

Minnesota Partners to End Hunger 2022 Legislative Agenda



Invest in Hunger-Free Schools



Hunger Free Schools are essential to ensure all students are supported in achieving their academic potential; that all students have access to nutritious options while they are developing life-long eating habits; and that there is no stigma associated with receiving free school meals.

Ask: Support the Governor's proposal to invest in school meals for all students in Minnesota. Support HF 1729 and SF 1902 as a critical first step to increase participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and invest federal resources necessary to support school meals for all kids in high poverty schools.

Lead organization: Hunger Solutions Minnesota

Committee: Education Finance

Expand Access to SNAP for Low-Income Minnesotans



Many Minnesotans are just above the income level to qualify for SNAP but are still experiencing food insecurity. Using Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) we can increase the gross income threshold on SNAP from 165% to 200% of federal poverty. By raising it, we can help support working people who don't earn quite enough to meet their needs, but who currently earn too much to qualify for SNAP, and whose high costs for expenses such as housing and childcare leave them with few resources to make ends meet.

Ask: Support HF 611 & SF 759 to raise the gross income level on SNAP to 200% of federal poverty

Lead organizations: Hunger Solutions Minnesota

Committee: Human Services

Secure Additional Funding for Food Support and Capital Improvement Grants



Additional funding to food shelves, food banks, and meal programs is needed to deal with the growing number of Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity. Investments in food shelf infrastructure, including equipment and storage space are also needed to address on-going wear-and-tear and deferred maintenance of existing food shelves.

Ask: Please fund \$8 million to fund food shelves, food banks, and meal programs, and \$15 million for grant funds to improve and expand food shelf facilities.

Lead organization: Hunger Solutions Minnesota and Minnesota Department of Human Services

Expand Farm to School Grants to Include Early Care Settings



Farm to School and Early Care initiatives connect farmers and kids by serving local food in students' meals, teaching them about local agriculture in educational activities, strengthening local economies and supporting healthy eating habits.

Ask: Please add legislative language that will ensure these opportunities are available for early care settings in addition to K12 schools.

Lead organization: IATP (Institute of Agriculture and Trade Policy)

Build a New Food Shelf in St. Paul



Keystone Community Services is requesting \$4 million in state funds for a capital investment project to renovate and equip a new Community Food Site in St. Paul. This 20,000 square foot building will have the capacity to support more than 50,000 people in Ramsey County with food, emergency assistance and connections to resources.

Ask: Please support HF 3371 & SF 2992 to fund \$4 million toward the renovation and equip of a new food shelf in St. Paul

Lead organization: Keystone Community Services

Provide Home Delivered Meals and Social Connection to Veterans



There are over 325,000 veterans living in Minnesota, many of whom are without stable housing or employment and suffer from depression, PTSD and/or social isolation. Please administer funds to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs for a grant for Meals on Wheels to provide meals and volunteer visits to veterans in need and outreach, technical assistance and volunteer recruitment for neighborhood Meals on Wheels programs.

Ask: Please support HF 3036 & SF 2933 to appropriate \$468,000 in FY23 and FY24.

Lead organization: Metro Meals on Wheels



About Partners to End Hunger

Minnesota Partners to End Hunger formed over 10 years ago to advance policies aimed at ending hunger and supporting programs that improve the economic well-being for low-income individuals and families. We work with a network of service providers and advocates on a variety of hunger policy issues and successfully passed legislation that:

- Increased funding to food shelves
- Secured funding for Market Bucks
- Ended the practice of school lunch shaming
- Secured funding for the Good Food Access Program
- Defended cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Secured funding for Farm to School
- Secured funding for Hunger Free Campuses

Partners Include:

