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**Preble Street announces matching grant challenge from  
the John T. Gorman Foundation for new Food Security Hub  
dedicated to ending hunger in Maine**

*Preble Street Food Security Hub will be the first food hub in Maine focused on food insecurity*

**PORTLAND, ME (December 15, 2021)** — Hunger is an everyday reality for too many Mainers. Because of the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic crisis, Preble Street is currently producing and distributing more food than ever before. For the second year in a row, Preble Street is on track to provide more than one million meals to people in need.

Because of this drastic increase in demand for food, Preble Street is launching a new **Food Security Hub**, a sustainable, comprehensive, and collaborative approach dedicated to ending hunger in Maine. The Preble Street Food Security Hub, the first food hub in Maine focused on food insecurity, will be located at 75 Darling Avenue in South Portland. When completed in 2023, this 30,000 square foot mixed-use space will function as an industrial kitchen, food processing center, educational/vocational site, office space, and conference center dedicated to collective advocacy work and efforts to end hunger.

Preble Street has received initial funding for this \$8 million project from several organizations, including significant support from the John T. Gorman Foundation, which advances and invests in innovative ideas and opportunities that improve the lives of Maine's most vulnerable people. The John T. Gorman Foundation is providing a gift of \$1 million, half of which has a matching requirement. Preble Street is looking to raise an additional \$500,000 to meet that challenge and secure these funds.

"Throughout the pandemic, Preble Street and other organizations have done an incredible job of not only meeting a dramatically increased need for food assistance but also employing new ways to reach people and ease access," said John T. Gorman Foundation President & CEO Tony Cipollone. "This new Food Security Hub is poised to build on that momentum, making it possible to provide high-quality and culturally-appropriate meals to even more people and foster collaboration among organizations working together to address this critical need. The John T. Gorman Foundation is privileged to support this initiative and the pivotal role it will play toward ending hunger in our communities."

"Our vision for this Food Security Hub is to scale up Preble Street's ability to feed more people in Maine while providing a way to bring anti-hunger and social justice organizations together under one roof to address food security and food justice. We are so appreciative of the John T.

Gorman Foundation's generous gift to launch this collaborative effort," says Mark Swann, Executive Director, Preble Street. "Meeting the needs of our community requires creative thinking, new approaches, and expanded resources. We are hoping to receive some ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding but also need to raise private dollars to fully realize our vision for the Food Security Hub. Food insecurity is a solvable problem, but it will take many organizations, partners, and funders all working together."

A key partner in this effort is **Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB)**, which sources and distributes food to more than 500 community-based organizations working statewide to improve access to nutritious food for Mainers experiencing hunger. Recognizing that a "meals-to-go" model offered not only optimal safety during a public health crisis but also improved client experience, GSFB is eager to support this partnership that fills a critical gap in "to-go" meal options, increases the capacity for culturally appropriate meals, and creates space for partners to collaborate on strategies to end hunger in Maine.

The **Hannaford Charitable Foundation**, whose mission is to invest in creating and sustaining healthy communities in their five-state region by providing financial support to nonprofit organizations and programs that focus on improvement of the root causes impacting the quality of life for our customers, associates, and neighbors, is also a key supporter of the Food Security Hub. Hannaford understands that ending hunger in Maine requires new, community-centered resources such as the Food Security Hub, which will not only help connect those at risk of going hungry with easy-to-access meals but also provide a space for people to work together toward ensuring that no one goes without the nutritious food they need.

Other currently committed partners include **The Locker Project**, which will utilize the Food Security Hub to provide access to healthy food at 34 public schools, and **Cumberland County Food Security Council**, which initiates and facilitates collaborative action toward a just, resilient, and sustainable food system.

"Besides giving us the ability to feed more people, the Food Security Hub will also help us provide more nutritious food, while reducing food waste. Through partnerships with small-scale farms growing local produce, the Food Security Hub will support local agriculture," says Natalie Varrallo, Preble Street Food Programs Director.

"Our goal is to create a comprehensive food system that extends the life of food, reduces food waste, creates more access to culturally appropriate meals, and provides more sustainable and nutritious food," adds Swann. "This is the time to learn from the pandemic, think big, and look for innovative ways to bring food insecurity in Maine to an end. We hope that more organizations and people in Maine will join us on this journey."

Once completed, the Preble Street Food Security Hub will offer:

- **An Industrial Kitchen** with the space and equipment necessary to efficiently produce a large volume of healthy meals. The kitchen will feature open floor plans as well as space for staff, client, and volunteer activities as well as educational/vocational opportunities.
- **A Food Processing Center** to increase access to nutritious fruits and vegetables year-round and mitigate waste. Because Maine has a short growing season, processing farm produce and increasing preservation will improve access to a variety of nutritious foods. Utilizing equipment like blanchers, blast freezers, and dehydrators, the Preble Street Food Security Hub will reduce food loss and waste and operate more efficiently and sustainably.
- **Dedicated Conference Center and Office Space** to host research efforts, discussions, and events about ending hunger in Maine.

Phase One of this project is underway and Preble Street Food Programs, which has operated at 252 Oxford Street in Portland since 1993, relocated to 75 Darling Avenue in South Portland in mid-November. Preble Street's Food Pantry is temporarily operating at 14 Portland Street in Portland.

"Preble Street's Central Kitchen has served millions of meals and hosted thousands of volunteers over the past 28 years," says Swann. "I was there the day it opened and am incredibly proud of the important work done there, but our need for food preparation, storage, and production has outgrown the space. The Preble Street Food Security Hub will allow us to evolve to meet these growing needs and scale our efforts to end food insecurity in Maine."

**Preble Street** is a nonprofit human service agency serving the most vulnerable people in Maine since 1975 through innovative, best-practice, client-centered programs. In addition to the largest direct service emergency food program in northern New England, Preble Street operates low-barrier programs throughout Maine providing 24/365 services for individuals and families, including homeless youth, women, veterans, and survivors of human trafficking, driven by its mission to meet urgent needs, empower people to move beyond the crises in their lives, and advocate for solutions to homelessness, hunger, and poverty. [PrebleStreet.org](http://PrebleStreet.org)

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