

Community Food Initiatives represents Ohio as one of 51 finalists in the running to earn \$50,000 for a community project that will increase access to healthy fresh foods for food pantries, and offer cooking and nutrition classes to food pantry patrons. Through a public vote at [www.Facebook.com/TomsofMaine](https://www.facebook.com/TomsofMaine) now through October 9th, local residents can help bring the funding to Athens County with the simple click of a mouse.

The "50 States for Good" program seeks to uncover local nonprofit groups that address urgent community needs and engage volunteers to get the work done. Community Food Initiatives' project "Fresh Eats: Discovery Kitchen" plans to increase access to fresh foods and teach cooking and nutrition skills among food pantry patrons. If CFI wins, The Donation Station, an existing Community Food Initiatives (CFI) program that distributes fresh local food from the Athens Farmers Market and area gardeners to food pantries and social service agencies, will expand to offer more support services to increase the ability of food pantries and agencies to offer more fresh food to their patrons. Additionally, cooking and nutrition classes will be offered for their patrons using the USDA My Plate model to increase consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

"It is our firm belief at Community Food Initiatives, that everyone deserves access to fresh and healthy food," says Mary Nally, CFI Executive Director. "The Tom's of Maine funding will help advance the Donation Station and new Discovery Kitchen program. We now look to our community to help build the support needed to bring this funding to Athens County, Ohio."

Non-profits from each state were selected by an independent panel of judges for the "50 States for Good" program. The public vote will determine six winning organizations to share \$150,000 in funding from Tom's of Maine. The organization with the most public support will receive \$50,000, while the five additional organizations will each receive \$20,000. Members of the public vote by going to [www.Facebook.com/TomsofMaine](https://www.facebook.com/TomsofMaine). Each person can vote once per day until October 9th.