

# Keeping Food on the Table

Presented by  
**HUNGER**  
SOLUTIONS<sup>MN</sup>  
A Statewide Partnership of Organizations Fighting Hunger



**"Middle-class families who never thought they'd be dealing with this kind of hardship and poverty are now having to face it."**

-University of Minnesota economics Prof. Ben Senauer (via Star Tribune interview)

**A Quarterly Review of the State of Hunger in Minnesota**

Fourth Quarter 2011

# 2012 Farm Bill

## A priority for hungry Minnesotans

After the failure of the "Super Committee", the "fast track" version of the 2012 Farm Bill may be obsolete. Congress is now expected to restart the Farm Bill debate next year. There is still a chance that a "Super Committee" proposed \$4 billion cut to nutrition assistance could be implemented.

### *Why the Farm Bill is vital in Minnesota.*

The charitable response to hunger in Minnesota is less than ten percent of the answer. Charities, such as, food shelves and meal programs can serve only so many meals and donations from food companies in the private sector are decreasing every year.

According to the USDA, in this economy, 59% of food insecure households are enrolled in Government sponsored nutrition programs.

Because of programs like Food Support/SNAP, well over 500,000 Minnesotans have been able to maintain incomes above the poverty line. Minnesota experienced a 56% increase in enrollment from 2007-2010. Minnesota witnessed an unprecedented 18% increase in senior Food Support enrollment in 1 year.

Each of the nutrition programs in the Farm Bill work together so that working poor families, seniors and disabled people can have access to much needed nutrition. Individually the programs are supplements, but together with personal income, provide the calories needed to live well.

Millions of pounds of commodities that arrive monthly in Minnesota are the backbone of the emergency response network. If these USDA products had to be replaced, the food shelves and meals programs would have to radically alter their budgets and fundraising.



**"The commodities foods account for 1/3 of our food inventory. If this were to decrease or be eliminated, we would have to raise another \$180,000 a year. That means we would have 25,000 less pounds of high quality food to distribute to our struggling families every month." – Byron Laher, CEAP, Hennepin/Anoka**

### *What's in the Farm Bill?*

Title IV of the Farm Bill contains all of the nutrition policy and funding. Essentially, Title IV represents 80% of all of the funding within the entire bill. These are the most critical areas that directly address hunger in Minnesota:

#### **SNAP (food stamps/food support)**

The SNAP program provides supplemental purchasing power at the grocery store for low-income families and seniors. The average monthly benefit for a senior in Minnesota is \$120 and \$234 for a family household.

#### **Commodity Supplemental Food Programs**

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is a USDA funded non-entitlement nutrition and supplemental food program that provides each participant with a free monthly package of nutritious USDA foods. The value of the government purchased commodities provided to CSFP participants in Minnesota exceeds 4 million dollars annually.

In 2011, Minnesota is authorized to serve just under 16,000 individuals a month. The populations eligible for CSFP include: individuals over age 60 with a household income at or below 130% of poverty and children between 5 and 6 years of age with a family income at or below 185% poverty. Over 90% of the current CSFP caseload is comprised of seniors.

#### **The Emergency Food Assistance Program**

Minnesota received over 12 million pounds of commodities in 2011. TEFAP is a commodities food program. The USDA buys the food, including processing and packaging, and ships it to the States. A formula based on poverty and unemployment and updated annually determines the amount of food and funds a State receives. Local organizations, including food banks, food shelves, soup kitchens, and emergency shelters that distribute food directly to low income households or serve meals, receive TEFAP commodities.



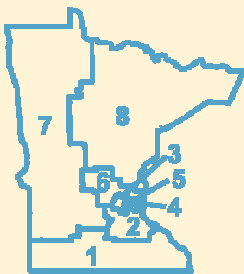
## 9% of Minnesota Households with Children have Difficulty Accessing Affordable Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

New report from  
 Food Research and Action Center  
 December 2011

Nationally, those with household incomes less than \$24,000/year reported affordability and access challenges 2.5 times more frequently than those with incomes between \$60,000 and \$89,999. People who reported high rates of food hardship (an inability to afford enough food) also were more likely to say they had difficulty accessing affordable fresh fruits and vegetables in their communities.

A household's ability to access healthy food hinges on having enough resources to do so. The fact that 9% in our Minnesota say it was not easy to access affordable fruits and vegetables shows that many are struggling with this access and affordability problem, and that it is an economic challenge at the household level.

### Three Minnesota congressional districts had at least one in ten households with children reporting difficulty accessing affordable fresh fruits and vegetables between 2009-2010.



