

Annual Report | 2024



RHODE ISLAND COMMUNITY
FOOD BANK

Executive Leadership



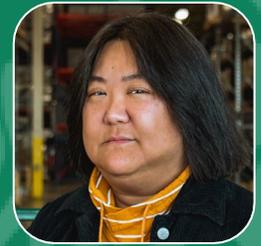
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Chief Philanthropy
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Christine Cannata
Chief Financial
Officer



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Former Managing Director
Royal Bank of Scotland



Secretary
David Macchioni
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Stop & Shop

*Member Agency



MISSION

To improve quality of life for all Rhode Islanders by advancing solutions to the problem of hunger.

VISION

We envision a state where no one goes hungry.

VALUES

Compassion | Innovation | Fostering Health
Collaboration | Accountability



www.rifoodbank.org

200 Niantic Ave.
Providence, RI 02907

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With Gratitude to You A Letter from Our Leadership

Each year that we write this letter, we're reminded of everything we have to be grateful for.

In Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024), we distributed more food than ever before, to help address the **highest level of need we've ever seen**. We are so grateful for the role *you* played in making this possible. The individuals, corporations and foundations that gave generously to support their neighbors this year were vital to helping us distribute fresh, culturally relevant foods to guests served at our 147 member agencies.

We're also sincerely grateful to Rhode Island's House and Senate leadership, members of the General Assembly, and Governor McKee for increasing funding for the Food Bank for Fiscal Year 2025. We were appreciative of our state leadership's investment in supporting our neighbors in need.

Finally, we were thrilled to bring back our much-loved Empty Bowls fundraiser in 2024, raising over \$220,000 to enable food acquisition. Thank you to everyone who made that event a success.

Your partnership is essential to our mission and to our community. Thank you for your loyalty and generosity.



Andrew Schiff
Chief Executive
Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Schiff".



Jyothi Subramaniam
Board President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jyothi Subramaniam".



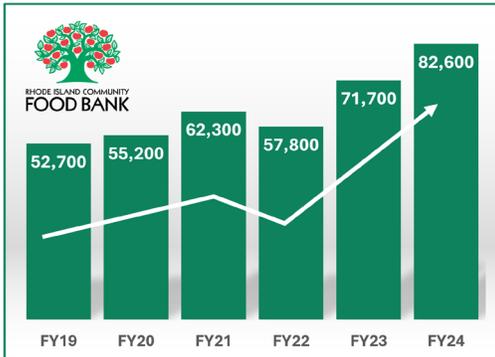
**Mark Your
Calendar**

Empty Bowls
WaterFire Arts Center
April 2, 2025

[Learn More](#)

Year in Review | Record Food Distribution to Address Record Need

People Served per Month by Fiscal Year (Fiscal Year: July 1 – June 30)



The number of people served by our agencies has continued to tick upwards since before the pandemic. The notable exception was in 2022, when families were receiving federal COVID benefits, such as school meals, the child tax credit and an emergency SNAP allotment.



School meals are as critical to a child's ability to learn and thrive as books and bussing.



Members of Sankofa's community kitchen support their food business using the resources available to them at Sankofa.

Record Food Distribution

With food, housing and other costs remaining high, our agencies served more guests, many visiting for the very first time, than ever before. In Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) the Food Bank served on average **82,600 Rhode Islanders per month** through its statewide network of 147 pantries, meal sites and other distribution programs. The Food Bank distributed **over 18 million pounds of food** – the most in our history – to address the high demand.

Advocating for Children

In 2024, we worked with a coalition of advocates to stand up for Rhode Island's kids. The coalition asked that **Healthy School Meals for All** legislation, sponsored by former Senator Sandra Cano and Representative Justine Caldwell, be passed to make free breakfast and lunch available to all public-school students. While the bills did not pass as written, we were pleased that the final budget included funding to ensure that 6,500 children in households with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level who currently receive reduced-priced school meals will now get those meals for free. We are grateful for the support we received from the community and are committed to continuing to advocate for our state's kids.

