



For Immediate Release

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Hannaford donates \$1.3 million to Maine Council on Aging to improve the well-being of older adults in New England and New York

Hannaford's new Connection, Health and Equity Through Food program enhances access to food and social connection, creating a path to better health for older adults

Scarborough, Maine – Hannaford Supermarkets is donating \$1.3 million to the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) to launch a major new initiative aimed at improving the well-being of older adults in New England and New York.

Under the banner of Hannaford's "Eat Well, Be Well - A Path to Better Health" initiative, the Connection, Health and Equity Through Food (CHEF) program will fund organizations and projects supporting the needs of diverse older adults, including improving access to food and increasing opportunities for socialization.

According to America's Health Rankings, about 10 percent of adults ages 60 and over experience food insecurity - illuminating the need to develop a system of support for older adults.

"As a grocery retailer, we understand the pivotal role that food plays in our overall wellness. And we know older adults face unique challenges when it comes to physical and mental health," said Mike Vail, President of Hannaford Supermarkets. "Hannaford believes creating healthy communities requires an investment in initiatives that help all members of our community thrive, including older people. We are pleased to partner with the Maine Council on Aging as we work together to enhance the well-being and quality of life for older individuals."

MCOA, the regional leader in the movement to advance equity in aging, oversees a multi-disciplinary network of more than 135 organizations and businesses in Maine, and leads the Tri-State Learning Collaborative on Aging, a shared learning network of thousands of professionals and volunteers across the region. The Collaborative, which includes social services, healthcare, research and policy organizations serving older people, currently operates in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. CHEF is allowing MCOA to expand the Collaborative to Massachusetts and New York.

Through the CHEF program, MCOA will evaluate opportunities to distribute “micro-grants” to organizations, programs and projects serving older people throughout New England and New York. CHEF includes a focus on supporting diverse older adults, including the BIPOC community, LGBTQ+ individuals, adults with disabilities, immigrants, and military veterans, as well as those living in rural areas with limited access to transportation. Grant applications are currently being accepted online at www.agefriendly.community.

“Too many older people are struggling to meet their basic needs and many feel invisible and alone in this struggle,” said Jess Maurer, Executive Director of the Maine Council on Aging. “This support from Hannaford will not only help solve some of the most challenging issues facing older people in our region but also sends a strong message to older people that they are seen and not forgotten, that they remain valued members of our communities.”

In partnership with EqualityMaine, Hannaford and MCOA announced the CHEF program today, December 12, during a press conference at the Equality Community Center in Portland against the backdrop of a community lunch for diverse older people. With support from the Southern Maine Agency on Aging, EqualityMaine hosts regular community meals for older LGBTQ+ people, providing opportunities for socialization and access to nutritious food—an example of the type of programming eligible for grant funding under the CHEF initiative.

“Food insecurity and social isolation are two issues that have a significant negative impact on the health and well-being of older people, particularly diverse older people. Both can lead to depression, anxiety, disease, and cognitive decline,” said Marilyn Gugliucci, Professor and the Director of Geriatrics Research at the University of New England,

College of Osteopathic Medicine, who spoke during the press conference at EqualityMaine. “Investing in programs that connect older people to reliable sources of food and social connection helps older people remain healthy and active members of our communities.”

In addition to the grants, the CHEF program involves several other components, including a series of webinars focused on addressing food insecurity and social isolation in older adults, as well as the establishment of a Network Advisory Committee to recruit partners. MCOA will also produce a monthly newsletter and will educate Hannaford associates on how to better serve older customers and meet the needs of older associates.

Hannaford introduced Eat Well, Be Well in September 2022 to help break down the barriers that challenge access to healthy, nutritious food and wellness resources. Hannaford has donated nearly \$3 million to organizations under the Eat Well, Be Well banner.

To learn more about the overall impact of the CHEF program, view the video.

For more information about Hannaford’s community efforts and charitable giving initiatives, visit [Hannaford.com/HannafordHelps](https://www.hannaford.com/HannafordHelps).

About Hannaford Supermarkets

Hannaford Supermarkets operates 187 stores in the Northeast, most with full-service pharmacies. Stores are located in Maine, New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. All are committed to offering great fresh food, convenient experiences and everyday low prices. Hannaford also is an active and committed community partner—focusing on fighting hunger, supporting youth development, and helping people live healthier lives. Hannaford is an industry leader in sustainability with a strong commitment to reducing waste and protecting the environment. Hannaford diverts or donates all food at risk of going to waste—sending no food to landfills. In 2022, Hannaford donated 25 million pounds of food to hunger relief organizations and prevented 65 million pounds of food waste from reaching landfills. Hannaford employs nearly 30,000 associates and is based in Scarborough, Maine. Additional information can be found at [Hannaford.com](https://www.hannaford.com).

About Maine Council on Aging

The Maine Council on Aging is a broad, multi-disciplinary network of more than 135 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older Mainers working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives as we age in our homes and community settings. For more information, visit: MaineCouncilOnAging.org.

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Media Contact:

Caitlin Cortelyou

External Communications Manager, Hannaford Supermarkets

207-885-3132

caitlin.cortelyou@hannaford.com