

# March Campaign 101

Reminders and refreshers to make your March Campaign a success



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# What is Minnesota FoodShare?

## Minnesota FoodShare is...

- An interfaith collaboration that fights hunger through community action
- A program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches
- The March Campaign - an annual campaign to restock food shelves across the state of Minnesota
- An advocate at the state legislature for food shelves, and other issues impacting those who experience hunger and poverty

Minnesota FoodShare is co-sponsored by Minnesota Council of Churches, Minnesota Catholic Conference, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, St. Paul Area Council of Churches and the Minnesota Rabbinical Association.

## When did Minnesota FoodShare begin?

The first campaign, called Metro FoodShare was held in 1983. In 2007, we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> yearly March Campaign. The March Campaign has raised millions of dollars and pounds of food for food shelves statewide since we began.

## What is the March Campaign?

- The March Campaign is a public awareness opportunity to educate the public about the need for food shelves and the good work they do in each community. It is a statewide effort by Minnesota FoodShare and local food shelves, and started more than 25 years ago.
- It is an opportunity for food shelves statewide to raise food and dollars, knowing that all food shelves are doing the same thing as the momentum grows to reach the goal. The March Campaign helps food shelves who participate to restock the shelves and earn extra dollars from Minnesota FoodShare.
- It is the only campaign of its kind in the United States. Food shelves, and thousands of congregations, corporations, civic groups, schools and individuals in the state of Minnesota all work together for one cause.

## How does Minnesota FoodShare support the March Campaign?

- FoodShare determines an annual theme and designs posters and other resources around that theme to provide the local food shelves with tools to help the local campaign be successful.
- FoodShare provides congregations statewide with general information about hunger and encouragement to participate and support their local food shelf.
- FoodShare works with media across the state to promote the March Campaign.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is a food bank?

- A food bank is a large warehouse that stores predominately donated food from large food producers in the state - i.e. General Mills, Land O Lakes and Hormel. Some of the food banks have product they have purchased in large quantities for their members. Other food comes from food drives sponsored by local individuals and groups. An example of this would be the Letter Carriers food drive.
- All of the food is to help smaller organizations - food shelves, soup kitchens, day care centers or day camps feed hungry people in communities all across the state. The food banks make the food available for a fee, referred to as "shared maintenance." This fee helps to pay for the warehouse space, the transportation costs, heat and electricity for the food bank. It is no more than 17 cents per pound and usually less.
- There are six Second Harvest Food Banks that serve the state of Minnesota - Duluth, Grand Rapids, Crookston, Fargo, Rochester and Heartland.
- The food banks are affiliated with Feeding America which serves food banks nationwide.
- There are several other food bank operations that work with hunger organizations including Emergency Food Shelf Network (EFN), Hope for the City and Greater Lake Country Food Bank.
- Minnesota FoodShare is not affiliated with the food banks but considers them our partners.

## Who are the Minnesota Hunger Partners?

The Hunger Partners is the name of the group of hunger agencies including food banks, Hunger Solutions, food shelves and Minnesota FoodShare. We work together on legislative issues, promotion and education, surveys and other issues that directly impacts hungry Minnesotans.

## What is the food fund distribution? (a.k.a. incentive allocation/match)?

Minnesota FoodShare distributes money to food shelves statewide through our "Food Fund". The fund includes donations FoodShare works to secure year-round from corporations, individuals, foundations and businesses, and 100 percent of all donations received during March go directly to the fund as well. Since 1992, FoodShare has distributed \$11,223,667 through the "Food Fund".

The "Food Fund" dollars are distributed based on March Campaign participation and results and on the number of clients a food shelf serves. Each food shelf reports their March Campaign results and number of clients served to Minnesota FoodShare and those numbers determine the percentage of the available dollars they will receive.

### Example

If Minnesota FoodShare has \$500,000 in the "Food Fund", \$250,000 will be used for the first/March Campaign distribution and \$250,000 will be used for the second/client usage distribution. Then, ABC Food Shelf raises 50,000 pounds and dollars combined as a part of the March Campaign, and serves a total of 2,000 clients annually their distributions will be as follows:

### **Distribution 1: March Campaign**

Amount ABC Raised/Statewide March Campaign Total x Half of "Food Fund" = Distribution 1  
 $50,000/10,000,000 \times \$250,000 = \$1,250$

### **Distribution 2: Client Usage**

Number of Clients ABC Served/Total Clients Served Statewide x Half of "Food Fund" = Distribution 2  
 $2,000/800,000 \times \$250,000 = \$625$

**ABC Food Shelf would receive a total of \$1,850 from the "Food Fund" that year.**

Minnesota FoodShare works throughout the year to support food shelves statewide and encourages all food shelves to participate in the March Campaign. The more a food shelf collects during the March Campaign, the more "Food Fund" dollars it will receive from Minnesota FoodShare. Tell your community about the "Food Fund" and that every donation during the March Campaign makes a difference.

