evaluation](#) of the Mobile Market Program conducted by MFB’s Strategy Group, the initiative’s effectiveness and its impact on neighbors in unserved and underserved areas has been significant. From Nov. 1, 2021 to Oct. 31, 2022, the two Mobile Markets served **11,266 households** across Maryland, or an estimated **29,742 Marylanders** in need, and generated a return on investment of **\$4.20 for every \$1 invested**.

Other highlights from the program analysis over the 12-month period include:

- The Mobile Markets distributed **401,497 pounds of food**, enough to provide **334,581 meals**.
- The Mobile Market team organized **152 distribution events** with the help of **62 community partners**.
- **75% of Mobile Market distribution events** reached vulnerable Marylanders living in remote areas in 16 of the 22 jurisdictions MFB serves.
- Mobile Markets’ in-kind contribution of free food translated to a market value of **\$1.3 million dollars**.
- Based on visitor statistics, a family **saved up to \$594 on groceries** by visiting a Mobile Market.
- The program leveraged volunteers to plan and host food distribution events at an **in-kind value of \$59,864**.
- It also contributed to the local economy through wages, employees’ tax contributions, and local food purchasing, valued at **\$183,874**.

The food bank’s first Mobile Market was unveiled in February 2020 and it was designed to allow neighbors to walk through the vehicle and select food items from easy-to-reach shelves. During the pandemic, however, the vehicle was used to transport MFB’s Back Up Boxes, 15-pound or 30-pound boxes of shelf-stable groceries. But this spring, the vehicle’s original intent of allowing individuals to walk through the aisle of the refrigerated truck and “shop” for a variety of food will again become standard.

“Earlier this month, we were thrilled to offer neighbors in Deal Island our first opportunity, since the onset of COVID, to select the foods they wanted for their families,” Small added. “From fresh produce to dry goods to frozen proteins, the Mobile Markets offer a maximum level of choice, which is critical in creating a positive, supportive experience for people in need of food assistance.”

(more)

In addition to food, the Mobile Market Program partners with a wide range of community allies to share critical resources with neighbors in need, referring them to specialized support services and offering wraparound services that help open paths to economic security. SNAP enrollment assistance and health screenings, for instance, are available through community partners and MFB programming at no cost to neighbors who visit a Mobile Market.

“We’re targeting communities that include hard-working households challenged by transportation and geography,” Small explained. “These families are living along the water and on farmland that are miles from any grocery store, let alone a food pantry. In some cases, these communities don’t even have access to running water or electricity.”


Since adding a second Mobile Market in March 2022, the vehicles travel across Maryland’s Eastern Shore as well as to counties in the northern, southern, and western region of the state, targeting communities that lack brick-and-mortar food assistance facilities and don’t have easy-to-access social services for residents.

“Our Mobile Markets have a proven track record of success. They’re working really well, which is why we’ll continue to invest in and expand the program this year with a third vehicle that will be equipped with a freezer and cooler to transport and distribute even more protein, meat, and dairy products,” Small said. “We’re excited to have all of our vehicles on the road more frequently, crisscrossing the state to deliver hope while feeding our neighbors in need.”

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