CD 1 Timothy J. Walz	6.1%
CD 2 John Kline	6.3%
CD 3 Erik Paulsen	4.6%
CD 4 Betty McCollum	11.9%
CD 5 Keith Ellison	7.2%
CD 6 Michele Bachmann	5.4%
CD 7 Colin C. Peterson	12.8%
CD 8 Chip Cravaack	13.2%

### Hunger in the Twin City Suburbs

Visits to suburban food shelves have increased 90% in the past 3 years.

Suburban food shelf directors report that donors have become visitors seeking assistance. The number of families and seniors having difficulty affording sufficient amounts of groceries has risen steeply in the past three years. This rise is very stark in the 9-county Metro area suburbs. The loss of income for middle class suburbanites has created a surge of new clients. Area food shelves have stepped-up to meet this need, but resources are strained.

County	Jan-Jun 2008	Jan-Jun 2010	Increase
Anoka	33,947	83,059	145%
Carver	7,674	14,367	87%
Chisago	4,595	7,532	64%
Dakota	28,489	125,871	342%
Sub. Hennepin	125,575	192,981	54%
Isanti	3,634	11,952	229%
Sub. Ramsey	62,053	87,461	41%
Scott	21,643	27,324	26%
Washington	22,430	40,041	79%



Long-term unemployed man chooses fresh produce at a Salvation Army food shelf in Egan.

## SNAPSHOTS:



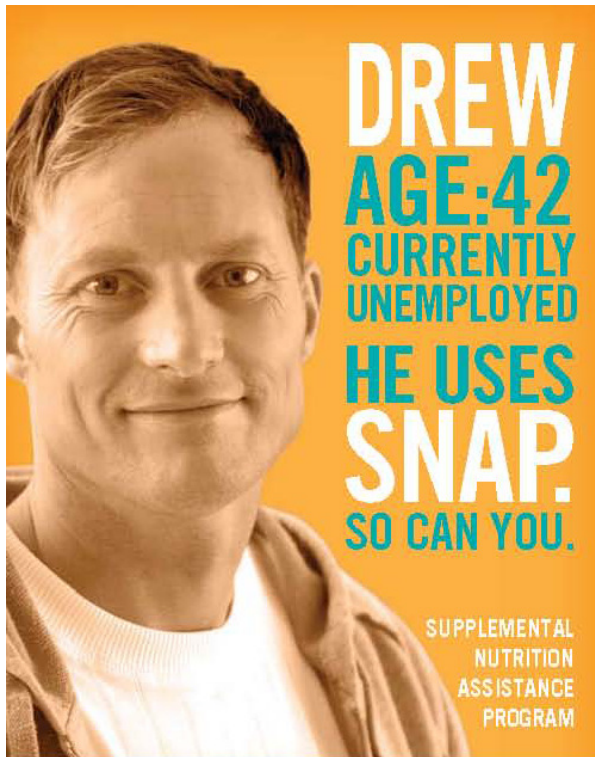
US troops used \$88 million in food stamps at US commissaries in 2011. That is triple the amount used before the recession.  
 -Defense Commissary Agency



33,000 Minnesota children enrolled in the free/reduced school lunch program in the past two years. Many for the first time.  
 -Minnesota Department of Education



Between September of 2010 and September of 2011, Minnesota had the 3rd largest (15.8%) increase in SNAP enrollment in the nation.  
 -USDA



Drew's unemployment benefits of less than \$1,498 per month qualified him to receive an EBT card to buy groceries – making food one less thing to worry about.

**CALL 1-888-711-1151  
TO SEE IF YOU QUALIFY  
OR VISIT [mnfoodhelpline.org](http://mnfoodhelpline.org)**

## Closing Minnesota's Missing Meals Gap:

A Statewide Campaign to Raise Awareness of the SNAP Program.

Hunger-Free Minnesota, General Mills, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and Hunger Solutions Minnesota, are launching a creative public/private partnership in early 2012.

This new outreach campaign is designed to generate 17 million meals for food insecure Minnesotans.

This is a statewide marketing campaign to raise awareness and enrollment in the SNAP/Minnesota Food Support program among eligible, but non-participating Minnesotans.

The campaign is geared to reach an estimated 90,000 people consisting of the recently unemployed, and seniors.

**HUNGER SOLUTIONS**<sup>MN</sup>  
A Statewide Partnership of Organizations Fighting Hunger

651-486-9860

[hungersolutions.org](http://hungersolutions.org)



Hunger Solutions Minnesota is a comprehensive hunger relief organization that works to end hunger in Minnesota. Hunger Solutions Minnesota helps alleviate hunger by providing fresh produce, making emergency food referrals via the Minnesota Food Helpline and by distributing grants so thousands of school children can have access to much needed food in the summer. When you donate to Hunger Solutions, you help the thousands across Minnesota who don't have enough money to put food on the table. The HSM Minnesota Food Helpline (1-888-711-1151) helps low-income Minnesotans find emergency food assistance in their area.