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October 2025



Standing Together Through the Shutdown

When Federal Support Pauses, the Community Steps Up

The Missouri Department of Social Services recently announced that **SNAP benefits will not be distributed in November** due to the ongoing federal government shutdown. With around **650,000 Missourians** relying on SNAP benefits each month, this decision will have a profound impact on individuals and families who need SNAP to buy groceries. Many of these households consist of **children, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities**.

SNAP payments are typically staggered throughout the month, so the effects will be felt more severely as the month goes on, but **by Thanksgiving, many families will be struggling to put food on the table**. In addition, grocery stores will see decreased sales as shoppers who used SNAP benefits will no longer have that money to spend. School meal programs will become more important than ever for kids who depend on breakfast and lunch at school.

Operation Food Search's pantry partners are already seeing an increase in demand, sometimes as high as 50%. Though food banks and pantries have faced spikes in need during crises, such as the pandemic and the tornado, **this loss of government aid is unprecedented in recent years**. Even when federal workers are able to return, aid from programs like SNAP will be slow to restart due to backlogs.



WHAT OFS IS DOING

- **Scaling up distribution.** We're meeting with our network of pantry partners to plan for the increased need.
- **Extending MetroMarket.** Our newly-expanded MetroMarket program has increased its number of markets and now operates year-round.
- **Keeping kids fed.** If USDA funding is cut to child meal programs, such as afterschool meals, OFS will self-fund through the end of 2025 (and possibly beyond).
- **Expanding Thanksgiving support.** We've increased our annual "Nourishing our Neighbors" Thanksgiving distribution on 11/20 to provide 1,200 households with turkeys and non-perishable side dishes.
- **Adding food distribution events.** This week's partnership with Whole Foods, which provided 400 people with over 23,000 pounds of food, is just one example of the impact we can make with the help of our partners.
- **Providing resources.** The [Meal Map & Hotline](#) and the [Child Meal Map](#) on our website help families locate free meals in their area.

- **Activating donors and reserves.** We're reaching out to our community of support for funding and may draw on emergency funds to sustain increased operations.



Time and again, the St. Louis region has proven to be resilient and generous to their neighbors in need. Together, we can make sure no one in our community goes hungry this November.

- **Donate:** [Make a gift online](#) to help us purchase and distribute food where it's needed most.
- **Double your donation:** [Check to see](#) if your company matches charitable gifts.
- **Collect Food:** [A simple food drive](#) held on your block or at your school or office can provide crucial shelf-stable items for families facing hunger. Consider a virtual food drive as an easy online alternative!
- **Fundraise:** Build-A-Benefit by [hosting your own fundraiser](#) to rally your friends, coworkers, or faith community to contribute funds to this urgent cause.
- **Advocate:** [Contact your senators](#) and [representatives](#) to share your concern about how these cuts affect Missouri families.

The coming weeks will test our community's resolve and resources, but also its compassion. **With your support**, Operation Food Search will continue to strive to ensure **no child, senior, or family faces hunger alone.**

HELP NOW

WARNERS' WARM-UP

Teaming up to keep the Bi-State warm since 2001

October 20 – November 2, 2025

2024 Community Impact



7,101
Coats & Winter Items



From 144
Locations



Given to 85
Social Service Agencies

Keep Children & Families Warm this Winter

The 25th Annual Warners' Warm-Up coat drive runs through November 2, 2025!

First Things First, **Kurt and Brenda Warner**, and Operation Food Search are once again teaming up to collect new and gently used winter coats of all sizes for children and adults in need across the bi-state region.

With more than **100 drop-off locations** throughout greater St. Louis, it's easy to help your neighbors stay warm this winter.

What began in 2001 as a one-day drive before a **St. Louis Rams game** has grown into a beloved annual tradition, collecting roughly 10,000 coats each year. Operation Food Search distributes all donated coats through our network of **schools, shelters, and social service agencies**, ensuring they reach families who need them most.

To date, more than **300,000 coats** have been shared with our community — a testament to the region's incredible generosity.

Find drop off locations, online donation options and more [here](#).



Scouting for Food Turns 40!

Watch for blue Scouting for Food bags to appear on neighborhood doorsteps **the weekend of November 15, 2025!**

Scouting for Food is the Greater St. Louis Area Council's largest single-day community service event—and one of the region's **most important food drives supporting Operation Food Search** and our partner pantries. Each fall, thousands of Scouts, parents, and leaders take to the streets to distribute blue bags throughout the community.

This year marks the **40th Annual Scouting for Food**, celebrating four decades of generosity and service. Since the first drive in 1985, Scouts have collected more than **54 million cans of food**, helping feed families across the bi-state area. On average, the campaign gathers nearly 2 million items each year!

Want to help?

When you get a blue bag on your doorstep, fill it with nonperishable foods,

such as canned fruits and vegetables, soups, pasta, or peanut butter, and place it outside by **9 a.m. on Saturday, November 22.**

Operation Food Search is honored to be a beneficiary of this incredible community effort.

Learn more [here](#).

Ways To Give



Donate

Give a one-time gift or become a Hunger Healer with recurring donations.

[Give online here.](#)



Honor Someone with a Gift

Recognize someone special while helping solve the problem of hunger in a directly impactful way.

[Learn more here.](#)



Get Your Gift Matched

Search for your company to see if it matches gifts or volunteer hours.

[Search here.](#)



Plan a Legacy Gift

Include OFS in your estate plan and help ensure a better future.

[Learn more here.](#)



Give Us a Like

Spread the word about OFS and our mission to end hunger in the St. Louis region.

Committed to Excellence

Operation Food Search is certified and accredited for its accountability, transparency and adherence to strong and comprehensive industry standards.



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