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For immediate release

BERKSHIRE BOUNTY RECEIVES \$100,000 EARMARK IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL

Berkshire County, MA-Berkshire Bounty is pleased to announce the award of a \$100,000 earmark in the recently passed State Economic Development Bill. The strong advocacy and support of Representative Smitty Pignatelli and his office helped to secure this important investment in fighting food insecurity in Berkshire County.

"Food insecurity in the Berkshires is somewhat of a silent problem, but it is not absent. Berkshire Bounty has been a champion for our food insecure residents and I am proud to have secured this earmark so they can continue their important and incredible work." -Representative Smitty Pignatelli

Berkshire Bounty is a 501(c)3 food rescue organization with the mission to fight food insecurity by collecting, purchasing and delivering nutritious food to build capacity, close gaps and improve quality of food in the emergency food system. Berkshire Bounty works with a network of 25 retailers and local farms and distributes food to 19 food pantries, senior centers and school districts all throughout Berkshire County.

This earmark comes at an important time as food insecurity rates continue to increase in our region. Berkshire Bounty's food distribution partners are reporting increasing numbers of clients requesting food assistance and the need for more food to meet the growing demand. Peoples Pantry in Great Barrington reports 40 additional families this month. The Christian Center in Pittsfield has seen an increase from 300 to 700 families. This increase has been ongoing since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic and is continuing to grow due to inflation, the high cost of food and the end of federal stimulus benefits. In addition, the colder temperatures present additional barriers which reduce access to nutritious food by vulnerable populations.

“We continue to see a strong demand for fresh, nutritious food from the community in need and Berkshire Bounty has the infrastructure in place to meet this need. With this funding, we are in a position to increase our impact substantially,” says Morgan Ovitsky, Executive Director of Berkshire Bounty.

Berkshire Bounty staff and the Board of Directors will be working closely with food distribution partners and community organizations over the next few months to carefully consider how to prioritize the use of these funds.

“This funding will be used to materially increase Berkshire Bounty's geographic and functional expansion while also reinforcing its sustainability as an effective and impactful organization,” say Mark Lefenfeld and Jay Weintraub, Co-Founders and Co-Presidents of Berkshire Bounty.

About Berkshire Bounty

Berkshire Bounty is a food rescue organization providing food to those in need by collecting and delivering nutritious food to food pantries, senior centers, school districts and other food access sites. Berkshire Bounty uses a significant amount of funds to purchase nutritious food including dairy, eggs, meat, fresh produce and culturally appropriate food.

Learn more at www.berkshirebounty.org.