



IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Reinventing How Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens Feed Our Communities

**East Hartford, Conn.** – End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!), a statewide anti-hunger non-profit organization, has a powerful new tool to address hunger in Connecticut. The Full Shelves Initiative (FSI) is a groundbreaking venture created to help food pantries purchase food cost effectively, share surplus inventory efficiently, and connect them to suppliers and services that will make a difference in how they provide for their community.

EHC!'s mission is to eliminate hunger and promote healthy nutrition and food security through outreach and support, public education, and legislative and administrative advocacy. With offices located in East Hartford, EHC! works with the state's food banks to address the needs of food assistance agencies throughout CT. However, beyond food bank food distribution, there is no coordinated statewide support for food pantries and soup kitchens to purchase food; efficiently share food between organizations; provide support for supplies and services; share information and problem-solve together; or communicate with one another.

In response to these challenges, EHC! created the Full Shelves Initiative, designed to address these deficiencies with innovative tools and services including:

- a wholesale buying group offering contract pricing for food, including delivery,
- a proprietary online resource, "The CT Food Exchange," allowing agencies to coordinate surplus food sharing,
- a resource of best practices, supplies, and services,
- a forum for communicating and crowdsourced problem-solving.

EHC!'s target market includes food pantries, soup kitchens, mobile pantries, senior outreach and home-bound assistance programs, and community-based afterschool/summer/weekend backpack programs. The program also extends support to non-profits such as YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs throughout the state.

"We began developing the Full Shelves Initiative when the pandemic highlighted gaps in our state's food assistance needs," said Julieth Callejas, Executive Director of End Hunger Connecticut!. "Connecticut's food bank system provides vital support to pantries, soup kitchens and other non-profit agencies. However, these organizations could benefit from additional tools to meet the ever-increasing needs to feed their communities. Many organizations in our state do great work but do it alone. Our goal is to collectivize purchasing power, talent, and expertise to create a powerful, self-sustaining network working together to reduce hunger in our state."

The new venture is supported by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, who recently provided a matching grant of \$20,000 to support EHC's commitment to raise \$100,000 to sustain the program for the next two years. [Read more about that generous donation here.](#) The Connecticut Community Foundation also recently donated \$10,000 to EHC! to support FSI. Corporate, local business, and private donations of any level are currently welcomed at [www.endhungerct.org/donate](http://www.endhungerct.org/donate). To learn more about the Full Shelves Initiative, contact Resource Director, Patrick Dowling at [pdowling@endhungerct.org](mailto:pdowling@endhungerct.org) or call 860.338.7371.

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