



Willing Hands

*Willing Hands*

# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025–2026



“Before partnering with you, we only had fresh produce in the summer/fall. Now we have it year-round. The assortment is incredible . . . almost all we receive is organic. The feedback we get is ‘**Wow, I can’t believe you have this for us.**’”

—Weathersfield Food Shelf

Photo: Tim delivering to  
Thetford Food Shelf

## Behind the scenes

### Staff

**Shara Buffington**  
Gleaning Coordinator

**Kristin Burdick**  
Gleaning Assistant

**Chris Castles**  
Logistics Coordinator

**Sara Cavin**  
Special Projects Manager

**Nicole Ekegren**  
Bookkeeper

**Peter Griggs**  
Delivery Driver

**Jen Ireland**  
Farm Assistant

**Glenn Johnson**  
Delivery Driver

**Ehrin Lingeman**  
Farm Manager

**India Mazzucco**  
Operations Coordinator

**Christine Savage**  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator

**Tim Sevigny**  
Fleet & Operations  
Coordinator

**Chris Simard**  
Director of Operations

**J. Cherry Sullivan**  
Director of Programs

**Scott Trombley**  
Warehouse Coordinator

**Emma Wunsch**  
Development &  
Communications Manager

**Gabe Zoerheide**  
Executive Director

### Board of Directors

**Stacey Chiochio**  
President

**Leslie Rimmer**  
Vice President

**Janet Hardy**  
Secretary

**Chuck Wooster**  
Treasurer

**Amanda Charland**

**Brenda Jordan**

**Lizzie King**

**Saranya Loehrer**

**Johanna Mirenda**

**Zeb Mushlin**

**Arundell Robinson**

**Cyndi Scott**

**Kathleen Sherrieb**

**Lindsay Sturman**

*From the Executive Director*

## Food Access Partners in a Time of Rising Need



Our food access partners have been giving us a consistent message. Since the pandemic, as federal hunger relief programs have receded, the need for our work has risen dramatically, and we have responded. Last year, when federal SNAP food benefit cuts made headlines, you stepped up with generosity. This allowed us to deploy the resources needed to deliver more food than ever before. From July 2025 through June 2026, we delivered 154,000 more pounds of food than during the previous year. Our community of supporters, volunteers, and partners made this impact possible. But we are not done.

Our community's needs have increased this summer. In the Upper Valley, thousands of people who previously received SNAP food assistance no longer receive it because of federal actions. Meanwhile, inflation has risen to its highest rate since 2023, and fuel prices are up 27% from last year. This has led our food shelf partners to see more people and a broader range of demographics than ever before. We are also receiving more applications than ever from sites in need of food.

Willing Hands is built on a simple premise: a caring community can do exceptional things. Our strength and impact come from our supporters, volunteers, and partners. Even as we have grown our budget and staff, we are centered on this understanding. We are only as strong as the community that makes our work possible. When our neighbors face uncertain times, I take solace in how vital and caring those engaged in this work are. Whether it is the food shelf volunteer who gives up their afternoon to deliver meals, the corporate volunteer who joins us in the garden, or the thoughtful and generous supporter who keeps our trucks on the road, we are buoyed by this care and generosity. It is the antidote to challenging times.

In the words of a food access partner:

*"We're grateful for the gleaners, the farmers, and all the volunteers. We've built beautiful connections with each other, and it has been a true blessing."*

Sincerely,

Gabe Zoerheide • 802-698-0265 • [director@willinghands.org](mailto:director@willinghands.org)



## *A Fond Farewell to Three Dedicated Board Members*

This year, we bid farewell to three extraordinary board members – **Amanda Charland**, **Cyndi Scott** and **Johanna Mirenda** – as they conclude their terms of service.

Though they're stepping down from the board, we know their support for Willing Hands and its mission will continue. Please join us in thanking Amanda, Cyndi, and Jo for their years of service.

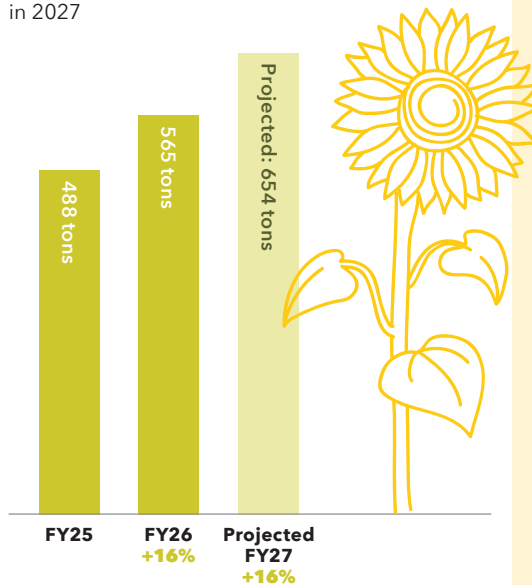
# Food Need Increases & Projections for 2027

Willing Hands distributed **1,072,316 pounds of food** in fiscal year 2026, up from 918,406 pounds in fiscal year 2025, an increase of nearly 17%. If we continue this rate of increase in the coming year, we'll distribute 1,252,018 pounds of food.