An Update from the Sankofa Initiative

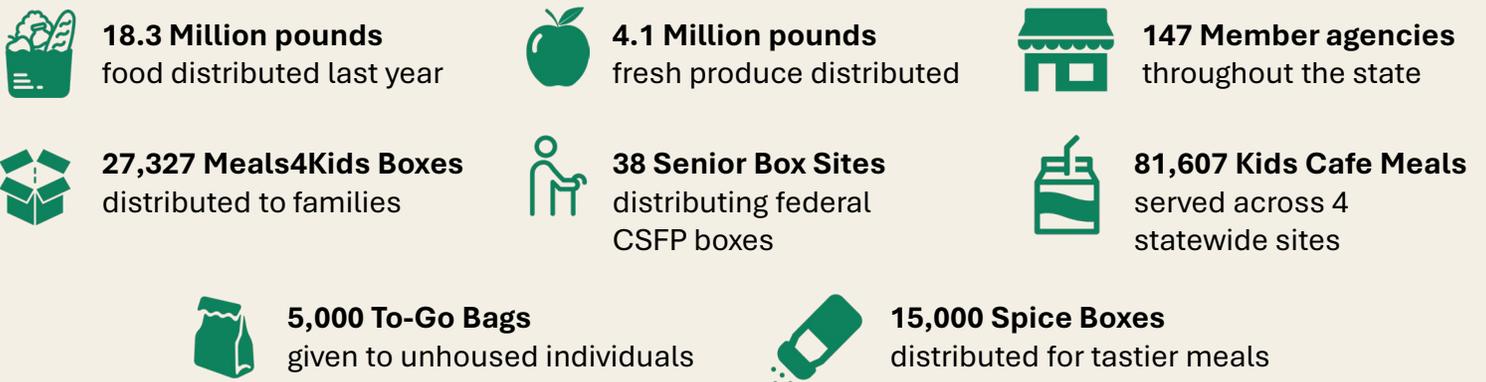
Last year, we announced that the Sankofa Initiative of the West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation was one of ten community organizations nationwide to receive a grant from Feeding America's Food Security Equity Impact Fund. Participating food banks applied on behalf of a local nonprofit working to address racial disparities in food insecurity. In the year since Sankofa, a food access initiative comprised of a community farm, community kitchen, and a weekly seasonal farmers market, was awarded \$500,000 in grant funds, the organization has expanded their number of garden farmers, improved area food security, sparked economic opportunity with their market and kitchen, and increased support staff to run the program.



Allie, a guest at West Bay Community Action Program in Warwick selects groceries in the pantry.



FY 2024 Food Distribution



Program Updates | A Place for *Everyone* at the Table

Healthy Habits is the Food Bank's community nutrition program that empowers low-income families and individuals to eat more healthfully on a budget. Through the lens of accessibility, cultural relevance and health equity, our culinary and nutrition professionals provide practical education in the form of classes, workshops and demonstrations on topics ranging from cooking for children to managing chronic disease. Last year, Healthy Habits provided 160 classes, demonstrations and workshops, helping 3,521 guests improve their health through food.



Kids Cafe provides healthy evening meals to children at risk of hunger at four after-school programs, including the Boys & Girls Club of East Providence, the Pawtucket YMCA, the Boys & Girls Club of Pawtucket and Segue Institute for Learning in Central Falls. Last year, Food Bank chefs and nutrition experts prepared more than 82,000 healthy meals, delivered Monday through Friday, at no cost to our partner sites or the families they serve. In addition to healthy, culturally diverse meals, the team provides kid-friendly nutrition education, designed to engage students in healthy eating habits and teach basic cooking skills.

The **Senior Box program**, or federal Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), administered for the State by the Food Bank, supplies qualified low-income seniors with a monthly box of healthy USDA staples to help stretch their food budgets. The boxes are distributed at low-income senior high rises and through participating member agencies. Last year, the US Department of Agriculture allotted Rhode Island 2,034 food boxes each month to provide to vulnerable seniors in our community.



Program Updates | A Place for Everyone at the Table



SNAP Outreach | The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a critical benefit for those who need food assistance, providing funds they can spend on food in the grocery store. Yet many people don't know they're eligible for the benefit, or struggle to navigate the application process. Our trained, multi-lingual SNAP Outreach team visits agencies to assist guests who may be eligible to apply.

Last year, the team completed 150 agency visits to help their guests determine eligibility, fill out forms, answers questions and make referrals for basic needs and legal services. As a result of these visits, qualifying individuals were able to claim an estimated \$1.3 million in SNAP benefits that they may have otherwise missed out on.



Food Bank driver Steve Ortiz shares the contents of our specialty boxes, like Meals4Kids boxes, To-Go Bags, senior boxes and spice kits.

