



Eastern Illinois
Foodbank

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Eastern Illinois Foodbank Receives \$50,000 Grant from the Walmart Foundation to Fund Infrastructure and Equipment Needed for Handling Fresh Food

URBANA, Illinois – Eastern Illinois Foodbank received a \$50,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation to fund infrastructure that will ultimately help the food bank’s partner agencies secure and distribute more nutritious food to families in need. The grant will support investments in the equipment necessary to handle perishable products, such as coolers and freezers for transporting, storing and distributing food; thermometers and temperature calibration devices; shelving units, carts and more.

“One in seven people struggle with hunger in eastern Illinois, including nearly 35,000 children,” said Jim Hires, President & CEO of the Foodbank. “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 Eastern Illinois Foodbank and our partner agencies across 17 counties.”

In addition to their monetary support for items like coolers and freezers, Walmart has been a leading donor of perishable product through EIF’s *Retailers Against Hunger* program. *Retailers Against Hunger* was created in 2016 and is a partnership between local food retailers, like Walmart, and the Eastern Illinois Foodbank to help alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois. Food received from retailers is often highly nutritious and generally the most expensive for the Foodbank to obtain. Meat, dairy, produce and baked goods are among the most donated items from stores in the Retailers Against Hunger program. Last year, local retailers donated 1,800,000 meals which were distributed through EIF’s network of food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other emergency feeding programs.

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 helping families who struggle with hunger by providing four billion meals to people in need 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, Walmart is our strongest retail partnership as the stores in our area donated more than 1.3 million pounds of product last year. Additionally, the Walmart Foundation donated nearly \$90,000 in grant funds to Eastern Illinois Foodbank in FY17.

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Eastern Illinois Foodbank works to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois through cooperation with a network of food pantries, agencies and other programs. The Foodbank distributes donated and discounted food throughout a 17-county service area in cooperation with over 200 member agencies and programs. Through these agencies, the Foodbank provides meals to more than 116,000 men, women and children each year. The Eastern Illinois Foodbank is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Illinois, the United Way of Coles County, and the United Way of Champaign County. For more information, visit eifoodbank.org.