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**The St. Louis Area Foodbank Receives \$75,000 Grant from the Walmart Foundation to Fund Infrastructure and Equipment Needed for Handling Fresh Food**

**ST. LOUIS** – The St. Louis Area Foodbank today announced a \$75,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation to fund the infrastructure that will ultimately help the Foodbank’s partner agencies secure and distribute more nutritious food to families in need. Locally, the Foodbank used the funds to purchase 34 refrigeration/freezer units for food pantries in Missouri and Illinois. These new units allow the pantries to freeze close-to-date meats and accept fresh produce that they may have had to refuse in the past because they didn’t have the infrastructure to store it.

Nationally, grant funds support investments in the equipment necessary to handle perishable products, such as refrigerated vehicles; coolers and freezers for transporting, storing and distributing food; thermometers and temperature calibration devices; among other items.

“One in six people struggle with hunger in the bi-state region, including more than 127,000 children,” said St. Louis Area Foodbank spokesperson, Ryan Farmer. “We are thankful to the Walmart Foundation for helping to ensure that people who struggle with hunger have access to nutrient-rich food. This grant will go a long way in helping the Foodbank and our partner agencies serve our 26-county service territory better.”

The St. Louis Area Foodbank secures fresh, perishable food from retailers and farmers in eastern Missouri, in southwestern Illinois, and across the country. Of the 42 million pounds of food distributed by the Foodbank last year, more than six million pounds were fresh fruits and vegetables. The Foodbank also secures and distributes thousands of pounds of dairy products, frozen meat, and bakery items annually. These are items that are rarely collected by food pantries but are critical for local families. Lack

of access to fresh food often leads to health issues for low-income families. The Foodbank is providing a vital service by distributing these items throughout the bi-state region.

The Walmart Foundation has been instrumental in helping food banks rescue and distribute more perishable food from retailers across the United States in a sustainable, cost-effective way. This grant is a part of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation's ongoing commitment to provide four billion meals to families struggling with hunger in the U.S. by 2020.

Since 2009, the Walmart Foundation has been a leading supporter of infrastructure grants to Feeding America food banks and their member agencies. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation provide donations of both food and funds to the Feeding America nationwide network of 200 food banks. Locally, the St. Louis Area Foodbank received more than \$134,000 in grant funding from the Walmart Foundation last year, including store grants and grants through Feeding America.

With food insecurity remaining high throughout the country, the ability to distribute more food is critical for food banks. According to the USDA, more than 42 million people nationwide are food insecure, which means that they may not know where they will find their next meal. In the bi-state region, nearly half a million residents are food insecure. To learn more about what the St. Louis Area Foodbank is doing to fight hunger, visit [STLFoodbank.org](http://STLFoodbank.org).

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#### **About the St. Louis Area Foodbank**

The St. Louis Area Foodbank began its service to the community in 1975. Since that time, the organization has grown to become the bi-state region's largest nonprofit 501(c)(3) food distribution center dedicated to feeding those in need. Through a network of nearly 500 partner agencies in 26 counties in Missouri and Illinois, the Foodbank distributes over 42 million pounds of food and personal care items annually. More than 392,000 people in the bi-state region rely on the Foodbank for assistance each year. For more information on the organization and the issue of hunger, please visit [STLFoodbank.org](http://STLFoodbank.org).