

While visiting and volunteering at Vermont charitable organizations Saturday and today, Rep. Peter Welch called on Vermonters to help neighbors in need this holiday season.

Touring Upper Valley Haven in White River Junction on Saturday and the Vermont Foodbank in Barre this morning, Welch cited a new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) report showing that hunger is on the rise in Vermont. Welch was also scheduled to visit the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf on Monday afternoon.

"Hunger has afflicted too many Vermont families and children for too long, and the ongoing economic downturn has only served to worsen the situation in Vermont," Welch said. "By lending a hand and helping our neighbors, we can each make an impact this holiday season. I encourage all Vermonters to do what they can to help those in need – now and every day of the year."

[According to the USDA's annual food security report](#), the percentage of Vermont families facing food shortages increased from 12.1 to 13.6 percent this year. The percentage of Vermont families suffering from chronic hunger increased from 5.7 to 6.2 percent.

[In his remarks Monday and on a new web page devoted to connecting Vermonters with charitable organizations](#), Welch highlighted five ways Vermonters can help out:

- **Donate money:** For just \$10, the Vermont Foodbank can provide 25 pounds of food to families in need.
- **Volunteer:** Consider volunteering with one of the many community organizations serving and delivering Thanksgiving meals to those in need.
- **Organize a food drive:** Work with your neighbors, business or faith organization to collect food for a Vermont food shelf.

- Clean out your closet: Take a look around your house to see if you have any unused clothing that could help keep your neighbors warm this winter.
- Support home heating assistance programs: Consider donating to one of the many organizations that provide home heating assistance to those in need.

To learn more about helping Vermonters in need, visit, www.welch.house.gov/helpingvermonters