

Partners to End Hunger

Eliminating hunger through advocacy, education and a commitment to healthy communities

2008 Public Policy Agenda

*Building a vibrant movement of advocates
focused on hunger issues*

*Organizing to seek funding needed to fill gaps between government funding
and the needs of hungry Minnesotans*



Minnesota Partners to End Hunger
www.hungersolutions.org

The number of hungry Minnesotans is increasing. Since 2000, individual visits to Minnesota food shelves increased 60% to nearly 2 million visits in 2007. Children account for 50% of all food shelf clients. Seniors are 20% of food shelf clients. The emergency food system, historically used to help people through troubled times, has become a monthly supplement for many families who cannot make ends meet.

For too many Minnesotans, skipping meals due to lack of enough food has become the norm. One out of every eight children on food assistance programs skips meals due to lack of funding for food. Hunger causes inattentiveness, poor concentration, and learning and behavioral problems throughout the school day. For far too many Minnesotans, the decision to pay for electricity, heat, medicine, *or food* has become an unpleasant and ongoing choice.

Minnesota Partners to End Hunger 2008 Public Policy Agenda

The following strategies are fundamental to the legislative agenda for 2008.

- ◇ Organize a statewide system to support meal programs. The Minnesota Meal Program Alliance will organize statewide to collect data, share resources and best practices and advocate for food shelf clients.
- ◇ Increase awareness of the Food Support Program (formerly the food stamp program), as an important nutrition assistance program for people who work for low wages, senior citizens, disabled individuals and families. Partners to End Hunger will support policies that reduce barriers to participating in the Food Support Program, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and other federally funded nutrition programs.
- ◇ Endorse actions to maintain and maximize state use of federal child nutrition funds.
- ◇ Advocate for statewide universal free breakfast for all Minnesota children in public schools.
- ◇ Advocate for funding for kindergarten milk, school wellness programs and WIC and the expansion of summer feeding programs.

Why is this work needed?

Increased food shelf funding is needed to keep pace with the demand for food shelf capacity building in Minnesota. We will work to increase that funding 45% to \$1,853,100. Funding has not changed since 1995; the level of spending has been \$1,278,000 for twelve years while the number of hungry people in Minnesota has increased.



Increasing food stamp participation

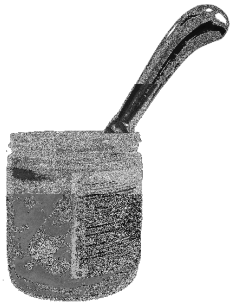
will be good for Minnesota's economy. The Minnesota Food Support Program (funded by the Federal Food Stamp Act) is a federally funded program that helps low-income families buy nutritious food from local grocers. However, only about 43% of eligible

households participate in the program. This means that Minnesota is missing out on more than \$150 million in additional federal funds to help low-income households, money that would be spent in local communities and help families and retailers during lean economic times.



Minnesota Partners to End Hunger will work to increase participation rates by extending programs such as the Minnesota Food Assistance Program and advancing policy changes that will reduce barriers to the participation.

Supporting the work of the Commission to End Poverty advances the hunger cause as well by organizing members of the hunger community to give voice to the hunger issue at hearings, in presentations and in final recommendations of this relevant work.



Minnesota Food Shelf Fact Sheet

**Hunger in Minnesota is a chronic problem.
Hunger is present in the city, in the suburbs and in rural
Minnesota.**

- ◆ In 2007, the 300 Minnesota food shelves were visited 1.9 million times and they provided 47 million pounds of food to hungry families and seniors.

Food shelves are a critical resource for working families.

- ◆ Food shelves allow people to use their money to pay other bills and still have access to nutritious food.
- ◆ People are able to stay in their own homes and get the help they need to remain healthy and go to work when they obtain nourishment from food shelves.
- ◆ Children represent more than half of the hungry who visit food shelves.

- ◆ 55% of families that rely on food shelf assistance are working, but cannot make ends meet.

**Poor economic conditions for low-income Minnesotans
result in unprecedented demands for service.**

- ◆ Between 2000-2007, food shelf visits in Minnesota increased from 1.2 million to 1.9 million
- ◆ Since 2000 food shelf usage has increased 60%.

Make Nutrition a Priority in Minnesota

- ◆ Minnesota food shelves are the first line of defense against hunger. They provide instant, emergency service to Minnesota residents.
- ◆ There has never been an increase in State funding for food shelves.
- ◆ We need to pass the food shelf funding increase (Bill Name: SF1331 Companion: HF1233)
- ◆ These state funds are leveraged in local communities and extend the purchasing power of food shelves.



School readiness is critical to give all children an equal opportunity to succeed in school. Proper nutrition through universal access to school breakfast and school milk and increased nutritional integrity and choices in school meal programs will help create this success.

