



News Release

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SEMO Food Bank Awarded \$500,000 Grant to Address Food Insecurity Disparities in Pemiscot County

Sikeston, MO (Oct. 11, 2022) – Southeast Missouri Food Bank, in partnership with Faith Temple Complex, has received a \$500,000 grant from Feeding America’s Food Security Equity Impact Fund to address the root causes of hunger and food insecurity in Pemiscot County, which has some of the highest rates of hunger in the state.

“We are very honored to be one of the recipients of the Food Security Equity Impact Fund,” said Joey Keys, chief executive officer of SEMO Food Bank. “This can make a long-term, lasting impact in Pemiscot County, giving its residents sustainable access to healthy food. This effort goes hand-in-hand with our mission to build stronger communities through the power of food. We hope that working with our partners in the community, we can address some of the barriers faced by residents in Pemiscot County.”

With every award from the Food Security Equity Impact Fund, a minimum of 85% of awarded dollars were allocated to community partners, purposefully driving resources to organizations with historical barriers to access funding. SEMO Food Bank and Faith Temple Complex in Hayti will work together to advance and develop solutions to improve food insecurity in the community. Funding will support the development of a community garden and the construction of a pavilion for a local farmers market. Both projects aim to improve the communities’ access to healthy food.

“Faith Temple Complex is so excited for the equity impact opportunity,” said Cora Sanders of Faith Temple Complex. “This will allow us to support our community in determining the most effective solutions to improve food access within and for the community, in particular for black community members. Talk and planning is underway to get our black and brown farmers back in the game to produce food for this area. The impact can be limitless as we work to find solutions with those who are most affected.”

In Pemiscot County, 21 percent of the population is considered food insecure and nearly 30 percent of children live in homes that don’t have the resources to acquire sufficient food. The county is in the top 10 most food insecure in the state, and is No. 74 for food insecurity nationally.

Feeding America established the Food Security Equity Impact Fund in March 2021 and seeded it with a \$20 million donation from MacKenzie Scott. The fund was established to drive investments to communities of color which are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity. Southeast Missouri Food Bank was one of 25 food banks across the country to receive grants from the fund.

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About Southeast Missouri Food Bank

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build healthy communities. The food bank provides food to 143 charitable and disaster relief programs in Southeast Missouri. These member agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence and homeless shelters. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also holds regular mobile food distributions and provides monthly boxes of food to 5,350 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to 1,200 students in 30 school districts. The food bank's 16-county coverage area includes Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard and Wayne counties. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or scheduling a time to volunteer. Visit semofoodbank.org for more information.