

Minnesota Partners to End Hunger

2023 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 HF 5 & SF 123 to invest in school meals for all students in Minnesota.

Lead organization: Hunger Solutions Minnesota and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

Ensure Food Security for Minnesota Families



Ongoing funding to food shelves, food banks and tribal nations 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 shelf spaces.

Ask: Support the Governor's proposal of investing \$45.4 million in FY 2024-2025 and \$23.6 million in FY 2026-2027 to ensure food security for Minnesotans in need across the state. The funding includes support for tribal food sovereignty, an increase in base funding for food shelves, one-time capital to expand and improve food shelf facilities, and establishes a base funding for SNAP outreach.

Lead organizations: The Department of Human Services and Hunger Solutions Minnesota

Expand Market Bucks



Market Bucks is a farmers market incentive program that helps SNAP customers buy local, healthy foods at farmers markets. SNAP customers swipe their EBT card at the farmers market and spend up to \$10 on their card and get a \$2 -for-\$1 Market Bucks match. Market Bucks is growing and is popular with SNAP customers. The number of people using the program doubled from 2019 to 2020 and the Market Bucks dollars redeemed were up 31%.

Ask: Support SF 1927 to increase funding for Market Bucks to \$500,000/year and expand the program to include direct farmer sales.

Lead organization: Hunger Solutions Minnesota

Increase funding for 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: Increase funding for the popular Farm to School grant program to \$5 million in FY24 and \$5 million in FY25 to catch up with the soaring demand, and add legislative language to ensure early care settings are eligible to apply for these grants in addition to K12 schools.

Lead organization: Institute of Agriculture and Trade Policy

Invest in LEAFF (Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund)



LEAFF helps small-scale emerging farmers by raising funds to purchase, at fair market value, food grown by these local farmers. LEAFF is not a grant, but a guarantee to buy a set dollar amount of produce from each farm accepted into the program. The food purchased is donated to food shelves and other hunger relief organizations striving to offer fresh and culturally relevant produce to their communities.

Ask: Support HF 1744 to allocate \$500,000 in FY 2024 and \$400,000 in FY 2025

Lead organization: The Good Acre

Build a new food shelf in St. Paul



Keystone Community Services is requesting \$2.6 million in state bonding 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 1265 & SF 1304 to fund \$2.6 million toward the renovation and equip of a new food shelf in St. Paul.

Lead organization: Keystone Community Services

Support Meals on Wheels Meals 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 to Metro Meals on Wheels to provide home-delivered meals and visits from volunteers to veterans in need.

Ask: Please support HF 122 & SF 774 to appropriate \$540,000 in FY 2024 and FY 2025

Lead organization: Metro Meals on Wheels

Build a permanent State Child Tax Credit



A Minnesota Child Tax Credit of \$1,080 per child under the age of 6, and \$900 for older children would reduce child poverty in Minnesota by 25%. Advocating for a permanent, income-targeted inclusive Minnesota Child Tax Credit is an effort to reduce the short and long-term harm of poverty and dismantle Minnesota's deep racial disparities in financial well-being. While advocates have aspirations that Minnesota could issue the tax credits monthly or periodically (similar to the federal Child Tax Credit), a once-per-year tax credit would also be welcome.

Ask: Support HF 1369 to establish a permanent Child Tax Credit

Lead organization: Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid and Childrens Defense Fund MN

Support Farm to Food Shelf



Farm to Food Shelf supports local food sourcing at Minnesota's Feeding America food banks, getting more in-demand milk, protein and produce onto the shelves at community hunger-relief nonprofits in all 87 Minnesota counties

Ask: \$6.1 million in FY 2024 and \$6.1 million in FY 2025 to provide year-round free milk to Minnesota's food shelves, get more locally produced and processed protein to our neighbors in need, and capture more produce that would otherwise go unharvested or unsold.

Lead organization: Second Harvest Heartland

Support The Good Food Access Program



The Good Food Access Program supports facilities for the sale of affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in areas of the state where better access is needed. The Program provides grants and technical support for food-related enterprises such as new and improved grocery stores, mobile markets, farmers' markets, fresh food refrigeration, and other innovative community-driven solutions.

Ask: Support HF 1981 which provides \$2.5 million in FYs 24-25 to meet ongoing demand for grants and technical assistance and expand to revolving loan opportunities.

Lead organization: Hunger Solutions Minnesota

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, add Fairview Health Services, 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