



PRESS RELEASE
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Rhode Island Community Food Bank has Record Distribution

9.5 Million Pounds, Representing 15% Increase over Last Year, Provided to Families in Need

PROVIDENCE, R.I. Rhode Island's record unemployment rate of 12.4 percent has had a devastating effect on the state's economy, and the wellbeing of our most vulnerable families. More Rhode Islanders than ever before have been seeking help through the Rhode Island Community Food Bank's network of emergency food providers, people that never before needed help feeding their family.

The result the Food Bank ended its 2009 fiscal year on June 30 having distributed more food than any other year in the organization's 27-year history a staggering 9.5 million pounds. This reflects a 15 percent increase over the previous year, when the Food Bank provided 8.3 million pounds to our neighbors in need.

"It's possible that the situation will continue to worsen before it improves," said Andrew Schiff, Chief Executive Officer of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. "If that happens, we will continue to do everything we can to ensure that Rhode Islanders have access to the nutritious food they need, but are unable to afford."

In order to continue to meet the increase in need, the Food Bank, which is a private charitable non-profit that relies upon donations to run its operation, is hoping for the continued support of the community. "We would not be able to help the tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders who turn to our food pantries for help each month without the support of the community," stated Schiff. "Together, we know that we are making a huge impact in the lives of those who are struggling in this economy."

According to a recent report in the *New York Times*, part-time workers mask the true unemployment woes of our country and more specifically, our state. While the national unemployment rate has risen to 9.5 percent, the highest level in more than a quarter-century, it still excludes those part-time workers who want to be working full time.

"Everyone is feeling the impact of the economy and unemployment levels, but no one has been affected more than low-income families," added Schiff. "Each month, the state's unemployment rate increases, yet it doesn't tell the whole story. There are thousands of people who are in need of full-time work but are working in temporary, part-time jobs or have had their hours, and income, drastically reduced."

If you include these individuals, as the Labor Department does when determining its broadest measure of the job market, Rhode Island's rate jumps to 21.5 percent tied with Michigan for the second highest rate in the country. One out of every five people who would like to be working full time is not doing so.

"When a family's income is cut, whether from the loss of a job or hours, it can cause even a middle-class family to spiral into poverty," stated Schiff. "The remaining limited funds are first used to cover rent or mortgage and utilities, leaving little, if anything, to purchase food. This is when families turn to our network of emergency food programs for help."

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank is a non-profit organization located in Providence, RI. The Food Bank solicits, stores and distributes food products donated by supermarkets, wholesalers, food processors, local farmers and community food drives. The food is then distributed to the Food Bank's network of 285 member agencies. In the past fiscal year, the Food Bank distributed 9.5 million pounds of food. For more information about the Food Bank, please visit www.rifoodbank.org

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