Appetite For Change, Inc., Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota - Center for Prevention, Catholic Charities Twin Cities, Community Emergency Assistance Program (CEAP), Churches United In Ministry (CHUM), Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), Dream of Wild Health, Family Pathways, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Hallie Q Brown, ICA Food Shelf, Institute for Trade and Agriculture Policy, Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis, Keystone Community Services, LeadMN, Legal Services Advocacy Project, Loaves and Fishes, MAZON, Metro Meals on Wheels, MinnCAP, Minnesota Farmers Union, Minnesota Foodshare, Neighbors, Inc., Open Arms of Minnesota, Pillsbury United, PRISM Food Shelf, PROP Food Shelf, SACA Food Shelf, Scott Carver Dakota CAP Agency, Inc., Sanneh Foundation, Second Harvest Heartland, St. Louis Park Emergency Program (STEP), The Aliveness Project, The Food Group, The Open Door Pantry, Twin Cities Medical Society, Valley Outreach, VEAP, White Bear Area Emergency Food Shelf

School meals for all students at no cost

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The results are indisputable. When kids get the nourishment they need during the school day, they perform better in the classroom. Attendance and math scores go up, tardiness and the number of kids repeating a grade go down.



Yet 1 in 6 children in Minnesota experiences food insecurity.

This means they don't get enough food on a regular basis. Yes, families can apply to the Free and Reduced Price School Meal program, which provides no-cost meals to those who qualify.



But 1 in 4 food-insecure kids comes from a household that doesn't qualify for support.

This leaves out many families struggling to make ends meet.

Even families that do qualify don't always use the program. For some the paperwork is simply too burdensome or difficult to complete. Busy, stressed, and working parents need an easier helping hand. And some kids who qualify fear the stigma around free meals and will go hungry to avoid it.



HOW SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL HELPS EVERYONE

When school meals are provided at no cost to all students, these hungry kids no longer fall through the cracks. They consistently get nutritious food that sustains their energy and focus in the classroom.

And the benefits don't stop there. So many others stand to gain when school meals are free for all.

Working families – Families will no longer need to meet rigid low-income guidelines in order to access free meals. Those who struggle to pay for groceries and school meals can use that money for other essential expenses.

All students – Not only will hungry kids be fed, but when all students have equal access to the same meal, we take the sting out of food stigma. More students will feel less shame about school meals – and won't hesitate to get the food they need.

School nutritionists – Staff can focus on feeding kids well instead of collecting payments—reducing the administrative burden and making meal service more efficient.

Now's the time to pass HF1729



Since mid-2020, federal pandemic aid has allowed all public schools to provide school meals to all students at no cost. This has been invaluable in helping schools and families feed kids through the upheavals of shutdowns, remote schooling, employment uncertainty, and isolation periods. But this aid is set to expire at the end of the school year in 2022 – in just a few months. If we don't act now to pass HF1729 and make school meals for all permanent, more than half a million kids in Minnesota will lose crucial access to meals and slide back into hunger.

LEARN ABOUT THE HUNGER-FREE SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

Endorsing partners include Allina Health, American Diabetes Association, Appetite for Change, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Children's Minnesota, EdAllies, Education Minnesota, Every Meal, Food Research and Action Center, General Mills, Hunger Solutions Minnesota, Mazon, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Minnesota School Social Workers Association, Second Harvest Heartland, Share Our Strength, The Food Group, Twin Cities Medical Society and Youthprise.

For more information contact Leah Gardner, lgardner@hungersolutions.org, 651-789-9850



HF 1985 (Jordan)/ SF 1902 (Duckworth): Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

OFFERING SCHOOL MEALS TO MORE MINNESOTA STUDENTS

Hungry kids can't learn.

When kids lack the nourishment they need during the school day, they struggle to perform in the classroom. Attendance and math scores suffer and the number of kids repeating a grade go up.



Yet 1 in 6 children in Minnesota experiences food insecurity.



1 in 4 food-insecure kids is from a household that doesn't qualify for help with school meals - yet the family still struggles to make ends meet.

This means they don't get enough food on a regular basis.

Thankfully, Federal resources are already available to help close this gap through the Community Eligibility Provision, or CEP.



WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a federal program that reimburses schools and school districts in low-income areas for the cost of school meals. These schools can offer breakfast and lunch to all students at no cost.