Meals4Kids boxes provide five days of healthy breakfasts, lunches and snacks, as well as kids' activities and information about social service resources. The boxes help families fill in the gaps between the meals their kids receive at school and those provided at home. Boxes are distributed through food pantries and community organizations, and include things like cereal, macaroni and cheese, snack bars and tuna with crackers. Last year, the Food Bank distributed 27,000 of the shelf-stable boxes to families in need.

To-Go Bags | Addressing feedback from our urban meal sites who see more unhoused guests, the Food Bank offers convenient To-Go Bags to meet this need. Packed in reusable drawstring backpacks, these bags contain seven light meals and sixteen snacks, made up of nutrient-dense foods that are easy to open and don't require refrigeration or cooking. Over 4,000 bags were distributed last year in high-need areas.



A Journey to Get Ahead

MLK Community Center eases a Navy family's transition to Rhode Island



“The pantry is a blessing, and I can’t wait for the day that I can be that blessing in return.”

Imani is a 28-year-old mother of four beautiful girls. Since moving to Rhode Island from Florida for her husband’s service in the Navy, Imani’s life has been a balancing act. Raising her girls, including an unexpected fourth baby, working nights, and managing finances in a much more expensive state proved challenging for the young family. Imani had never sought food assistance before. But they were still paying the mortgage on a home in Florida that wasn’t selling, and with her husband’s nominal salary, the financial strain of rising costs have made it difficult to keep up with their family’s needs. “We’ve always been financially independent,” Imani shared. “But there’s no shame in asking for help when you need it.”

Imani started visiting Food Bank member agency, **Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center in Newport** when she heard about it through her daughter’s head start program. Before coming to the pantry, food was among the family’s largest expenses, with grocery bills often exceeding \$700 a month. **“We were spending more than half our mortgage just to eat,”** Imani shared. Supplementing their groceries with food from the pantry helped alleviate some of the financial pressure, allowing Imani and her husband to get established in a new state. “The pantry took a load off our plate,” Imani said, reflecting on how it eased the burden and allowed them to regain some financial stability.

The food assistance Imani has received has had a profound impact on her family, especially as they work to reduce their debt. The pantry’s fresh produce has been a lifeline, providing healthy options that her children enjoy. “Produce is my favorite thing to get, and it’s the first thing to go at home,” she said. The support from the MLK Center has not only allowed Imani and her husband to focus on paying off their debt but also brought peace of mind in their day-to-day life. “Without the pantry, things would be very sticky financially. It would be detrimental not to have it,” she expressed with gratitude. Imani looks forward to one day being able to give back, saying, “The pantry is a blessing, and I can’t wait for the day that I can be that blessing in return.”



Meet Imani

Imani joined the panel discussion for our Status Report Town Hall back in December.

[Watch the Recording](#)
[Read the Status Report](#)



Member agency Comprehensive Community Action Program in Cranston opens the doors at its expanded food pantry, a project funded in part by an Agency Capacity Grant provided by the Food Bank.



Lihna Agostini, the Food Bank’s director of community outreach and Jailine Ortiz, community outreach coordinator, visited with the kindergarten class at the Nuestro Mundo Charter School to talk about our work. They shared a simplified version of how we operate and read the Spanish-language version of “Maddi’s Fridge”, a story about a young girl experiencing food insecurity. The class loved Lihna and Jailine’s visit so much, they all signed a copy of “La Nevera de Maddi” and sent it to us as a thank you.

“We Didn’t Have Much but a Sense of Community” How a corporate executive’s childhood inspired him to give

“ For many people, if they lost their job tomorrow, they couldn’t survive a month. They never think it will be them and suddenly it is. There’s not that much separation between us. ”



Wayne Robinson, donor and retired FM executive

Wayne Robinson moved to Rhode Island 10 years ago to manage the events and multimedia team at FM (formerly FM Global). He grew up in Asbury Park, New Jersey, and his career in insurance has brought him to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, New York City, and 35 countries. But Wayne says Rhode Island felt like home from day one. He retired back in 2024 but his work here isn’t done.

In all the places Wayne has lived, one thing stayed consistent: his support of the local food bank. Growing up, Wayne’s family struggled. They often relied on church pantries and other community resources to help make ends meet. “We didn’t have much but a sense of community,” Wayne said. “I’ve been so fortunate in my career, and I want to give back - I can’t bypass my past.” So throughout his career, he’s sought to fight food insecurity. He worked at a food bank while going to college and has donated to the local food bank everywhere he’s lived, including Rhode Island. The Food Bank is grateful to call Wayne one of our loyal donors.