### **Does my donation go to Minneapolis?**

No, all donations collected in your community stay in your community for your local food shelf. When we receive calls in our office from those who wish to donate, one of the options we present to the caller is to connect with a local food shelf.

### **What else does Minnesota FoodShare do other than the March Campaign?**

The main focus is the March Campaign, and it's a year-round job. When the yearly campaign is complete, planning begins for the next campaign. We also do advocacy work at the state legislature, and educational work with the public.

### **Who supports Minnesota FoodShare?**

The March Campaign and all staff costs of Minnesota FoodShare are funded by donations from foundations, corporations and individuals who believe in our work. Minnesota FoodShare is a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches.

### **Who is involved in the March Campaign?**

- **Food Shelves:** A food shelf must be a member of the local Second Harvest Food Bank to participate in the March Campaign.
- **Congregations:** Minnesota FoodShare sends information packets to about 4,000 congregations in the state. We estimate about 2,500 participate with their local food shelf during the March Campaign.
- **Corporations:** Minnesota FoodShare works with about 70 of the major corporations in the Twin Cities each year.
- **Individuals:** There are thousands of individuals at the local food shelf level who participate each year. Considering the volunteers at the food shelf, those who organize food drives, and children who collect foods, it is estimated that over 250,000 volunteer hours go into the March Campaign each year.

## **Why March? Why not during the holiday season?**

Food shelves statewide receive untold donations during the holidays to help with holiday food baskets. Everyone is in the giving mood during the holidays. By March, the shelves are starting to go bare. Usually March also falls during the Christian Lenten season, a time of giving and sacrifice. Thus - March.

## **How does Minnesota FoodShare help our local food shelf?**

- We spend the year promoting the need at food shelves using our media connections.
- We raise awareness about the trends at food shelves. We collect that information through meetings and surveys.
- We raise dollars to provide food shelves with the March Campaign incentive allocation twice a year.
- We organize the March Campaign and provide resources, posters and other information statewide to promote the March Campaign.

# **The March Campaign**

# Quick Start Guide for Food Shelf Directors

Here are some ideas for you to think about. They don't work for all food shelves, but might reinvigorate your March Campaign.

## 1. Find community members to help the food shelf

- Consider politicians, school board members, local VFW, Lions, Jaycees. This will increase community awareness of the good work that you do.
- Is there someone in your community that you would like to honor for their hard work on behalf of the food shelf? How about naming them the "honorary chair" of your March Campaign? This might increase the publicity for your campaign.

## 2. Set a goal for your March Campaign

Use the following questions as a guide to set your goal for your campaign:

- Consider what your March Campaign did in the previous year - total pounds and dollars received. Did your food shelf usage increase in the previous year?
- What other food drives will happen in your community in the coming months? Letter carriers, boy scouts or civic groups.
- Will you be able to sustain the amount of food given to clients in the coming months?

## 3. Publicity

- We encourage you to contact your local media (newspapers, TV and radio) with all of your local information.
- Minnesota FoodShare provides press releases to all media outlets in the state. The information that Minnesota FoodShare provides to the media can be used to supplement the information that you provide.
- Use the "Media and Community Outreach" section of this guide to help you increase your coverage and information to your community.

## 4. Website - [www.gmcc.org/foodshare/marchcampaign](http://www.gmcc.org/foodshare/marchcampaign)

The Minnesota FoodShare website has information and resources for organizing a March Campaign and hunger and nutrition information that can be helpful to community members. For directors there is information for registering, planning, promoting and reporting your campaign.

