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Philadelphia Foundation, William Penn Foundation, and United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey Announce Regional Food Fund

\$6 Million Fund Created in Response to Cuts to Regional Food Banks;

William Penn Foundation Issues \$4 Million Challenge Grant to Amplify Impact

PHILADELPHIA, PA — [October 30, 2025] — Philadelphia Foundation, William Penn Foundation, and United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey today announced the establishment of the **Regional Food Fund** in response to federal funding cuts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that are creating a crisis for food banks across Southeastern Pennsylvania. The fund has been developed in partnership with and will support the region's four largest food banks—**Bucks County Opportunity Council, Chester County Food Bank, Philabundance, and Share Food Program**—which collectively serve the five-county region and were all significantly impacted by the federal funding cuts.

By leveraging the purchasing power and regional infrastructure of the four partner food banks, every dollar contributed to the fund will have maximum reach and impact across more than 1,000 partner organizations, including neighborhood food pantries, schools, mutual aid groups, senior centers, and shelters across Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties.

Regional food banks have reported they will face annual losses of nearly \$16 million due to federal funding cuts beginning in fiscal year 2026, with additional cuts anticipated across multiple federal programs. These reductions, combined with anticipated loss of SNAP benefits on November 1 due to the federal government shutdown, rising food costs, increased demand, and strained distribution networks, have greatly reduced the regions' food supply.

"When families in our region are facing a food security crisis of this magnitude, we cannot afford to wait or work in isolation," said Pedro A. Ramos, President and CEO of Philadelphia Foundation. "This collaborative response demonstrates what's possible when philanthropy, nonprofits, and community leaders move quickly and decisively together. But the reality is stark: we need more partners to step forward now to help ensure families in our region do not go hungry. Philadelphia Foundation stands ready to work with funders and organizations that want to help."

The fund was established with a \$4 million challenge grant from the William Penn Foundation, which will match every dollar invested in this fund 2:1. Funders have raised nearly 50% of their \$2 million goal to unlock the full \$4 million challenge grant, with a lead a gift of \$700,000 from the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. Once the goal is met, the fund will reach \$6 million. In addition, United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey is providing an additional \$300,000 to support emergency food access in South Jersey.

"This is about our neighbors—families who are already struggling to make ends meet and now face even greater uncertainty about where their next meal will come from," said Bill Golderer, CEO, United Way Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. "United Way is proud to step up alongside our philanthropic partners to help our region's food banks fight food insecurity."

More than 15% of Pennsylvania residents depend on SNAP benefits and many more rely on food from food banks at various times during the year. While the Regional Food Fund does not have the capacity to replace federal funding losses, the combined resources of this effort will assist food banks in keeping shelves stocked during a time of unprecedented strain.

"We cannot stand by while families go hungry," said Shawn McCaney, William Penn Foundation Executive Director. "This challenge grant is designed to catalyze an urgent regional response and maximize the resources available to address the crisis in our emergency food system that began with federal funding cuts and has been exacerbated by the potential pause in SNAP benefits. We are gratified to follow the lead of our regional food banks in developing this fund and to work with our philanthropic partners."

The Regional Food Fund is housed at the Philadelphia Foundation, which is contributing additional resources and further fundraising to maximize the reach of this response and worked with the four regional foodbanks named above to determine the allocation of funds.

Individuals or organizations interested in donating a minimum of \$10,000 to the Regional Food Fund should email foodfund@philafound.org. (To minimize administrative burden and speed fund development and disbursement, only large gifts can be managed and matched through this fund. Smaller gifts should be directed to <https://www.phillygives.org>.)

The Crisis: Federal Cuts Creating Unprecedented Strain

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture cancelled food orders for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) with little notice, resulting in hundreds of thousands of pounds of food not reaching local food banks.

The situation has been further exacerbated by Pennsylvania's budget impasse, which has stalled state payments from the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus Program (PASS) and the State Food Purchasing Program (SFPP), leaving some food banks waiting for hundreds of thousands of dollars in delayed funding.

Beyond the funding cuts, food banks are also grappling with a roughly 20% increase in food prices since 2020, with basic staples like eggs spiking 15% in early 2025. The cost of a truckload of food has jumped by an average of 17% since last year, while storage, transportation, staffing, and procurement costs continue to rise.

"At Murphy's Giving Market, our mission has always been to ensure that no child, no family, and no elder in our community goes without food," said Desiree Murphy Morrissey of Murphy's Giving Market

in Delaware County. "Yet right now, our shelves are emptying faster than we can fill them. Cuts to critical programs, rising costs, and increasing need have collided to create a crisis like never before."

The cuts also threaten relationships food banks have built with Pennsylvania farmers through programs like the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA). Without federal funding, food banks may be forced to revert to lower-cost sources, reducing revenue for local growers and limiting access to fresh, locally-sourced food.

Adding to the strain, the loss of SNAP benefits on November 1 will drive more families to seek emergency food assistance.

"Today, families and food banks are grappling with one of the most dire times in the history of food insecurity. How we respond has never been more crucial for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people in our region," said Share Food Program Executive Director George Matysik. "Letting our neighbors go without food is not, and will never, be an option. For that reason, we're incredibly grateful to partners and generous donors who are stepping up with us to keep everyone fed."

"When it comes to taking a stand against hunger, there is no more powerful resource than collective action," said Loree D. Jones Brown, CEO, Philabundance. "Thanks to Philadelphia Foundation, William Penn Foundation and the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, the food banks striving to provide hope and stability to the nearly 700,000 food-insecure people in our region are stronger than we could ever be on our own."

About United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey is on a mission to end poverty and expand opportunity for all. By forging coalitions with business, government, and community organizations, we provide the skills and support people need to rise—and remain—above the poverty line. Serving Pennsylvania's Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties, and New Jersey's Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, and Cumberland counties, United Way leads solutions that deliver immediate relief and long-term achievement. For more information visit www.unitedforimpact.org

About Philadelphia Foundation

Philadelphia Foundation is one of the country's first publicly supported community foundations and the largest devoted to improving lives in Greater Philadelphia. For over a century, community members, civic and business sector leaders, and nonprofit organizations have turned to us for partnership and collaboration in responding to community needs and creating opportunities for impact. In our work as a civic catalyst, trusted partner, and strategic problem-solver, we seek to strengthen the economic, social, and civic vitality of the region. Our philosophy is that providing civic and community leadership is necessary for effective philanthropic leadership. Learn more at www.philafound.org.

About William Penn Foundation

The William Penn Foundation, founded in 1945 by Otto and Phoebe Haas, is committed to expanding access to resources and opportunities that promote a more vital and just city and region for all. We do this through funding

programs in the Philadelphia region in arts and culture, children and families, democracy and civic initiatives, environment and public space, and workforce training and services. Learn more at www.williampennfoundation.org.

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