## Food Distributed (in tons)

A dramatic 3-year projected increase in food distributed by Willing Hands from 488 tons in 2025 to a projected 654 tons in 2027



## Food Access Partners, By the Numbers

### Closest partner:

**Norwich Senior Housing**  
(Norwich, VT)

**2.1 miles**

from Willing Hands office

### Furthest partner:

**Fall Mountain Food Shelf**  
(Langdon, NH)

**45 miles**

from Willing Hands office

### Most recent new partner:

**Mountainvale**  
at Twin Pines Housing

## Why Are Food Needs Increasing?

Many economic and policy shifts are putting more pressure on household budgets and more people are turning to food shelves and community food programs for support. The biggest drivers of this increase:

**SNAP Cuts and Changes:** Federal changes to SNAP have reduced and put pressure on food assistance for households in NH and VT.

**Higher Food Costs:** Food prices remain significantly higher than they were a few years ago. Over the last five years, grocery prices have increased by an average of 24% to 30%, according to economic data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Rising Housing Costs:** More income goes toward rent and mortgage payments, leaving less for groceries.

**Higher Costs for Essentials:** Medical bills, childcare, and utilities are all more expensive.

**Income Uncertainty:** Even working families struggle with inconsistent income.

**THE RESULT:** More of our neighbors are turning to food shelves and community food programs.



## Which partner gets the most food?

The **Upper Valley Haven** gets the most food:

**135,507 pounds**

in the past year.

*In addition to the Haven's community food market and mini food markets, they have two shelters for 66 people, with a third opening very soon. The Haven is also one of Willing Hands' longest partnerships—in the early days, Willing Hands used their parking lot as a distribution center.*

Next highest: **LISTEN:**

**93,382 pounds**

at the LISTEN Food Shelf;

**29,966 pounds**

at the LISTEN Dinner Site

Third highest: **Claremont Soup Kitchen** with

**66,617 pounds**



## Fresh Food for Kids

Thanks to a Vermont Agency of Agriculture grant, children at a dozen local Early Childhood Education Centers have been able to enjoy farm-fresh fruit and veggies this season.



## Thank You to Our Food Access Partners

Baby Steps Family Assistance  
Bethel Food Shelf  
Bradford Food Shelf  
Bradford Teen Center  
Bugbee Senior Center  
Claremont Soup Kitchen  
Community Harvest of Central VT  
Cornish Produce Drop  
Crafts Hill Family Housing  
Dartmouth Cancer Center Food Pantry (Healing Harvest)  
DHMC - OB/Pediatrics Department  
Earl M. Bourdon Centre  
Enfield Methodist Church  
Fairlee-Orford Food Shelf  
Fall Mountain Food Shelf  
First Universalist Society of Hartland, Hartland Food Shelf  
Friends of Mascoma  
Gather  
Good Folks Pantry  
Good Neighbor Health Clinic  
Graystone Apartments  
Hanover Community Food Pantry  
Hanover Community Kitchen  
Hartford Community Coalition

Hartford Dismas House  
Hartford High School Regional Resource Center  
Hartford School District  
Hartford/Norwich Holiday Basket Helpers  
Headrest  
Heater Landing, Lebanon Housing Authority  
HIV/HCV Resource Center  
Hollow Drive VSHA  
Horse Meadow Senior Center  
Joseph's Storehouse (Praise Chapel Foodshelf)  
Lebanon Middle School  
Lebanon Towers  
Listen Community Dinners  
Listen Community Services  
Little Rivers Health Care Medical Clinic  
Lyme Emergency Food Pantry, Community Care of Lyme  
Maple Avenue Elementary School  
Mascoma Area Senior Center  
Newbury United  
Next Step

Northwoods VSHA  
Norwich Senior Housing  
Olde Windsor Village  
One-4-All, Claremont Learning Partnership  
Orange County Parent Child Center  
Orford Food Drop  
Overcomers Refugee Services  
Overlook c/o Twin Pines Housing Trust  
Plainfield Food Pantry, Christ Community Church  
Putney Food Shelf  
Randolph Area Food Shelf  
Rogers House  
Romano Circle LHA  
Second Wind Foundation  
Sharing and Caring (WRJ United Methodist Church)  
Sharon Food Shelf  
South Royalton Community Food Shelf - United Church of S. Royalton  
South Royalton Seniors  
Southwestern Community Services  
Springfield Family Center

Stepping Stone  
Stevens High School  
The Center for Safer Communities  
The Community Kitchen  
The Family Place  
Thetford Food Shelf  
Time-Out Americana Grill  
Upper Valley Haven  
Upper Valley Pediatrics  
Upper Valley Senior Center  
VA Medical Center  
VA Medical Center/VA CSA Program  
Vershire Food Shelf  
Village Apartments  
Visions for Creative Housing Solutions  
Weathersfield Food Shelf  
Wellspring Food Shelf  
West Fairlee Produce Drop  
White River Junction Veterans Center  
White River School  
Windsor Community Food Shelf  
Women's Health Resource Center