## 5. Minnesota FoodShare campaign packets

- **Food Shelves:** Minnesota FoodShare sends a general packet of information to all food shelves in the state. Please watch for the packet, including the March Campaign Announcement and Order Form. Don't forget to complete your participation agreement.
- **Congregations:** Minnesota FoodShare sends general packets of information to congregations statewide. You can follow-up with information regarding your March Campaign to each of your congregations.
- **Corporations:** Minnesota FoodShare works with many of the corporations in the Twin Cities. Many Twin Cities food shelves also receive food and dollars from these corporations, be sure to follow-up with your contact at the corporation. Food shelves in greater Minnesota should be in contact with the companies and businesses in their communities to encourage participation.

## 6. Stay positive

- March can be grueling on even the most positive person. Give yourself and your volunteers a break. Have a mid-month party to celebrate, and then celebrate when the Campaign is over.
- Don't forget your weekly and final reports. Remember to e-mail or call-in your weekly food and dollar totals.
- All food or cash donations should be delivered to the food shelf no later than the first Friday of April.
- Complete your final donor reporting forms and mail them to Minnesota FoodShare.

# Planning a Successful Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign

The Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign provides an opportunity for communities to help restock Minnesota food shelves. Food shelf directors, who promote and plan for the month-long, statewide March Campaign, can significantly increase donation levels for the food shelves. Use this guide to plan your March Campaign.

## January

- Contact all previous community supporters to encourage participation during the upcoming March Campaign.
  - Thank them for their previous support.
  - Put together a packet of information for participants, and see our website for materials you may want to include in your packet.
- Contact new groups you would like to participate in your Campaign and explain...
  - All donations you receive are used in the local community
  - All donations received during the March Campaign help increase the amount your food shelf will receive from the food fund distribution.
  - A large campaign is needed in March because food shelves run out of holiday donations by then.
- Watch for your March Campaign Announcement and Order Form. Minnesota FoodShare will mail you a campaign packet containing resources to give to groups participating in your campaign. If they need posters, stickers, or other resources, refer them to our website.
- Plan on attending your winter regional meeting. A wide variety of resources will be available there. You will receive notice of meeting dates and locations.
- If your food shelf hosts a kickoff event to boost interest and enthusiasm for your campaign you may wish to coordinate a committee to plan and publicize the event.

## February

- Advertise and promote the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign in your community
  - Send announcements and press releases to congregations, community newspapers, shopper's guides, radio and TV stations.
  - Bring attention to the hungry and to your food shelf's efforts to help.
  - Arrange for speakers to make presentations about hunger in your community.
  - Place March Campaign posters in your community.
  - For help on writing press releases, see the media and community outreach section of this packet.
- Recruit and schedule volunteers to assist with loading, transporting, unloading, weighing and stocking of food donations.
- Nominate volunteers, staff and donors for the WCCO Radio Good Neighbor Award. More information will be included in your March Campaign packet.

## **March**

- Don't forget to report your weekly donation totals.
- Provide Minnesota FoodShare with photos and stories of your Campaign as soon as events occur.
  - Please contact FoodShare's Communications staff at (612) 721-8687 x304 if you have photos and/or written stories describing activities related to your food drive. This helps Minnesota FoodShare tell statewide stories about hunger.
- Get donors to report on time! Remind donors of the date that donations should be received by your food shelf or a report of pounds and dollars are collected for it to count toward the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign totals. This is usually the first Friday in April.
- Nominate one of your special March Campaign supports for the Campaign awards to be presented at the Minnesota FoodShare Campaign Celebration.

## **April**

- Complete your Minnesota FoodShare Donor Reporting Forms and mail them in on time.
- Report the pounds and dollars raised to your local community and thank them for a successful drive. Send a news release to the media to report the total amount raised, and present your own certificates of recognition. Blank certificates are available on our website.
- Evaluate the drive. Was the goal met? What were the strengths and weaknesses? If the goal was not met, discuss possible ways to adjust for next year. Celebrate your efforts.

## Checklist for Participating Food Shelves

Things you need to do and know to participate in the March Campaign:

- Be a member in good standing of your Second Harvest Food Bank.
- Complete and return your March Campaign Participation Agreement.
- Report your pounds and dollars donation totals WEEKLY.
- Complete your March Campaign Final Donor Reporting Forms.  
Indicate total pounds and dollars received from each category of donor. Make a copy for your records. Double check your numbers, your food fund distribution check is based on your report.
- Mail your final donor reporting forms - mailing directions will be provided.
- Be sure to report your monthly service statistics.  
Report the number of people you serve each month on time, all year long to your Second Harvest Food Bank. Food shelves that don't report their statistics will lose portions of their food fund distribution from Minnesota FoodShare.

