

Keeping Food on the Table

Presented by
HUNGER
SOLUTIONS^{MN}
A Statewide Partnership of Organizations Fighting Hunger



"We make a living by what we get.

We make a life by what we give."

- Sir Winston Churchill

A Quarterly Review of the State of Hunger in Minnesota

Released December 2010

**Year
End
Review
2010**



1 in 5 families with children in our community has trouble putting food on the table

Food insecurity is not a new phenomenon in Minnesota, but we have seen a marked increase in the past year. Minnesota had 10.5 percent of its people living in households that struggled with hunger during the 2007-2009 period, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's annual report. The numbers are averages of years from both before and after the start of the recession. They therefore almost certainly understate the extent of food insecurity in Minnesota in 2009 and, in all likelihood, today. For a current snapshot of hunger during the recession, we rely upon our own database, the Minnesota Department of Humans Services and data on food hardship in 2009 released by the

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index project. The Gallup project shows 13.8 percent of people in Minnesota reported an inability to afford enough food in 2009. These reports reaffirm what we're seeing in our local communities and show the impact of the recession on people in our state.

Who uses food support benefits in Minnesota?

As of September 2010, Minnesota now has 454,513 people enrolled in Food Support. That reflects a 66% increase over September 2008.

About Food Support enrollees:

- The average Food Support-eligible adult in a Family Household is 34 years old.
- Seventy percent of adults are female.
- 72 percent have at least a high school diploma or General Education Development certificate.
- 58 percent of family households are working.
- Sixty-one percent are white and 21 percent are black.
- Half of all new participants leave the program within 9 months.



Monthly Income Limit Before Taxes = \$2,518/family of 3

Average Monthly Food Support Benefits

- 65 years or older = \$120 / month
- All other ages = \$212 / month

Source:<http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/>

New Summer program filled nutrition gap for children

Hunger Solutions Minnesota leveraged a local grant in order to secure a large Federal grant this past summer. It allowed us to provide a new summer opportunity for Minnesota food shelves to create nutrition programs that focused on children living at or below 200% of poverty.

During the school year, forty percent of Minnesota school-age children rely on free or reduced school food for 2/3 of their calories. Summer means no school and often means low quality meals for these students. Food shelves have a unique ability to address the food needs of children. Each summer, Minnesota food shelves help families fill this nutritional gap.



The new program reached over 93,000 children with 1.7 million pounds of food in 127 Minnesota communities.

CAER food shelf in Elk River was one of the grant recipients. To fill the summer hunger void, they developed "Kidz Kitz." Each package contained five day's worth of breakfasts and lunches. They provided "kitz" to over 300 children per week for 10 weeks. They expected to serve 150 and were surprised to find the demand so great. Said one parent of the CAER program, "It made the difference between going hungry and not. It made it so we didn't feel like we were starving from dinner to dinner the next day."

What's happening at Minnesota food shelves?

62% jump in monthly visits

The alarming upward trend continues at Minnesota food shelves. From the beginning of the financial crisis (Fall 2008) to this Fall, there was a 62% jump in people seeking emergency grocery assistance statewide.

Metro area food shelves report an even higher growth in hunger hardships. Comparing food shelf visits from Fall 2008 to Fall 2010 shows a staggering 97% increase in visits to 9-county metro area food shelves.

The most current (Jan.—Aug. 2010) reporting period indicates an 11% statewide increase in food shelf visits.

That translates to 1.8 million individual visits for emergency grocery assistance at the 300 food shelves in Minnesota.

During this time, food shelves distributed 38.6 million pounds of emergency groceries to needy citizens.

During the same 2010 reporting period, there was a 16% jump in visits in the 9-county metro area. Isanti and Dakota counties out-paced other metro counties with 146% and 22% increases in service respectively.



"The demand (in Minnetonka) has increased incrementally and if you want food, you have to wait two weeks. We are trying everything (to meet the need) – two sites, open three nights a week. We will continue this fervent service as long as we can." —food shelf director

New, unique food shelf opens



"Nearly 40 percent of emergency room patients at Hennepin County Medical Center reported food scarcity. Mothers talk about the impossible choices they must make -- paying for heat, food or medicine, and sacrificing to take care of their children. Those concerns led the pediatric clinic to set up its own emergency food shelf last summer." - Star Tribune (June)

Hunger-Free MN SNAPSHOTS:



Minnesota families miss
125 million meals per year.



Hunger-related costs in
Minnesota amount to
\$1.2 billion annually.



80,200 Minnesotans receive food
assistance every week.

HSM is proud to be a founding member of Hunger-Free Minnesota: an emerging movement to end hunger in our communities, initiated by a coalition of partners united in the common belief that food is a basic and essential human right that every Minnesotan should enjoy. Learn more at: www.hungerfreemn.org

MINNESOTA FOOD HELPLINE



1-888-711-1151

Providing a vital service to
Minnesotans at risk for hunger.

A program of
Hunger Solutions Minnesota

HSM provides answers to seniors and families in crisis. The Minnesota Food HelpLine assists low-income callers to fill the gap between going without food and eating well. We hear from people like the caller below every day:

Veteran thanks Minnesota for sending the goodness back

"You gave me the application (Food Support) to fill out and showed me that I could have my application expedited, so I was able to get the help I needed. I've served in the military and worked for over 30 years, and to have help like this – it restores my faith in Minnesota. Because of my cholesterol, I can't eat meat now. So when I had to go to the soup kitchen, I would have to eat around it. Food Support has allowed me to raise myself up by helping me buy the healthy foods that I need. Now I don't have a guilty conscience about what I eat. I'm so grateful for your help – I can't thank you enough."

- recently retired Vietnam Veteran from Duluth

HelpLine by the Numbers

- **3,373 calls from 80 different Minnesota counties—Jan.—Nov. 2010.**
- **1,603 of those callers were screened for Food Support benefits.**
- **So far this year, 88% of callers to Hunger Solutions Minnesota's Food HelpLine were eligible for food stamps, but were not yet enrolled.**
- **34% of all callers were seniors and 18% of all callers had children in the home.**



651-486-9860

hungersolutions.org

Hunger Solutions Minnesota is a comprehensive hunger relief organization that works to end hunger in Minnesota. We take action to assure food security for all Minnesotans by supporting agencies that provide food to those in need, advancing sound public policy, and guiding grassroots advocacy. HSM advocates for the maximum use of all federal public nutrition dollars available and works to improve low income Minnesotans' access to all nutrition programs.

