

MEND Completes Impact100 Essex Two-Year Grant

Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity (MEND), our 2019 Impact Grant Recipient, just completed their two year grant to address food insecurity in Essex County by:

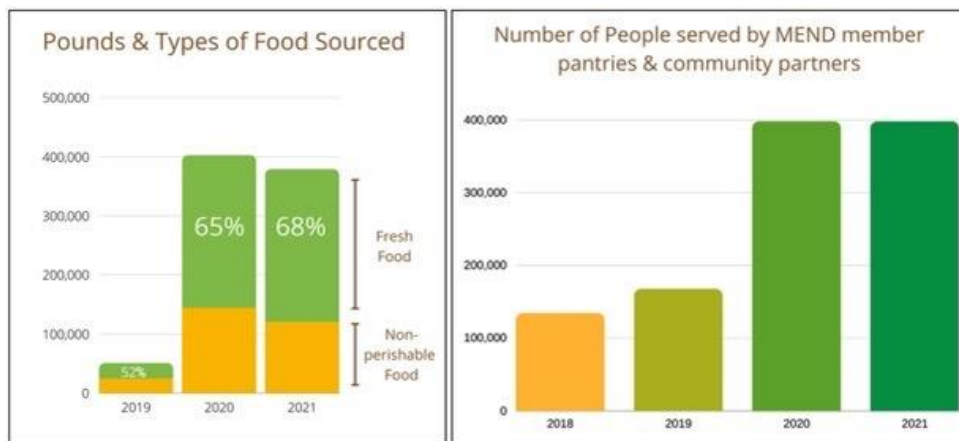
- Creating the *Fresh Food Hub (HUB)*, a centrally-located, cold-storage equipped physical space to support the growing fresh food needs in Essex County and
- Purchasing a van, affectionately called the *Sweet Pea*, to transport fresh and healthy food from farms and other sources

The Impact100 Essex grant was received two months before the pandemic hit. MEND accelerated its timeline for implementation and then went beyond their original plan to address the fresh food needs of Essex County residents.

Impact

As a result of the HUB launch, MEND significantly increased fresh food sourcing and support, while increasing the number of people served.

- Overall pounds sourced increased 8X from 50,000 to about 400,000 over the last three years. At the same time, the percentage of fresh food support increased from 52% to 68%
- Number of people served by MEND pantries more than tripled from 125,000 in 2018 to 400,000 in 2021

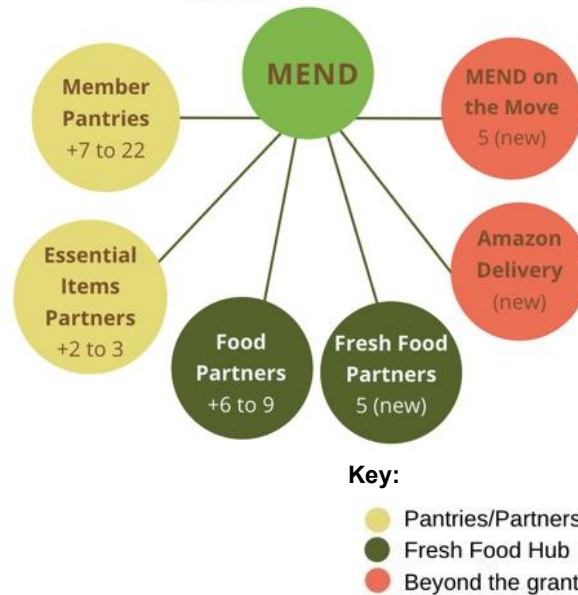


Having the Fresh Food Hub enabled MEND to add new pantries and fresh food partners with most of the growth happening during the 2 year grant period.

Above and Beyond the Grant

Based on regular engagement and input from their pantry partners, MEND decided to launch a pilot program in 2021 called *MEND on the Move* to meet people where they are - via home deliveries made possible with support from Amazon and via Mobile Markets (free farmers markets held on site at select community partner locations). Based on the success of the pilot, MEND decided to expand it to a year-round program for 2022.

**MEND Pantries, Sourcing and Distribution
2015 to 2021**



As MEND increased the number of new successful programs, its staff increased from two to a team of six as volunteer engagements sky-rocketed. Volunteer engagement grew from eight volunteer shifts/month to over sixty volunteer shifts/mo while creating new opportunities for corporate and community volunteers.

If you are looking for a way to continue support of MEND, please consider either [volunteering](#) or [hosting a drive](#) or donating directly to MEND.

Impact100 Essex is grateful that our \$120,000 Impact Grant helped MEND grow exponentially with pounds of food sourced, number of people served, and their community engagement with increased volunteer shifts. We look forward to seeing them continue to grow in the future.