



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**

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## **PERSHING VA MEDICAL CENTER, FOOD BANK MOBILE FOOD PROGRAM FOR VETERANS TO BE EXPANDED**

Sikeston, MO (January 20, 2021) – The John J. Pershing VA Medical Center program that provides food for southeast Missouri veterans who are food insecure is being expanded thanks to a grant awarded to Southeast Missouri Food Bank.

The VA and the food bank have partnered to hold monthly mobile food distributions at the medical center for the past 18 months. The initial program was designed to serve about 50 veterans each month.

The new program will be expanded to serve 75 veterans each month. Each participant will receive a box with 35 to 40 pounds of fresh produce, lean protein and other foods.

“These veterans have made incredible sacrifices to protect the freedoms we enjoy,” said SEMO Food Bank Chief Executive Officer Joey Keys. “They should not have to face hunger in the country they have served. We’re excited about this opportunity to increase the number of veterans being served and improve the value of the food they will receive.”

“Expanding the capacity of our current pantry lets us help more members of the veteran community who face limited resources and may not be able to access food through traditional means,” said Ashley Aubuchon, health promotion disease prevention program manager for the VA Medical Center. “We also appreciate having more fresh produce because we know that when a veteran experiences food insecurity, they’re more likely have diet-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Access to healthy foods like these and education will go a long way in improving health outcomes for our veterans.”

The Veterans Healthy Food Surplus, is part of the Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program at the Pershing VA Medical Center. The distributions will be held at 9 a.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Poplar Bluff Armory, 1605 Cravens Road in Poplar Bluff. Vets interested in participating in the program should contact Ashley Aubuchon at 573-778-4386.

In order to receive food, veterans should bring an identification card and a box to carry the food. In addition to food, the SEMO Food Bank staff will be on-site occasionally to conduct Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid application assistance.

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### **About Southeast Missouri Food Bank**

Southeast Missouri Food Bank provides food to 140 food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters in 16 southeast Missouri counties. They include Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard, and Wayne counties. The food bank also provides mobile food distributions, monthly boxes of food to eligible seniors and weekend backpacks of food to more than 1,100 students in 32 school districts. The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build a healthy community. The Food Bank is affiliated with Feeding America, the nation's largest food bank network, and has received the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, attesting to its adherence to best practices. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or volunteering. Visit [SemoFoodBank.org](http://SemoFoodBank.org) for more information.