

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Nonprofits Unite to Combat Food Insecurity Crisis

Greenfield, Mass., November 14, 2025 – LifePath, United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region (UWFH), and United Way of North Central Massachusetts (UWNCM), today announced a joint effort to sustain relief for thousands of local residents, focusing on the ongoing food insecurity crisis affecting one in two households in our region.

The three organizations are partnering to rapidly deploy resources through the existing United Response Fund, created by the 13 United Ways of MA in partnership with the Commonwealth's Anti-Hunger Task Force. This unprecedented local collaboration was launched as a direct response to the incredibly high rates of food insecurity regionally, which were exacerbated by the delay in the distribution of federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and the recent implementation of new SNAP rules. While full SNAP benefits have now been issued, the temporary funding gap and the high demand during the delay severely strained local food security nonprofits, necessitating continued support from the United Response Fund to replenish resources and serve the most vulnerable.

LifePath Commits Significant Funding

As a key provider of nutrition services, LifePath has stepped up to allocate a new stream of funding specifically for local relief.

"Food Security has been core to LifePath's mission for over 50 years. As the Franklin County and North Quabbin Meals on Wheels provider, we already provided over 186,000 meals and wellness checks last year," said Gary Yuhas, Executive Director of LifePath. "Even with the tremendous community support of Meals on Wheels, we know those meals are not enough."

LifePath announced that, with the support of their Board of Directors, they will utilize **\$50,000** of interest earned from their investments to support urgent, local food insecurity initiatives immediately in the community, above and beyond their home-delivered meals program.

A Coordinated Regional Approach

The local disruption of SNAP benefits impacted nearly 12,000 people (or over 16% of the total population) throughout Franklin County and an estimated 8,500 people in the North Quabbin Region,

the majority of whom are children, older adults, and people living with disabilities. This puts a significant burden on local food security focused nonprofits, which saw a significant surge in clients and had to commit additional resources to meet the need.

The three partnering organizations are leveraging the statewide United Response Fund to pool resources and rapidly distribute aid to local food pantries and other nonprofit organizations to ensure a resilient safety net for the community.

"It's been gratifying seeing all the United Ways across the state come together so quickly to address this current crisis," added Geoff Naunheim. "By teaming up with our neighbors at United Way of North Central MA and a vital partner like LifePath, we can maximize the reach and impact of every dollar donated."

"The interruption to SNAP assistance has exacerbated an already intractable problem of food access for our most vulnerable friends and neighbors," said Kory Eng, President and CEO of United Way of North Central Massachusetts. "We thank LifePath for their support and commitment to combating hunger."

Other key partners include the Community Foundations of Western Massachusetts and North Central Massachusetts, which have each committed \$25,000 to the United Response Fund. So far the fund has locally raised over \$200,000 in support of residents of Franklin and Hampshire Counties and North Central Massachusetts. Money raised by the fund has been (and will continue to be) deployed rapidly, with both United Ways reporting making weekly distributions over the past three weeks.

How to Help

To support the United Response Fund and ensure local families get the nutrition they need, please make a donation by visiting www.uw-fh.org or www.uwncm.org. Donations that come into the local United Ways will be earmarked specifically for this urgent food security purpose. You can support Meals on Wheels or Lifepath by going to www.LifePathMA.org.

About LifePath

LifePath's mission is to ensure that older adults and individuals living with disabilities in Franklin County and beyond can remain safely in their homes and communities—with dignity and independence. It is an Area Agency on Aging and Aging Services Access Point, providing essential services like Meals on Wheels in Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region.

About United Way of the Franklin & Hampshire Region

UWFH's mission is to work in partnership with the local community to identify and address the region's most pressing issues. Their vision is that all individuals and families should have equitable access to the tools and resources designed to support their basic needs and ensure future successes.

About United Way of North Central Massachusetts

UWNCM's mission is to improve the quality of life for the residents of North Central Massachusetts by raising, investing, and allocating funds to partner agencies and community initiatives in the areas of Education, Income, and Health.