

Point of Contact: Margaret Chatey, Communications Specialist  
Town Manager's Office  
860-429-3373 Office, 860-377-0499 Cell, [ChateyM@mansfieldct.org](mailto:ChateyM@mansfieldct.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Mansfield Families Boosted by Helping Hand Program

*Mansfield, CT January 4, 2023*– The Town of Mansfield Human Services Department is in its final days of distributing food and funding to eligible households through the Helping Hand Program. Families picked up generous food boxes, assembled by Bob's IGA in South Windham, at the final distribution as the funding ended December 31.

The program kicked off in February 2021, and has provided assistance to eligible residents affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through loss of income or increased expenses. Through the food assistance portion of the program, funded by a \$500,000 Small Cities Grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Housing, Mansfield provided assistance to more than 70 seniors on limited income who live at the Juniper Hill Village. Residents there

received free prepared meals at the common dining room. Additionally, 100 families and households throughout the community were able to access groceries customized for their needs.



At the final food distribution, households received an ample food box for the holiday season, including potatoes, carrots, a choice of chicken or pork, plus broccoli. Dorothy DelValle, Community Assistance Coordinator for the Human Services Department (*below right*) facilitated the distribution at Bob's Windham IGA working with Owner Bob Buonomano. (*shown left.*)

"We hear such positive feedback from these residents," Ms DelValle says. "One person told me 'I greatly appreciate all of the hard work you did with the groceries. It really helped my family.' Another resident shared her husband had just been laid off and told us, 'I can't tell you how much this is going to help my family.' "

The Town took great care in providing food assistance in multiple ways. Families identified their preferred shopping list and Town staff shopped for grocery staples, both perishable and non-perishable foods. Great care was taken to accommodate special dietary needs and cultural preferences. Omair Shalo at Al Basha Market in Manchester assisted in providing groceries for families with Halal diets. The program provided contact-free pickup if





Your place to grow

requested, and delivery options were available for those lacking transportation. Throughout the program, ready-to-eat meals were also purchased through local restaurants which participants could pick up to enjoy. Participating Mansfield restaurants included Little Aladdin, Moe's Southwest Grill, Pizza Mike's and Stix 'n Stones

An additional component of the program was providing Childcare Assistance. Eligible families could receive up to \$9,000 of assistance with childcare costs over a 26-week period per family, as long as they were utilizing a childcare providers licensed by the State of Connecticut or exempt from licensing requirements. In addition to daycare, families could tap this program for expenses including summer camps and before-after school care provided through the Town. About 25 families took part in this program, and 15 were able to access both the food and the childcare assistance.

Knowing that the program period was winding down, Town departments have been actively communicating with households and families who have benefitted so they might plan and apply for other assistance programs as needed.

"We are so fortunate in Mansfield to have qualified for this grant," says Patricia Schneider, Director of Human Services in Mansfield. "We know that so many families are still adapting to conditions changed by the pandemic and households are stressed by increasing costs. We were glad to implement the Helping Hand program, and are eager to help provide assistance as this grant program ends," she adds.

Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth also acknowledges the program's impact. "The success of this grant-funded program required considerable teamwork and collaboration across multiple municipal departments, and I am incredibly proud of the results our dedicated staff were able to deliver to so many individuals and families in our community during their time of need."

Funding for the Helping Hand Food and Childcare Assistance programs was provided through a Small Cities Grant from the State Connecticut Department of Housing as part of the HUD Community Development Block Grant.

###

---

---

## ABOUT THE TOWN OF MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

*Mansfield is a vibrant, diverse, and caring community that offers its residents and visitors unique cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities. Known for its excellent public schools, community-wide events, inclusive and efficient government, parks and preserves, protected open spaces, and agriculture, the Town is home to the main campus of the University of Connecticut. Principles of sustainability guide zoning and development, preserving the Town's historic character and providing for economic vitality.*

*Come and enjoy the beauty and historic traditions that Mansfield has offered for more than 300 years and see why it's your place to grow.*

[mansfieldct.gov](http://mansfieldct.gov)