We asked Wayne how his experience growing up informed his passion for giving today. “You may be too proud to ask for help, or have a language barrier or cultural differences,” Wayne shared. “But it’s so important to be able to rely on your community. The Food Bank helps break down barriers, so that people who need it don’t feel reticent to ask for help.”

Wayne wants people with the capacity to give to understand that when you donate to the Food Bank, those funds are immediately put to work here in Rhode Island.

“Sometimes people are removed from what’s happening in their own back yard. For many people, if they lost their job tomorrow, they couldn’t survive a month. They never think it will be them and suddenly it is. There’s not that much separation between us.”

Agency Spotlight | Connecting for Children & Families Removing Barriers for Those in Need

When Daria, a community health staff member at Connecting for Children and Families (CCF) in Woonsocket, asked Maria how she could help, Maria began to cry. She'd had a tough road with breast cancer and was diagnosed with throat cancer shortly afterward. The magnitude of it all was just hitting her. While Maria (a pseudonym) did not want to be identified, Daria was able to share her guest's story with us.

Maria worked full-time until her cancer treatments, surgeries and recovery forced her to trade steady work for a more flexible, but lower paying Uber gig when she felt well enough. With the extra wear and tear on her car, it broke down and she had to get another one in order to continue Ubering when she could. She was also facing eviction. Maria told Daria,

“I have nothing.”

Connecting for Children and Families, a Food Bank member agency, was there for Maria. Daria worked with her to ensure there was enough food to feed her family and connected her with other resources. With a language barrier to overcome, it was hard for Maria to advocate for her own care. Daria, a certified medical interpreter, helped her set up appointments and speak to her doctors.

Things gradually improved for Maria. With her tax refund, she was able to get a used car. Daria helped her find an apartment she could afford, and Maria had her next cancer surgery a month later. CCF arranged for food from the pantry to be brought to Maria when she was too sick to pick it up.

“Every time I see her, I'm reminded that she's the reason we do this work,” Daria said. **“Sometimes we're the only ones there to listen and help remove barriers.”**





Twenty-eight year old Aaron is on the autism spectrum and working full-time is challenging for him. So he works part-time in housekeeping at a local inn.

His minimal work schedule qualifies Aaron to receive disability assistance, but it also means a limited income that doesn't afford him the basic necessities he needs.

“There is no middle ground,” Aaron said about disability. “You either have to make enough to afford everything on your own, or hardly anything at all.”

Aaron visits the pantry at the **Jonnycake Center for Hope in Peace Dale**, a member agency of the Food Bank. These trips to the pantry help him focus the small amount he earns on other necessities without worrying about groceries. And he loves to go.

“People here are really friendly,” Aaron said. “There’s no judgement.”

A Providence Icon's Commitment to Food Security Olneyville NY System thinks creatively and gives locally

Greg Stevens and his sister, Stephanie Stevens-Turini have been behind the counter at Olneyville New York System in Providence since their teens, when their father ran the family business, and before him, his father. Their shop has been a fixture in their community since the 1930's.

Greg has been giving back to his community by donating to the Food Bank since March of 2022, when a customer offered to buy the restaurant's grill press for \$100. After declining to sell several times, with the offer going up and up, Greg had an idea. With \$500 on the table, he offered to match the offer and donate the whole thing to the Food Bank. He came to our office the next day with a check for \$1,000 and a great story!

In 2023, when the restaurant's exterior signage needed to be replaced, Greg and Steph once again thought creatively about how to make an impact for their neighbors. They chose to auction off their original signs to make way for the new, raising \$27,000 for the Food Bank in an amazing show of support from Olneyville's friends and fans. We were especially moved by this donation, considering the auction proceeds would have paid for the new signage if not donated to the Food Bank. "Steph and I talked about how best to support the community as a whole, and could think of no better fit than the Food Bank," Greg said.

"We're both in the business of feeding people so it just made sense to me."

We're thrilled to have a Rhode Island icon in our corner!



