



THE STATE OF HUNGER IN MINNESOTA

— 2014 —



Our work

ENSURING FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL MINNESOTANS

Hunger Solutions Minnesota works to end hunger by advancing fair nutrition policy and guiding grassroots advocacy on behalf of hungry Minnesotans and the diverse groups that serve them. We connect Minnesota's food shelves and hunger-relief organizations with the necessary funding, technical assistance and logistical support to reach thousands of Minnesota individuals, families and children in need. Our work is made possible through the generous support of donors across the country; each sharing our commitment to ensuring no Minnesotan will struggle with food insecurity alone.

How it all works

SMALL ORGANIZATION, BIG IMPACT



Minnesota families still struggling

No one could have known that the need for hunger relief services would still be growing in 2014. Unfortunately, our work is needed now more than ever. According to a recent report, Minnesota's real household median income is down 9.5% over the last ten years (Winkler, 2014). The downward slide results in 1 in 4 Minnesotans working in low-wage jobs.

Minnesotans are also facing high food prices at the grocery store. Lower-income households have less flexibility in how they spend their money because of rising costs of fixed expenses such as rent, utilities, health care and car insurance.

Hunger Solutions continues to develop new initiatives to reach hungry Minnesotans. We strive to improve our services and expand our advocacy to keep adequate, healthy food on the tables of our hungry friends and neighbors.

1 in 5

1 in 5 families with children face hunger.





HSM makes an impact on child hunger

One in five families with children in Minnesota faces hunger or food insecurity. This means that children do not always eat three square meals a day and sometimes skip meals. Much of this happens on the weekends and during summer vacation when there is no access to free or reduced school meals.

During summer vacation, about 36,000 Minnesotan children per week eat lunch via the federally funded Summer Food Service Program. That represents only 15% of eligible children — leaving an estimated 250,000 kids at risk of missing lunch.

- Our Minnesota Food HelpLine aids parents in finding food for their children in their neighborhood and enroll in supplemental food programs like WIC, SNAP, school lunch programs and more.
- Each summer, we make special grants to food shelves so they may stock up on extra food for those times when parents really need the extra assistance.
- We advocate at the State Capitol and in Washington DC to make sure that children have access to the food assistance they need. This year we made sure that no Minnesota child would go hungry and feel stigmatized at school if their parents could not afford to pay for their lunches.





Hunger help on call

The Minnesota Food HelpLine assists low-income Minnesotans to get the food that they need. Since launching the HelpLine in 2009, it has helped more than 30,000 people get assistance.

CHANGE IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

30,000 Minnesota adults without dependents recently became ineligible for SNAP benefits. They have fallen into a gap because of their extended unemployment. Many of these are veterans. A new study has found that vets who served in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars are nearly twice as likely as other Americans to struggle to get enough food. The study from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health found 27% of young veterans from those wars do not have consistent access to food (Widome, Jensen, Bangerter & Fu, 2014).

BY THE NUMBERS

- Total number of calls in 2013: 5,900 (8,686 household members), 50% of those calls were from senior citizens.
- 95% of the families that call who are eligible for SNAP benefits have an average monthly income of \$1,000.
- The average monthly SNAP benefit amount for a family of four is \$339.

"I lost my job a few years ago when the economy tanked. I needed to get food on the table, so I called the HelpLine and they were so helpful. It really made my day — and I hadn't had a good day in a long time."

— Phil

VIOLA has to choose between paying for her medicine or buying healthy food.

MARIA has two part-time jobs, three kids and an empty refrigerator.

ERIC was hurt on the job and can't work due to the injury, but his bills are piling up.



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1.888.711.1151 | www.MNFoodHelpLine.org

over the phone language interpreters available

SNAP Rx

Hunger Solutions Minnesota is collaborating with the AARP Foundation, the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and the Minneapolis Health Department on a new program: SNAP Rx. SNAP Rx is designed to connect healthcare providers statewide with existing resources that address food insecurity, particularly in Minnesota's senior population. Our initial research found a major barrier to addressing hunger at the clinic was the lack of resources for providers.



We also developed an easy referral system for providers who have identified food insecurity in patients. Patients will be written a "prescription" to call the Minnesota Food Helpline, a toll-free resource where they can be screened for SNAP eligibility and are connected with other programs in their community. Programs such as nutrition education, food shelves, farmers markets that accept SNAP, and discount grocery programs.

"Hunger has many serious health consequences, including diabetes, depression and hypertension. These challenges are some of the most formidable public health issues facing the United States today, particularly among older people. The SNAP Rx program helps doctors connect older patients to the nutritious food they need to stay healthy, happy and independent."

