



Many Rhode Islanders like Paul are seeking food.

“I Can’t Make Ends Meet Anymore”

A former Providence Journal employee laments cost of living

Paul* scans the food pantry at Tri-County CAP in North Providence for the fresh produce he likes to prepare with every meal. “My parents were both from Italy, so I always ate fresh food.”

Things look a little different for Paul these days, he shared when we met him at the pantry. When

he was married, he and his wife both had good jobs and did fine. Now, he lives by himself in senior housing.

Until recently, Paul worked at *The Providence Journal*. He had to cut down his shifts to qualify for senior housing and then he was laid off.

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He says he'll have severance to sustain him for a little while but will be on a fixed Social Security income after that.

“It’s just been hard, I’m sure you’ve noticed.”

Paul’s basic expenses caused him to turn to a food pantry for the first time in his life. He ticks off just a few of his monthly costs in our conversation:

- Rent: \$816
- Medical insurance: \$242
- Internet: \$60
- Car insurance: \$150

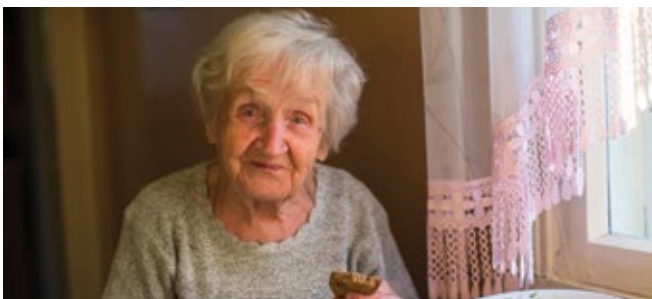
Not to mention maintenance. Paul recently had to put new tires on his car to the tune of \$900.

“And that’s just me,” Paul added. “I don’t even understand how some people can raise a family these days. I wish I didn’t have to come here, but at the end of the month, I’m very low on food.”

**Name and image changed to maintain anonymity*

Rhode Islanders Missed 42 Million Meals

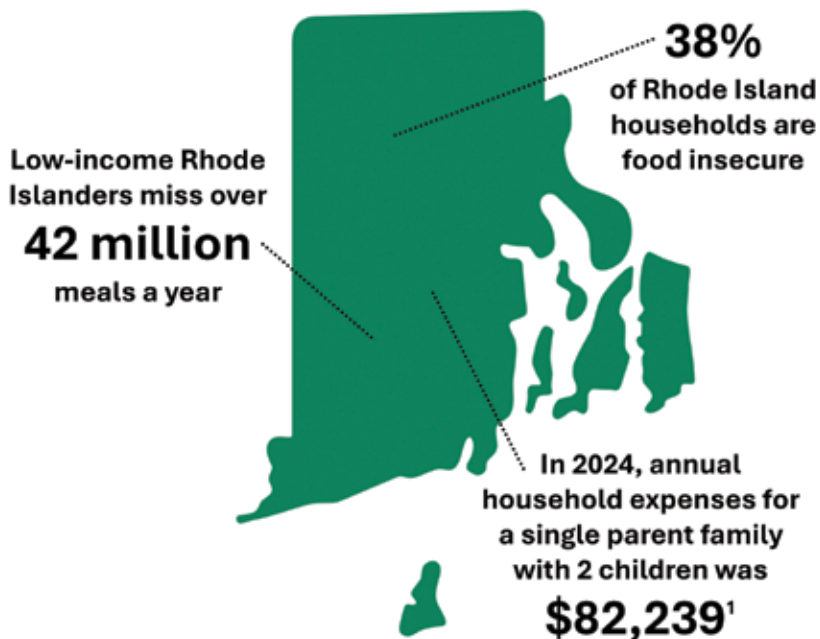
Food Bank serves as a lifeline for families in need of support



In November, the Food Bank released its *2024 Status Report on Hunger in Rhode Island*, which showed that for many of our neighbors, after paying for basic necessities like rent, utilities and gas, there isn’t enough money left to adequately provide food for a family.

The Food Bank works diligently to ease the burden of food insecurity in our community. Through our state-wide network of member

agencies, the Food Bank provides pantry staples, fresh produce, protein, dairy and culturally relevant food to an average of 84,400 people per month. Thank you for your continued support in making this possible.



To read the *2024 Status Report on Hunger*, use your phone’s camera to snap a picture of the QR code, or visit www.rifoodbank.org.

Economic Progress Institute, 2024 Standard of Need Report

“Our SNAP Benefits Run Out in the First Week.”

When SNAP isn't enough, this mom relies on the pantry at Jonnycake Center for Hope in Peace Dale.

Meg*, a resident of Westerly, visits the pantry at Jonnycake Center for Hope in Peace Dale with her two teenage daughters.