Schools that qualify for CEP get partial to full federal reimbursement for the cost of providing school meals. This means the school can provide no-cost meals to all students with less paperwork and more streamlined meal service. **More importantly, it means free school meals for all – including food-insecure students who don't qualify for free school meals.**

A school's eligibility for CEP depends on its "identified student percentage" (ISP). The ISP is the portion of a school's students who automatically qualify for free meals because they're enrolled in SNAP or TANF, they're experiencing homelessness, or they're in foster care or Head Start. CEP eligible schools must have an ISP of at least 40% to participate. At 62.5% the Federal government will reimburse the full cost of all meals.



WHY WE NEED THE CEP BILL (HF 1985 / SF 1902)

We're missing opportunities to feed more kids:

- We're leaving millions of dollars in federal resources on the table
- Minnesota ranks 47th in the nation in CEP participation
- Only 50% of eligible schools in the state take advantage of the program



HF 1985 / SF 1902 takes a big leap forward in our use of CEP:

- Requires all schools that are eligible for full reimbursement to participate in CEP
- Provides technical support to help schools efficiently roll out the program
- Allows flexibility in how schools measure student poverty to secure supplemental state aid, reducing the administrative burden

Now's the time to embrace CEP

In early 2020, the federal government began providing universal free meals as part of its pandemic aid. Students across the state have been getting consistent, worry-free meals to fuel long days of learning. This aid is set to expire at the end of the school year in 2022.

Now is the time to pass HF 1985/ SF 1902 to fully leverage CEP. This bill provides needed continuity in nourishment and peace of mind for families. Without this bill and in the midst of an ongoing pandemic and continuing economic stress, many families will be forced to scramble when meal aid ends – and many Minnesota students will be hungry once again.

LEARN ABOUT THE HUNGER-FREE SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN

Endorsing partners include Allina Health, American Diabetes Association, Appetite for Change, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Children's Minnesota, EdAllies, Education Minnesota, Every Meal, Food Research and Action Center, General Mills, Hunger Solutions Minnesota, MAZON, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Minnesota School Social Workers Association, Second Harvest Heartland, Share Our Strength, The Food Group, Twin Cities Medical Society and Youthprise.

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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest federal nutrition assistance program and the first line of defense against hunger. SNAP supplements low-income family food budgets so they can purchase food that meets their needs. For every meal provided by food banks and food shelves, SNAP provides 9, making it by far the most efficient solution.

An unprecedented 20% of Minnesotans are reporting food insecurity. In order to fully leverage SNAP to address high levels of food insecurity due to COVID-19, Hunger Solutions Minnesota worked with partners across the state on a project to explore ways to improve SNAP in Minnesota by hearing directly from SNAP participants and individuals experiencing food insecurity through surveys and listening sessions.

1 in 3 respondents NOT on SNAP report being food insecure. Many reporting being just above the current income limit, or having their income and eligibility for SNAP fluctuate. **During a time of need it's critical we fully leverage SNAP to make sure low income Minnesotans have enough food on the table to feed their families.**



The Solution

Raising the SNAP Gross Income Threshold in Minnesota

Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) allows states to increase the SNAP income eligibility. In Minnesota we have the ability to increase the gross income threshold on SNAP from 165% to 200% of federal poverty. By doing this we can help out many who are struggling to put food on the table to get the resources they need to feed their families.

“I make too much to receive SNAP, and barely enough to survive for my kid and I.”

