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IBEW Local 103 electrical workers combat local food insecurity in a Day of Service for MLK Day

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Boston, MA Among many legacies, Martin Luther King Jr. is remembered as a man of service. In his honor on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, volunteers from the IBEW Local 103 electrical workers cleaned and stocked a total of 8 community refrigerators across the city with hundreds of food donations purchased and collected by the union. Boston city councilors Ruthzee Louijeune and Erin Murphy supported the efforts.

The team's Day of Service actions were even more critical in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which Massachusetts has seen the largest increase in food insecurity in the nation, with a 59% increase overall and a 102% increase for children specifically. The rate of food insecure households in Massachusetts leapt from 8.2% pre-pandemic to 19.6% at the peak of the pandemic.

“Sometimes we forget that the ongoing pandemic is affecting local families in many, many different ways,” said IBEW Local 103 business agent Renee Dozier, who helped lead the organizing efforts. “Food insecurity is a big one that we don’t often talk about, despite food access being one of the most basic building blocks of public health.”

IBEW Local 103 collected and donated food for community refrigerators in Roslindale, Fenway, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Allston/Brighton, Back Bay and the South End. The union also donated electrical services, installing new security cameras for Cafe Juice Up in Mattapan, which provides power to one of the community refrigerators, and wiring three (3) new circuits at Shirley’s Pantry to support its deep freezers.

“I am proud of my union for stepping up to the plate and for helping to feed our neighbors on Martin Luther King Jr. Day,” said IBEW Local 103 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Lou Antonellis. “Local 103 pushes ourselves each day to carry on Dr. King’s values of equality and service, both in our industry and our community. We have made strides towards a more diverse and inclusive union, and although we have plenty of work ahead of us, we renew our commitment to the process each day. King’s vision is one we must fight for.

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