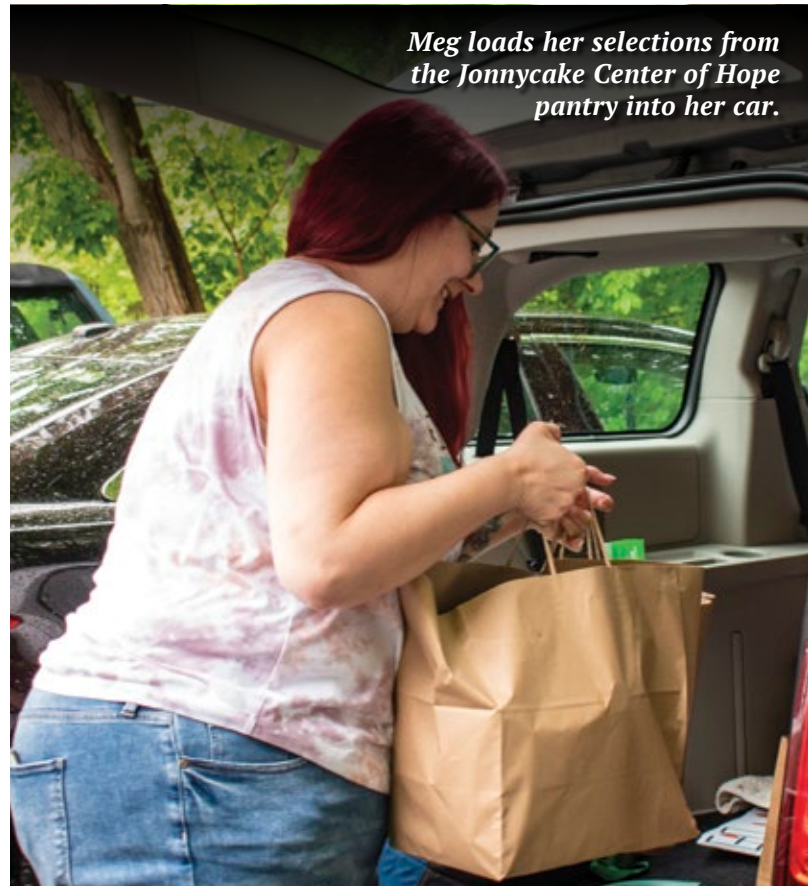
Meg is unable to work due to a disability, leaving limited social security benefits as her sole source of income. She also qualifies for SNAP benefits to purchase food.

“Our SNAP benefits run out within the first week of us receiving them,” Meg said. The family of three receives \$175 per month in SNAP assistance on her EBT card.

Meg has been visiting the Jonnycake pantry, a member agency of the Food Bank, for the past two years. But with the cost of food so high, she has found herself coming more frequently than before.

Many people have the perception that food insecurity only exists in urban areas, but with the high cost of living felt by so many, the Food Bank supports pantries across the state, serving every community.

“With two growing teens in the house, I’m constantly trying to make sure they have enough



Meg loads her selections from the Jonnycake Center of Hope pantry into her car.

food to keep them healthy and satisfied,” Meg said. “My girls come first.”

**Name changed to maintain anonymity.*



Advocating for Policies Addressing Hunger

In January, the Food Bank brought **Food Insecurity Awareness Day** to the Rhode Island State House to announce our policy priorities for 2025 and highlight the actions our State leadership can take to address the issue.

The Food Bank's 2025 legislative priorities include:

- Maintaining State funding for the Food Bank at least at the current \$800,000, enabling us to continue to distribute food to nearly 85,000 people a month.
- Passing a Healthy School Meals for All bill that will provide free breakfast and lunch to all of Rhode Island's public school students.
- Protect SNAP and WIC benefits from federal cuts. These nutrition programs are critical to the health and food security of low-income Rhode Islanders.

Learn more about our policy priorities and how you can make your voice heard by visiting www.rifoodbank/advocate-for-change.

Farewell to Food Bank CEO Andrew Schiff

18 Years of Impact in Rhode Island



Schiff with honorary board member Mary Flynn, PhD, RD, LDN.

This spring, the Food Bank will say goodbye to CEO Andrew Schiff, who will retire after 18 years of leadership and service to the Rhode Island community. Schiff is known for his commitment to listening —

to staff, to the community, and to member agencies — and learning how best to meet their needs.

“Andrew’s legacy is the space he created for work to happen,” shared Chief Operations Officer Jen Tomassini. “He is a strong, calm, empathetic leader who trusts his team and their vision.”

Food Bank Chief Financial Officer Christine Cannata echoes the sentiment. “Andrew’s commitment to not just the work, but to making the Food Bank a great place to work, speaks volumes about the type of leader he is.”

Schiff’s legacy since his start in 2007 includes:

- Began distribution of healthier, more culturally relevant food, while increasing food distribution by millions of pounds.
- Built new relationships with under-resourced communities, impacting both individual guests and the communities at large.

- Imbedded a DEI focus into the organization, shaping policies, hiring practices, and the day-to-day focus of our work.
- Launched the annual Status Report on Hunger, a sought-after source of information on food insecurity.
- Demonstrated calm, strategic leadership through the 2008 financial crisis and Great Recession, which hit shortly after he joined the organization.
- Led the organization through the pandemic, ensuring uninterrupted food distribution.

All of this happened against a backdrop of decreasing food donations from the food industry, as their inventory management became more sophisticated, and they no longer had excess food to donate. Under Andrew’s leadership, the Food Bank more than doubled its annual food distribution since 2008, raising the funds needed to purchase by the truckload what we were not receiving through donations, or from the USDA—an incredible accomplishment.

“Andrew brought a thoughtful and strategic brand of leadership to the Food Bank,” said Lisa Roth Blackman, Chief Philanthropy Officer. “His focus on the dignity of those we serve led to a greater focus on distributing healthy, fresh, culturally relevant foods to people who are struggling.”



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