The Minnesota Partners to End Hunger will take the following actions to support child nutrition:

- ◇ Support efforts to raise awareness of the value of universal school breakfast.
- ◇ Support state WIC programs and efforts of the National WIC Association
- ◇ Encourage and support efforts of local governments, school districts, faith based communities and non profits to sponsor summer food sites
- ◇ Endorse efforts by the Minnesota Food and Nutrition Network and the Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota Initiative to improve nutrition in schools and youth agencies

Adequate senior nutrition is needed to ensure all seniors can maintain their quality of life. Access to healthful food that is easy to transport and providing access to participation in congregate and home delivered meals program will help seniors remain independent.

Specific recommendations are to:

- ◇ Support the successful execution and full funding of the Older American Act, which focuses on home delivered meals and congregate dining.
- ◇ Support the expansion of Seniors Farmers Market coupon program.
- ◇ Support enhanced food safety efforts to reduce food borne illness which the seniors are particularly vulnerable
- ◇ Support maximum use for seniors and young families of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- ◇ Support increasing the minimum amount of food stamps allocated to seniors.





Federal hunger programs are critical to provide enough food for the hungry. The Minnesota Partners to End Hunger will take the following actions to support nutrition programs included in the reauthorization of the Farm Bill 2007.

- ◇ The Partners to End Hunger oppose the use of administrative orders or proposals for legislative activity which would abolish eligibility for participation in federal programs.
- ◇ Strongly support all federally funded nutrition programs as a comprehensive approach to addressing hunger.
- ◇ Mobilize all services locally and nationally to communicate with federal representatives on the value to our local communities of food support (food stamps) and CSFP.
- ◇ Stress the value of strong nutrition programs and healthful foods to reduction of health care costs and improvement of educational outcomes
- ◇ Support the successful execution of the Ryan White Act, which focuses on people with AIDS.
- ◇ Work to increase summer lunch participation and streamline procedures and paperwork by expanding the number of Simplified Summer Program (Lugar Pilot) states, including Minnesota.

The partner organizations or individuals listed below support the work of Minnesota Partners to End Hunger.

Steering Committee members are noted with an asterisk.

If you would like to be added to this list, we invite you to visit www.hungersolutions.org/do/peh

Affirmative Options
Bemidji Community Food Shelf
Big Stone Lake Area Emergency Food Shelf, Ortonville
Channel One Food Bank, Rochester
Children's Defense Fund*
Christian Cupboard Food Shelf, Woodbury
Clear Lake Food Shelf
Climax Parish Food Shelf
Community Aid Elk River
Community Food Shelf at First Lutheran, Aitkin
Crookston Emergency Food Shelf
Dick Goebel*
Dorothy Day Food Pantry Moorhead
Emergency FoodShelf Network*
Falls Hunger Coalition, International Falls
Family Pathways - Onamia Food Shelf
Family Pathways - Sandstone Food Shelf
Faribault County Food Shelf
Friends for Life Food Shelf, Watertown
Friends in Need Food Shelf, Cottage Grove
Grand Rapids Food Shelf
Great Plains Food Bank, Fargo
Greater Lake Country Food Bank*
Greater Twin Cities United Way*
Groveland Emergency Food Shelf, Minneapolis
Hawley Food Pantry
Henning Community Food Shelf
Hibbing Area Food Shelf
Hope for the City
Hunger Solutions Minnesota*
Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy*
Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners, Wayzata
Legal Services Advocacy Project*
Loaves and Fishes*
Long Prairie Food Pantry
Lutheran Coalition of Public Policy in Minnesota*
Mary Pat Raimondi*
Melrose Area Food Shelf, Grey Eagle
Merrick Community Services Food Shelf, St. Paul
Metro Meals on Wheels
Milaca Area Pantry
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits/Minnesota Budget Project
Minnesota Dietetic Association
Minnesota FoodShare*
North Country Food Bank, Crookston
Northfield Community Action Center Food Shelf
Open Your Heart
Peace Center Inc, New Prague
People Reaching Out to Other People Food Shelf, Eden Prairie
PRISM, Golden Valley
Project Share of Wadena
Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, New Brighton
Rush City Food Shelf
Salvation Army Carlton County Food Shelf, Cloquet
Salvation Army Hibbing Food Shelf
Second Harvest Heartland*, Maplewood
Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, Grand Rapids
Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank, Duluth
SEMCAC Dodge County, Dodge Center
Senior Food Shelf of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Senior Services Consortium of Ramsey Co.
Sibley County Foodshare, Winthrop
Silver Bay Food Shelf
Strandquist Area Food Shelf
The Helping Hand Food Shelf, Lafayette
The Salvation Army - Minneapolis South
The Salvation Army - East St. Paul Office
The Salvation Army - Need Office
The Salvation Army - North Office
The Salvation Army - West Seventh Office
The Salvation Army - Virginia
Tri-Community Food Shelf, Wright
Two Harbors Food Shelf
Willmar Area Food Shelf
Winona Volunteer Services

Minnesota Partners to End Hunger
www.hungersolutions.org