Food Bank Finances | July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

FY24 Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

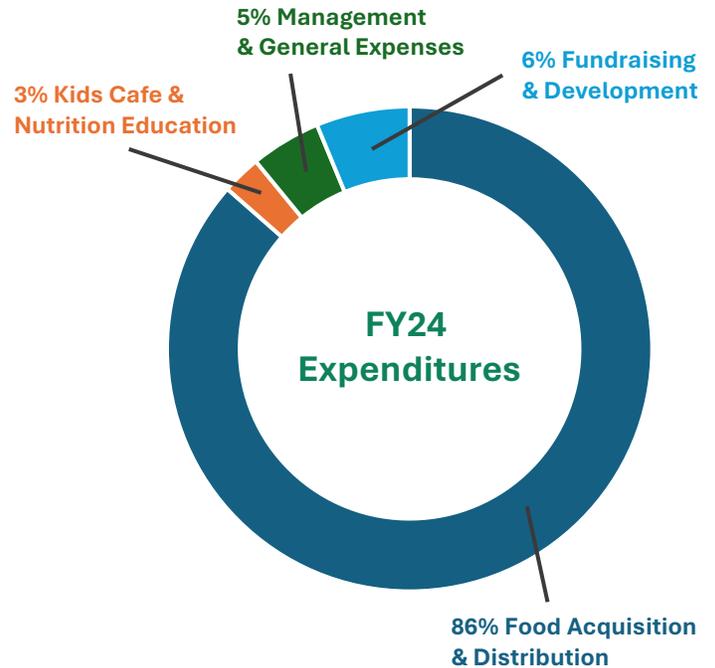
| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$4,362,034 |
| Accounts and grants receivable, net | 472,937 |
| Food inventory | 920,929 |
| Prepaid expenses & other assets | 230,091 |
| Property and equipment, net | 5,836,751 |
| Investments | 11,733,442 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$23,556,184 |

LIABILITIES

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses | \$564,740 |
| Operating leases payable | 40,000 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | \$604,740 |

NET ASSETS

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Without donor restrictions | \$22,084,391 |
| With donor restrictions | 867,053 |
| TOTAL NET ASSETS | \$22,951,444 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | \$23,556,184 |



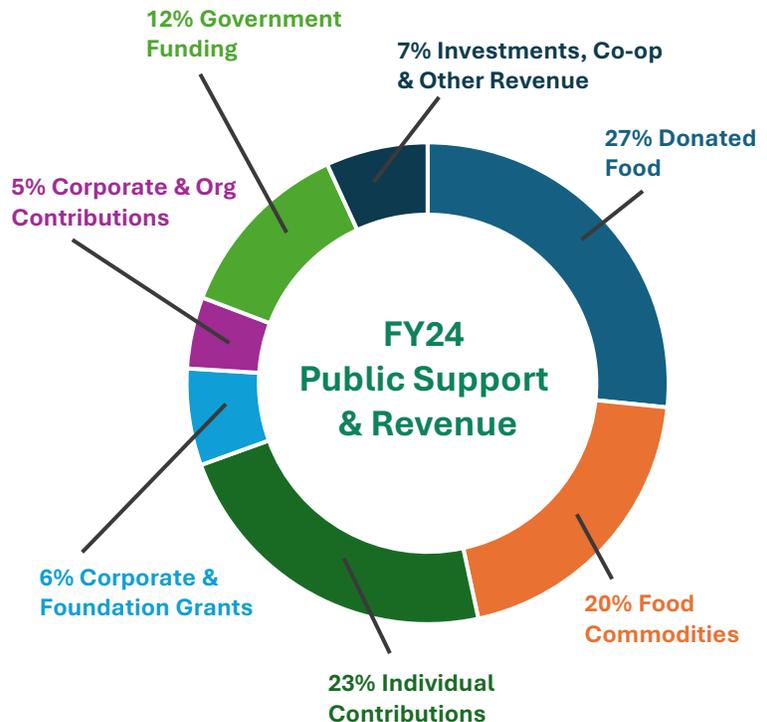
FY24 Statement of Activities

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Contributions | \$11,491,150 |
| Food contributions (fair market value) | 8,945,686 |
| USDA commodity food (fair market value) | 6,732,428 |
| Co-op revenue | 206,711 |
| Government grants and contracts | 4,161,076 |
| Net investment income and other income | 2,092,495 |
| TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE | \$33,629,546 |

EXPENSES

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Program services | \$29,307,313 |
| Management and general | 1,543,091 |
| Fundraising and development | 2,051,119 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$32,901,523 |
| INCREASE IN NET ASSETS | \$728,023 |



The financial statements of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank Association are audited by Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co., Ltd. A copy of the complete audited financial statements, along with the auditor's report thereon, is available at rifoodbank.org.