



For Immediate Release
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Vermont Everyone Eats Continues Through December 31

Upper Valley Everyone Eats tops more than 130,000 meals

October 6, 2021, White River Junction, Vt. – Vermont Everyone Eats (VEE), the innovative COVID-19 response program that provides meal assistance to Vermonters while supporting local restaurants, farmers, and food producers, has received an extension to continue through December of this year.

Program managers had anticipated that meals would end on September 30, but with funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Vermont has extended the program to address the ongoing economic instability of restaurants and the food insecurity experienced by nearly one in four Vermonters.

Since the start of Everyone Eats, 14 community hubs have worked with more than 200 restaurants sourcing ingredients from more than 300 farmers to distribute more than 1.6 million meals to Vermonters all over the state.

One such hub is Upper Valley Everyone Eats (UVEE), administered by Vital Communities. Since September 2020, UVEE has worked with 10 Upper Valley restaurants to provide over 133,000 meals to Vermonters experiencing food insecurity. UVEE has worked with more than 45 distribution partners, all on the Vermont side of the Connecticut River, especially Listen Community Services, the Upper Valley Haven, Willing Hands, and a team of dedicated volunteer drivers who have delivered meals to every corner of the Vital Communities region.

This network-building is also reflected state-wide. “Over the course of the past year, it has been astounding to watch so many VEE partners work together to feed and care for one another,” Jean Hamilton, Vermont Everyone Eats Statewide Coordinator for Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), the statewide administrator, said this week. “A lot of hard work has gone into this program, and everyone I talk with – volunteers, restaurants, meal recipients, lawmakers, and state employees – is overjoyed that we can continue for another three months. I am so proud that our partners across state agencies, FEMA, the legislature, SEVCA, and local communities are continuing to offer this program. Not only are we meeting today’s acute challenges, we are also learning to work together in new, collaborative ways that can help improve how our communities build health and resiliency into the future.”

Everyone Eats was inspired by grassroots initiatives from communities across Vermont. Originally designed as a five-month program, VEE has been extended multiple times to mitigate high levels of food insecurity and economic instability exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis. In July 2020, Vermont lawmakers

allocated funds from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to launch Vermont Everyone Eats and the program was subsequently extended with FEMA funding. Vermont Everyone Eats is operated through a network of community hubs located throughout the state.

To enroll in Everyone Eats, contact your local hub at uvee@vitalcommunities.org

For more information about Vermont Everyone Eats visit www.vteveryoneeats.org or explore community posts at #vteveryoneeats. Learn more about Upper Valley Everyone Eats at <https://vitalcommunities.org/food-and-farm/everyone-eats/>.

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[Vital Communities](http://vitalcommunities.org) cultivates the civic, environmental and economic vitality of the Upper Valley. We bring people together, bridging boundaries and engaging our whole community to create positive change. Learn more at vitalcommunities.org.