- SNAP Project Participant

\$1

in SNAP generates

\$1.70

in economic activity

“I’ve been unemployed since the Pandemic started, which brought us from 2 incomes to 1. Free food giveaways and school food help so much because they are about the only thing we qualify for, but we really need to cut expenses somewhere”

- SNAP Project Participant

Raising the gross income threshold for SNAP would:

- Strengthen food security and economic stability among low-income working households
- Provide SNAP benefits to low-income Minnesotans with high expenses like housing and childcare
- Bring more federal funding into Minnesota
- Boost the local economy



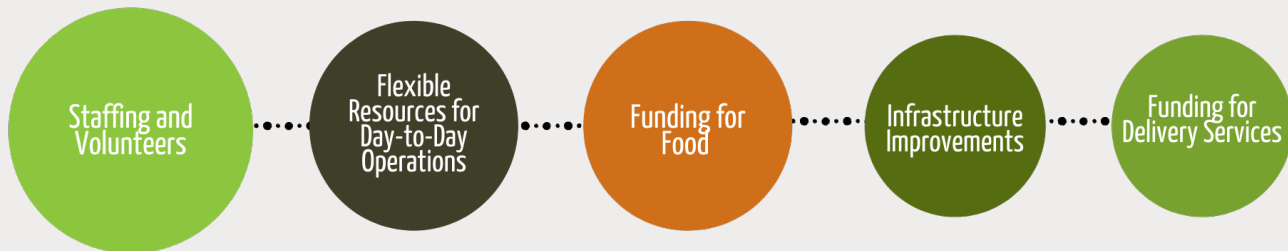
Additional Funding For Food Support and Capital Improvements

Since the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, food shelves in Minnesota have seen record high numbers of visits - topping at 3.8 million visits a year. With 1 in 9 Minnesotans facing food insecurity, Minnesota's network of over 300 food shelves throughout the state are often the first line of defense against hunger, helping put over 92 million pounds of food on the tables of low-income households each year.

In December, Hunger Solutions Minnesota conducted a survey food shelf leaders throughout the state. 70% of survey respondents noted that their food shelf has seen a recent increase in clients and new visitors. Past resources have been allocated to food shelves in our state to support immediate needs during the COVID-19 crisis, but with visitors numbers increasing, it's time we invest in long-term capacity building to ensure our food shelves are set for future challenges.

58%
of food acquired by food insecure
people during the pandemic has
been from their food shelf.

When surveyed about anticipated needs for 2022, the top five anticipated needs were for staffing and volunteers, flexible resources for day-to-day operations, food, infrastructure improvements and delivery resources.



Sourcing and Distributing Food

With food prices up nearly 6% since 2020, food shelves, food banks and meal programs in Minnesota will need additional support to keep their shelves stocked. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted the need for increased transportation options for food shelf clients, especially to those aged 60+ who are the fastest growing group of food shelf visitors.



“Funding for food purchases is going to be a major issue in 2022... we are beginning to see issues with availability of food, especially meat protein, and increasing prices for what we are able to purchase.”

– Pipestone County Food Shelf

Additional Funding for Food Support and Capital Improvements

INVESTMENTS IN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Investments in food shelf infrastructure, including equipment and storage space are needed to address on-going wear-and-tear and deferred maintenance of existing food shelves, especially after a record breaking 2020. When food shelves are able to store more food and increase their facilities, they are able to help more Minnesotans in need.

“We are in need of a walk-in freezer to support the growing needs of the community. Due to our small space, this will require some remodeling which will involve extensive costs.”

– Big Lake Community Food Shelf



“Clients are asking for things we simply cannot provide at this time. Our current food pantry storage needs to be refreshed and updated, including better air circulation.”

– “SuperMarket Saturday”



WHAT YOU CAN DO

1

Support \$8 million in funding to food shelves, food banks and meal programs to help meet the increasing needs in their communities.

2

Support \$15 million in grant funds for food shelves to improve and expand their facilities.

By investing in food shelves, food banks and tribal nations in our state, we can ensure that they are able to keep their shelves stocked with food despite rising food costs; are able to transport and deliver food to many who need it, including the growing number of seniors who depend on their local food shelves; and ensure that food shelves are set up with the appropriate storage, equipment and infrastructure to meet the growing demand in our state.