— Jay Haapala, *Community Outreach Director AARP MN*

Food assistance by the truckload

Many of us remember the free blocks of cheese when the USDA truck rolled into town back in the 1980s. Today, the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) means much more. Through the TEFAP commodity food program, Hunger Solutions Minnesota distributes more than 12 million pounds of high-quality proteins, fruits and vegetables to Minnesota food banks. Families visiting food shelves have access to a greater selection of nutritious food.

TEFAP is the backbone of the emergency food system because the products include items not often donated to food shelves. Some goods are too costly to purchase at retail value, so their availability through TEFAP allows food shelves to obtain higher-quality foods at little or no cost.

DELICIOUS VARIETY

PRODUCT	VALUE
Potatoes	\$419,036.16
Chicken	\$ 674,500.00
Canned Fruit	\$ 682,246.80
Whole Turkeys	\$ 299,300.40
Orange Juice	\$ 234,360.95
Blueberries	\$ 198,396.00

TEFAP provided 69 different products to food shelves in 2013.

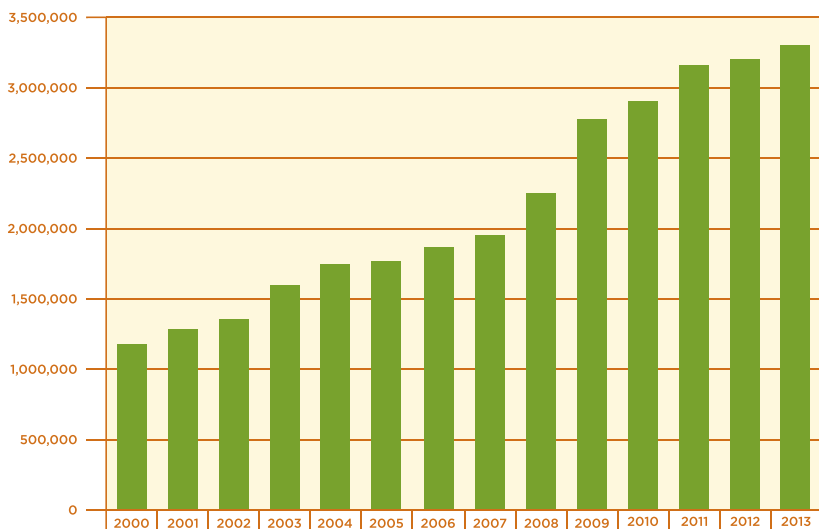
Another record year for food shelves

Visitors to food shelves report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities. This means that people in those households simply did not get enough to eat -- they had to cut the size of their meals, skip meals, or even go whole days without food at some point during the year.

BY THE NUMBERS

- Every day in Minnesota, food shelves serve 3,500 children.
- Food shelf usage in the nine-county metro reached a record 1.7 million visits in 2013. This is nearly a 50% increase from pre-recession numbers. Almost half of these visits are made by children and seniors.

2000 - 2013 FOOD SHELF VISITS



Visits to Minnesota food shelves well over 3 million mark.

Meeting hungry Minnesotans where they live

There is a service gap for food-insecure Minnesotans that have mobility challenges. We have begun to build capacity within the emergency food system by solidifying the newly formed mobile food shelf network. Last year the mobile food providers distributed 833,832 pounds of food to 42,166 individuals. Our goal is to expand that number by 25% in the next year.

"Mobile food distribution is a critical component in assuring access to food support for food insecure families by addressing mobility and transportation barriers."

— Lisa Horn, *The Open Door*



Advocating for fair food policy



Our advocates in the **Voice of Hunger Network** celebrated policy wins that fight hunger and poverty.

We successfully advocated at the Minnesota Legislature for a variety of policies designed to put more food on the plates of hungry Minnesotans:

- Minnesota schools are now directed and funded to expand free school lunch. This would cover the 61,000 children whose families fall into the gap between full price and free.
- Schools now are instructed to serve Universal Free Breakfast for all students in Kindergarten. Schools are prohibited from the stigmatizing use of hand stamps and stickers on children if parents have unpaid lunch bills at school.

ON THE HORIZON

Do you support farmer's markets and food access for low income Minnesotans? We do too! We encourage you to support our Healthy Eating, Here at Home initiative. This program would provide a modest match to SNAP use at farmer's markets.

This legislation will increase SNAP enrollees' access to fresh, local, and healthy foods by expanding their buying power at farmer's markets. Incentives will increase SNAP use and allow low-income Minnesotans to buy even more fresh, healthy foods while shopping from local growers at the market.



240%

SNAP redemptions at MN farmers' markets increased by 240% between 2012 and 2013.

HUNGER SOLUTIONS MINNESOTA

Winning Minnesota's Food Fight

www.HungerSolutions.org | 651.486.9860



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