



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**

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### **SEMO FOOD BANK RECEIVES GRANT TO CONTINUE VETERAN HEALTHY FOOD PROGRAM**

Sikeston, MO (April 18, 2022) – Southeast Missouri Food Bank has been awarded a grant to continue the Veterans Healthy Food Surplus Program for the amount of \$46,500 through the Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust.

The food bank began providing boxes of healthy food to veterans in 2019 through a continuing partnership with the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff. The program expanded in 2021, serving 75 veterans each month. Eighty-eight percent of the 58 veterans in the program who completed both a pre- and post-survey reported improved health with access to the healthier foods. The funds from DAV Charitable Trust will allow this program to continue.

“We know that access to healthier food is important to overall health,” said Joey Keys, chief executive officer of the food bank. “Our veterans have already sacrificed so much. We hope that providing this nutritious food will help improve their well-being.”

The boxes are distributed through the VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff, with veterans receiving 35 to 40 pounds of food, including lean protein and fresh fruit and vegetables, each month.

“We are so excited to partner with SEMO Food Bank on the Veterans Healthy Food Surplus Program funded through the DAV Charitable Trust this year,” said Ashley Aubuchon, health promotion disease prevention program manager for the VA Medical Center. “We saw this past year the many health benefits veterans experienced from receiving more nutritious foods, like more fruits and vegetables, and we can’t wait to continue providing this service to those most deserving. Our mission to enhance veterans’ health and well-being by promoting nutritious food options that are not available or affordable is achieved through the partnership between the SEMO Food Bank, and we couldn’t be more grateful.”

The Veterans Healthy Food Surplus is part of the Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program at the Pershing VA Medical Center. For information on future food distributions, veterans may contact Aubuchon at 573-778-4386.

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### **About DAV**

DAV provides a lifetime of support for veterans of all generations and their families, in positive, life-changing ways. We ensure veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits they deserve, provide care and support during tough times, advocate for the veteran community on Capitol Hill, connect veterans with meaningful employment and so much more. We provide free, professional assistance to more than 1 million veterans every year to connect them with the healthcare, disability, employment, education and financial benefits they have earned through military service. The past 100 years, we have submitted more than 12 million claims on their behalf. If you need help or know someone who needs help, contact your local DAV office.

### **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 1,200 in 31 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.