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Support a Vital New Community Food Site

You Can Support Neighbors
& Stabilize our Community

HF 3371, Chief Author Rep. Moran
SF 2992, Chief Author Sen. Pappas



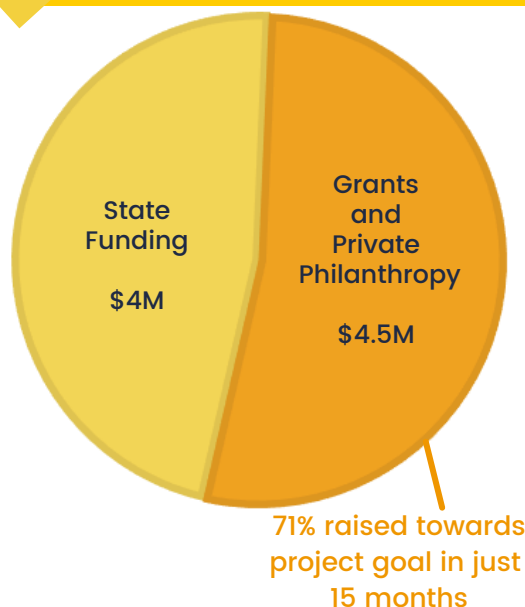
Our vision for our new Community Food Site, located at 1800 University Avenue West, St. Paul. Keystone acquired the properties in December 2020.

THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW!

Keystone Community Services is requesting an investment of \$4 million of state funds to renovate and equip a new Community Food Site in Ramsey County.

This new site will allow Keystone to significantly expand food and crisis services for people in Ramsey County. During this time when food support is needed by more people, this site will stabilize our community today and for years to come.

State Support is Critical to Project Success



The estimated total project cost is \$8.5M.

Since September 2020, our community has generously contributed \$3.2M towards this new site.

- \$1.1M secured in government funding, largely from the City of St. Paul
- \$2.1M secured from foundations, corporate gifts, and community donors

Our 20,000 square-foot site will offer:

- A large market area for people to select free food and household items
- Increased capacity to receive and store donated food and household essentials
- Private meeting space for crisis assistance support and providing community programs
- Large areas to offer more volunteer opportunities for people to support hunger relief efforts

Your support is needed now!

With secured state funding, construction will begin on this shovel-ready project in Sept. 2022 and the site will be operational in spring 2023.

FOOD INSECURITY IS ON THE RISE AND KEYSTONE IS PREPARED TO RESPOND



Food shelves ensure people have the food support they need in times of crisis.

On average our food shelf participants utilize food shelf services 3 times per year.

The pandemic, high unemployment rates, and long-term affordable housing issues are wreaking havoc on families in Minnesota, particularly for low-income people and people of color. Food shelves are a vital safety net support for low-income seniors, families, and individuals.

Keystone has added services to meet the growing demand for food support, and requires more space to meet community need. **This new site will bring more food and resources to more people.**

“

"I have not had to go hungry because of Keystone and their programs. It's really something that's saved my life."

Mary, a Keystone program participant



”

Join us in combating food insecurity!

Mary McKeown, President/CEO

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651-603-6644

www.keystoneservices.org



Keystone: 80+ years as a trusted resource in our community

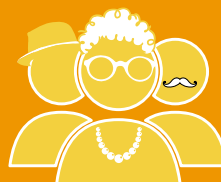
Keystone provides hope, stability, and support through basic needs, youth and senior programs which support more than 40,000 people annually.

Did you know?



Keystone is the largest provider of food shelf services in the East Metro within an ecosystem of other hunger relief partners.

Annually, Keystone provides the equivalent of 180,000 free bags of groceries to our community.



Keystone's new grocery delivery program brings food shelf items directly to the homes of 150+ seniors and adults with disabilities every week and we plan to expand this program at the new site.

Keystone's Foodmobile (mobile food shelf) stops at 30+ high-demand locations in Ramsey County each month, with plans for expansion at the new site.



With a new site, we expect to be supporting over 50,000 people with food and crisis support. This is doubled from our 2019 service levels.

We need your support!

You are a critical piece to providing food and support to people in our community.

