



# News Release

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Heather Collier  
573-471-1818, hcollier@semofoodbank.org

## **SEMO FOOD BANK RECEIVES GRANT TO SUPPORT VETERANS HEALTHY FOOD PROGRAM**

Sikeston, MO (April 16, 2024) – Southeast Missouri Food Bank has been awarded a grant from the Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust to support the food bank's Veterans Healthy Food Surplus Program.

SEMO Food Bank began providing boxes of healthy food to veterans in 2019 through a continuing partnership with the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff. The program expanded in 2021, serving 75 veterans each month. Eighty-eight percent of the 58 veterans in the program who completed both a pre- and post-survey reported improved health with access to healthier foods.

DAV Charitable Trust awarded \$63,700 to support the program.

"This is a program with proven results," said Joey Keys, chief executive officer of SEMO Food Bank. "We know that providing veterans with access to nutritious food is helping improve their overall health. These men and women have already sacrificed so much for our country; we're honored to be able to provide them with a resource to support their health. We appreciate DAV's generous contribution to this program."

The boxes are distributed through the VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff, with veterans receiving 35 to 40 pounds of food, including lean protein and fresh fruit and vegetables, each month.

The Veterans Healthy Food Surplus is part of the Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program at the Pershing VA Medical Center. For information on future food distributions, veterans may contact Ashley Aubuchon at 573-778-4386.

Southeast Missouri Food Bank serves 80,000 individuals each month across its 16-county service area, which includes some of the highest rates of hunger in the state. For more information about the food bank and its programs, visit [www.semofoodbank.org](http://www.semofoodbank.org).

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## **About DAV**

DAV provides a lifetime of support for veterans of all generations and their families, in positive, life-changing ways. We ensure veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits they deserve, provide care and support during tough times, advocate for the veteran community on Capitol Hill, connect veterans with meaningful employment and so much more. We provide free, professional assistance to more than 1 million veterans every year to connect them with the healthcare, disability, employment, education and financial benefits they have earned through military service. The past 100 years, we have submitted more than 12 million claims on their behalf. If you need help or know someone who needs help, contact your local DAV office.

## **About Southeast Missouri Food Bank**

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build healthy communities. The food bank provides food to 140 charitable and disaster relief programs in Southeast Missouri. These member agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence and homeless shelters. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also holds regular mobile food distributions and provides monthly boxes of food to 5,575 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to 1,200 students in area school districts. The food bank's 16-county coverage area includes Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard and Wayne counties. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or scheduling a time to volunteer. Visit [semofoodbank.org](http://semofoodbank.org) for more information.