



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Rhode Island Community Food Bank Kicks-Off Holiday Meal Drive to Help the Growing Number of Local Families Seeking Food Assistance**

*Stop & Shop's Turkey Express Gets Things Started with Donation of 1,000 Turkeys*

**PROVIDENCE, R.I.** – To ensure that hungry Rhode Islanders are able to enjoy a meal together this season, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank kicked-off its Holiday Meal Drive with an ambitious goal – to collect an additional 350,000 pounds of food by the end of December.

Getting the drive started, Stop & Shop delivered 1,000 turkeys to the Food Bank on November 10. The donation was part of the company's "Turkey Express" program, which will provide 20,000 turkeys to hunger-relief agencies throughout New England before Thanksgiving.

"This year, more than ever, local food banks need help from the community," said Judi Palmer, Director of Marketing and External Communications for Stop & Shop. "The need is great and we're pleased to be able to offer some much-needed relief to families not only in Rhode Island, but across the Northeast."

To help the Food Bank meet its goal of collecting 350,000 pounds of food for the Holiday Meal Drive, people are encouraged to host a food drive, make a secure online donation at [www.rifooodbank.org](http://www.rifooodbank.org) or bring donations of food to the Food Bank: 200 Niantic Avenue in Providence. Most needed holiday items include:

- Canned ham
- Soups and stews
- Canned vegetables
- Stuffing and rice

Rhode Island's troubled economy and high unemployment have been the driving forces behind an unprecedented increase in the demand for food assistance.

"Two years ago, the Food Bank's statewide network of emergency food pantries were serving 37,000 people each month. Now each month, we're serving 55,000 people, one-third of them children," stated Andrew Schiff, Chief Executive Officer of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank."

With the holidays right around the corner, and the cold winter months looming, the Food Bank anticipates that even more Rhode Islanders will turn to food pantries for help. "Once families already struggling to make ends meet begin to receive higher heating bills, they will be faced with the difficult choice of heat or eat," added Schiff. "Right now, we're hoping for the community's continued generosity to ensure that no one in Rhode Island goes hungry this season."

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**Donations may be dropped-off at the Food Bank, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.**

Currently, the Food Bank feeds more than 55,000 Rhode Islanders each month through a statewide network of emergency food pantries. This represents a 50 percent increase over just two years ago. According to the USDA, 1 out of 8 Rhode Island households are at-risk of hunger.

**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 more than 250 member agency programs. In the past fiscal year, the Food Bank distributed 9.7 million pounds of food. For more information about the Food Bank, please visit [www.rifoodbank.org](http://www.rifoodbank.org).

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