



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gov. Wolf, First Lady Highlight Administration-Long Food Security Efforts During Visit to Philadelphia Food Rescue Operation

Philadelphia, PA -- Governor Tom Wolf, First Lady Frances Wolf, and Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding visited Sharing Excess, a food rescue organization, to highlight innovative food security efforts that are feeding Pennsylvanians and their legacy of work to improve food access over the past seven years.

One of Governor Wolf's very first initiatives in 2015 was an [all-inclusive executive order addressing a multitude of food security and nutrition issues](#) in the commonwealth. He and the first lady have since worked year over year to improve access to food, eliminate food deserts, and improve nutrition for Pennsylvanians. Most recently, these efforts include a new \$1 million Hunger Free Campus Initiative and a \$2 million increase in funding for the [Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System](#) (PASS) in the governor's [final budget](#).

"Since I took office, [fighting hunger was a first and foremost priority](#) for Frances and me," said Gov. Wolf. "We put together a [blueprint](#) that has worked to improve food access and affordability across the commonwealth. I'm so thrilled that the commonwealth is home to innovative people who share this priority. Together, we can end hunger."

"Sharing Excess meets an incredibly important need, and I am impressed and inspired by how they turned their passion for people into an impactful organization," said First Lady Wolf. "The thoughtfulness of this operation helps increase food access, saving what would be wasted product, and ultimately fighting food insecurity in Pennsylvania."

Sharing Excess began as a movement of Drexel University students working to address food insecurity on campus and in the surrounding community of West Philadelphia. What started as a college meal sharing program transformed to a food rescue operation. Within three years, the organization evolved into a network of hundreds of grocers, restaurants, farmers, and wholesalers – including those located at the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market -- that would contribute millions of pounds of rescued food. Today, Sharing Excess delivers an average of 100,000 pounds of food each week and is using its in-house technology to help other food rescue organizations do the same.

"Rescuing and redistributing food excess is not only sustainable, but it's also the right thing for humans to do for one another," said Sharing Excess Founder and Executive Director Evan Ehlers. "In the United States, we waste more than double the amount of food that's needed to feed everybody that struggles with food insecurity."

Since 2015, Governor Wolf and First Lady Wolf have worked to reduce barriers to access for food, strike out food apartheid, invest in improved infrastructure for the charitable food system, and support improved access to local, nutritional products for families across the commonwealth.

Their legacy of working to improve food security in Pennsylvania includes:

- [Investing in cold storage infrastructure](#) for food banks to reduce food waste and increase capacity.
- Funding the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System, which was enacted in 2010, [for the first time](#) in 2015 and increasing its funding annually thereafter, providing farmers the opportunity to put their excess product in the hands of families in need.
- Rebranding the [Pennsylvania Senior Food Box Program](#) to raise awareness, removing proof of income requirements, and offering delivery by DoorDash.
- Improving access to fresh, nutritious food in food deserts across the commonwealth through both the [Fresh Food Financing Initiative](#) and [PA Farm Bill Urban Agriculture Infrastructure Program](#).
- [Continually advocating for school children](#) to have consistent access to free, nutritious meals.
- [Raising income eligibility for Pennsylvanians](#) receiving support from Pennsylvania's network of food banks and pantries from 150% to 185% to meet the needs of more individuals.
- Increasing access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by [expanding eligibility to include community college students](#), launching [SNAP online ordering](#), streamlining the [SNAP application](#) for seniors and people with disabilities, and [increasing SNAP 50/50](#) programs to 28 across the state.

In his final budget, Governor Wolf increased funding for PASS by \$2 million, bringing the total budget to \$4.5 million. PASS works to effectively provide a mechanism for the agriculture industry to donate safe, wholesome food products to the non-profit sector while being reimbursed for the costs involved in harvesting, processing, packaging, and transporting these foods. Without PASS, these food products would otherwise be left to rot in the field, be plowed under, be dumped, or be landfilled. Under the Wolf Administration, PASS has distributed more than 22 million pounds of surplus food from farmers to Pennsylvanians in need while simultaneously generating more than \$39 million in economic output.

Additionally in the budget, Governor Wolf secured \$1 million for Pennsylvania's first-ever [Hunger Free Campus Initiative](#) to help school create or expand campus food pantries to support the 30% of college students facing food insecurity.

"Food is a basic human right. As public servants, it is not only our duty, but our responsibility to tackle food insecurity and ensure that no Pennsylvanian goes hungry," said Redding. "Governor Wolf has met that challenge head on to take away decisions of paying for bills or putting food on the table."

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