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Salvation Army increases goal for Portland's red kettle campaign

The Portland agency served more than 7,000 people in 2014, providing food, housing and other support to individuals, families, seniors, veterans and abuse victims.

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The Salvation Army in Portland hopes to raise \$40,000 more than last year with its red kettle campaign. *Shawn Patrick Ouellette/Staff Photographer*

The Salvation Army in Portland kicked off its 2015 Christmas Kettle Campaign on Tuesday, increasing its goal to \$180,000 to address a growing need for assistance offered through the agency's various social service programs.

The goal is \$40,000 higher than the kettle campaign of 2014, when the agency assisted more than 7,000 people with programs that provide emergency food and housing, English classes, life-skills training and other support for children, parents, seniors, veterans, immigrants and victims of human trafficking and other abuse.

"As the cost of nearly all basic necessities continues to rise, it is becoming all too common for families and individuals to find themselves struggling with their expenses and falling behind," Major Annette Locke said in a news release. "As housing costs skyrocket and benefits like SNAP are cut, more and more (people) are having to rely on supplemental services and temporary aid to get by each month and so find themselves coming through the doors of The Salvation Army."

Also on Tuesday, the agency began distributing more than 300 food baskets for Thanksgiving.

Donations may be made at red kettles manned by volunteer bell ringers throughout the holiday season or [online at portland.salvationarmymaine.org](http://portland.salvationarmymaine.org).

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