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Fresh Food Year Round

MetroMarket Expands to Year-Round Service

“MetroMarket helps me save a lot of money and stay healthy,” one shopper told us in a recent survey about our fresh food market. It’s the kind of feedback we’ve become used to hearing over the last several years, and one of many indicators of the demand for expanding the program. Whether MetroMarket comes to a neighborhood via one of our farmers trucks or as an indoor market, the impact is consistent: people in areas with little access to fresh food are able to shop for produce, proteins, and other groceries at affordable prices—at or below cost.

The OFS MetroMarket has continued to evolve in exciting ways over the years, but for the first time this winter, the program is operating year

Fresh Food Year Round (Continued)

round. MetroMarket now runs five days a week and reaches thousands more individuals and families across Missouri and Illinois. In the next fiscal year, MetroMarket is projected to grow to 665 total markets, up from 388 in 2025.

“Families in the areas we serve need reliable access to fresh food all year, and now we can deliver it,” said Jessica Murphy, Senior MetroMarket Manager. “Moving to a year-round schedule allows us to reach more than 23,000 households and nearly 70,000 individuals in the coming year. That level of impact simply wasn’t possible with a seasonal model.”

An Adaptable Resource When It Matters Most

Beyond providing low-cost grocery items, MetroMarket has proven to be a flexible and responsive resource during times of increased need. With the support of our generous donors and corporate partners, markets were offered at no cost in neighborhoods most impacted by the tornado and severe storms last year. During the SNAP crisis last fall, donor support also made it possible for OFS to provide \$15 vouchers to SNAP recipients shopping at MetroMarket.



Positive Experiences, Real Impact

Results from our fall shopper survey reinforce what we hear every day from neighbors:

- ✓ Nearly all shoppers say MetroMarket makes life easier by offering affordable, reliable access to groceries.
- ✓ More than 95% report saving money for other essentials like transportation or prescriptions.
- ✓ All respondents say they are eating more fruits and vegetables because of MetroMarket.
- ✓ Over 95% say a MetroMarket location is convenient for them.
- ✓ 100% of shoppers report being satisfied with their MetroMarket experience.

We are deeply grateful for the support that has made this growth possible. Thank you for helping Operation Food Search deliver fresh, affordable, dependable food access to tens of thousands of individuals and families, all year long.

What Your Support Made Possible in 2025

(Oct. 1, 2024 – Sept. 30, 2025)

Highlights from Our Impact Report

2025 was a year marked by distinct challenges in our region: devastating storms, rising food prices, and growing uncertainty for families already living on the edge. But, together, we were ready—ready to respond, ready to adapt, and ready to nourish our neighbors when it mattered most. With our expanded facility, more than four decades of experience healing hunger, and incredible supporters like you, we helped turn a time of dire need into collective action. The results are inspiring: a community marked by resilience and generosity, sharing a vision of a future free from hunger—all because you stepped up.

A YEAR OF CHALLENGES

Severe Weather Disruptions

When powerful storms and tornadoes tore through our region in May, homes were damaged and families were displaced. The need for food assistance and basic necessities surged as neighbors worked to recover and rebuild.



Rising Food Prices

Inflation and supply chain pressures continued to push grocery prices up, rising 25–30% compared to five years earlier. Individuals and families were forced to stretch their limited budgets even further, making nutritious food harder to afford just as the need was increasing.



Economic Uncertainty

Job instability and the rising cost of living created food insecurity where it hadn't existed before and deepened the need for those already struggling. Requests for food assistance increased across our network.



READY TO RESPOND

Powered by More than 40 Years of Partnership

Because of our long history of trusted community partnerships—and the support of donors like you—we were able to respond immediately after the tornado, delivering food and resources where they were needed most.



Prepared Through Growth and Expansion

The investment in our facility renovation and expanded capacity meant we were ready for increased demand during a time of economic uncertainty, allowing us to nourish more people without interruption.



Increased Access to Nourishing Food

Generous support for the expansion of our MetroMarket program meant we could increase the number of markets in our service area. Neighborhoods with little access to fresh food have benefited from affordable, nutritious produce, protein and pantry staples.



Your Support (Continued)

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

We distributed more than **\$32 million worth of food in 25 counties in Missouri and Illinois** through our programs and partner network.

Child Meals:

688,618	56,321	58,864
weekend meals	after-school meals	summer meals

Community Nutrition:

- ⇒ **Nearly 3,000 individuals** participated in Community Nutrition classes and cooking demos.
- ⇒ OFS **rescued 13,264 pounds** of fresh produce through our gleaning program.
- ⇒ OFS MetroMarket served more than **39,000 individuals at 388 markets**.

View the 2025 Annual Report →



What's Cooking in the Teaching Kitchen



Mexican Street Corn

FEATURED RECIPE

Mexican Street Corn

Scan to View Recipe →



Our **Mexican Street Corn Bowl** is a vibrant, budget-friendly meal that's perfect for weeknight dinners or casual gatherings. Inspired by traditional *elote* (Mexican street corn), this bowl builds on the classic flavors you love—sweet corn charred for a smoky edge, creamy tangy dressing, zesty lime, and a salty cheese finish—to create a satisfying dish that's bursting with color and texture. It's incredibly customizable, so you can make it **with chicken for extra protein** or leave it out for a vegetarian option. You can make this dish in 30 minutes, and the recipe makes three to four servings.

Enjoy a cooking class for your group up to 16 in the OFS Kitchen. Contact Jason Goldman to learn more at Jason.Goldman@operationfoodsearch.org.

Giving Update: What to Know About 2026 Tax Law Changes

How New Rules May Affect Charitable Giving

New federal tax law changes will take effect in 2026, and while everyone's situation is different, we put together a few highlights our supporters may want to be aware of:

- 1** The higher standard deduction remains in place. For 2025, it is:
 - \$15,750 for single filers
 - \$31,500 for married couples filing jointly
 - The deduction will be indexed for inflation going forward.
- 2** Taxpayers 65 and older may qualify for an additional \$6,000 deduction (2025–2028), subject to income limits.
- 3** The State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction cap increases from \$10,000 to \$40,000, which may encourage some households to itemize again.

- 4** Non-itemizers may deduct up to \$1,000 (individuals) or \$2,000 (joint filers) for cash gifts to public charities.
- 5** Donor-advised fund (DAF) contributions are not eligible for the new non-itemizer deduction.
- 6** Corporations must donate at least 1% of taxable income to qualified charities to remain eligible for certain deductions.

We encourage you to consult a tax professional to understand what it means for you—and how your generosity can continue to make the greatest impact.