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Volunteers prepare for a Mobile Food Pantry at the Hannahville Community Center in Menominee County this June.

Food Bank Receives New Funding for Menominee Hunger Relief

Menominee, Michigan — Oct. 17, 2016 — [Feeding America West Michigan](#) just received two grants to support its hunger-relief efforts in Menominee. The grants, totaling nearly \$11,000, will bring more [Mobile Food Pantries](#) to the city and establish a program for women veterans in need.

The [Caterpillar Foundation](#) has granted \$9,822 to underwrite Mobile Food Pantries at [Abundant Life Mission Center](#) in downtown Menominee. Caterpillar, which has operations in Menominee, also funded the partnership between Feeding America West Michigan and Abundant Life in 2015.

Pastor Dave Pennell says each Mobile Pantry is able to serve about 300 households. Pennell is grateful that Caterpillar acknowledges the reality of hunger in the community.

“It’s a big deal, stepping up to the plate and realizing there is an issue here in Menominee County,” Pennell says. “It really puts a feather in their cap to recognize it and step up where others haven’t.”

In addition to hosting Mobile Pantries, Abundant Life works with Feeding America West Michigan to provide food to residents of the mission. Pennell says Abundant Life is currently hosting 66 people, 25 of whom are children.

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Funding to feed women veterans and their families comes from the [Women's Giving Circle Committee](#) of the M&M Area Community Foundation. The \$1,000 grant will fund a pilot project in Menominee. The goal, says agency relations manger Nancy Ullrey, is to help a local veterans assistance program add food to the list of needs they're able to meet.

While [veterans are at high risk of food insecurity](#), Ullrey says stigma around food pantry use can discourage them from seeking help. "We found out that there was a big need for a food pantry for veterans run by veterans," she says. "If they have food through their resource office, it's a more natural fit."

She also says food can serve as an outreach tool for veterans who may need other services. "If you feed them, they will come."

Feeding America West Michigan is finalizing details of the arrangement with the host agency.

Paula Gruszynski, executive director of the M&M Area Community Foundation, says Feeding America West Michigan's network of local partnerships makes it an attractive organization to fund: "The fact that Feeding America has such a great system in place and has such a great history of connecting with families that have these needs, it was an easy partnership on our part to coordinate and collaborate with Feeding America."

"If it's hunger needs, if it's sickness needs, we want to be there. It's all an effort to meet the community where they're at," Gruszynski says.

The M&M Area Community Foundation also funds partnerships between Feeding America West Michigan and backpack programs at [Hannahville Indian School](#) and [Carney-Nadeau Public School](#).

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About Feeding America West Michigan. Serving local families in need since 1981, Feeding America West Michigan reclaims safe surplus food from farmers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers. That food is distributed through a network of nearly 1,100 food pantries, youth programs, and other hunger-relief agencies in 40 counties from the Indiana border through the Upper Peninsula. Each year, an estimated 492,100 people receive food from Feeding America West Michigan. For more information, visit FeedWM.org.

About the Caterpillar Foundation. Founded in 1952, Caterpillar's philanthropic organization, the Caterpillar Foundation has contributed more than \$650 million to help make sustainable progress possible around the world by providing program support in the areas of environmental sustainability, access to education and basic human needs. To learn more about the global impact of the Caterpillar Foundation, please visit TogetherStronger.com.

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About the Women's Giving Circle at MMACF. The Women's Giving Circle of Marinette & Menominee counties is an endowed field-of-interest fund affiliated with the M&M Area Community Foundation. Its mission is to support organizations that address issues of interest to women and girls, and to build a community of women to support and promote philanthropy in the Marinette-Menominee area. To learn more, visit MMCommunityFoundation.org.