If you have any questions about the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign, please contact the March Campaign Coordinator at (612) 721-8687 x326 or (888) 315-7390.

## What to Count During the March Campaign

**The March Campaign runs March 1<sup>st</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>. All food and cash donations collected at your food shelf during those dates should be reported.**

*Exceptions:*

- *Some activities happen the week prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> as a kick-off activity... all food and cash from these activities can be reported.*
- *All food and cash must be received into the food shelf no later than the first Friday of April. This gives organizations the opportunity to get all donations delivered to the food shelf.*
- *Be sure to advise your donors of the final deadline. Each year we receive many calls about large donations that come in past the deadline and can not be counted.*

### **What you can count:**

#### **Food:**

All food donations you receive at your food shelf including weekly bread and produce donations. Be sure to weigh and report them all to receive credit.

#### **Non-Food Products:**

All paper products, soap products and other non-food products donated during the month of March can be weighed and reported.

#### **Money:**

- Cash and check donations from individuals, congregations, businesses, corporations, schools, civic groups etc. should be counted.
- Grants specifically given to you for March.

### **What you can't count:**

#### **Food:**

You can not count any "purchased" food from your Second Harvest Food Bank, EFN or local grocery store.

#### **Money:**

- Capital campaign dollars.
- Donations from the Crop Walk, unless the walk is held in March.
- Any checks from Hunger Solutions, Minnesota FoodShare or Second Harvest.

# **Media and Community Outreach**

# Media and Publicity How-To

One of the best ways to get the word out about your March Campaign is through the media. This can include your local newspaper, radio station or television station. If you can tell your story in a way that is interesting enough, your local media will cover the story. Although Minnesota FoodShare works hard to get the media to cover the March Campaign, nothing beats a local contact.

## What Minnesota FoodShare does to get media coverage

### Television

Minnesota FoodShare sends press releases to all of the major television stations with updates about the campaign's progress throughout the month.

### Radio

WCCO Radio is a media sponsor of the March Campaign. They have us on the air several times to encourage support for the March Campaign, and they keep their listeners up-to-date on the progress statewide. They also highlight food shelf volunteers daily during March through their Good Neighbor Awards. Occasionally, we get calls from other stations that want to do a story on the March Campaign. We also provide radio stations radio spots to use during March. It is up to each radio station whether or not they wish to use it.

### Newspapers

Minnesota FoodShare sends press releases to newspapers in Minnesota throughout the March Campaign. It is up to the individual newspaper whether or not they wish to run the story. We encourage you to contact your local newspaper to encourage them to run a story.

## What you can do to get media coverage in greater Minnesota

Most local papers prefer to run local stories rather than general stories sent from far away. So, call your local newspaper, radio station, or television station if you have one and ask to speak with whoever covers community events or poverty issues, and talk to that person directly. This information is for food shelves in Greater Minnesota. Minnesota FoodShare works with the large Twin Cities outlets.

## How to write your own press release

Local newspapers and radio stations are often understaffed and hurried. If you can give them a press release that reads just like a news story, they are more likely to run it than if they need to send out a reporter to write the story from scratch.

Start out simply by announcing it's March and time for the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign to raise money and food for your food shelf. Then, think about what makes your drive interesting and unique. Keep in mind that the media needs a hook: something that makes your story more interesting than simply an announcement about your drive, Do you have great community involvement? Mention specifics: which churches, schools, or community groups are having especially successful or interesting drives? After drumming up enthusiasm, be sure to drive home the need for donations. Mention how many people

use your food shelf each year, make sure to let people know if use has gone up this year, and use a few facts and figures, keeping them as local as you can. Minnesota FoodShare has a list of Minnesota hunger facts if you need them. A few statistics can drive home your point, but too many may make your story dry and uninteresting. The best way to make the need come alive is to get a quote or two from local users of your food shelf. There is no need to use real names. You can also quote yourself, letting people know what specific items the food shelf needs and any other important information.

Make sure you have a contact person with a phone number listed on the press release so the media can reach someone right away.

### **Why do I need to do all of this?**

Nothing beats a local touch. A story with a local angle is more likely to be published, and a story in the local paper or on the radio will increase interest in the in your community and will probably increase community involvement in your campaign. From the many local newspaper clippings we receive in our office, many of you are already doing an excellent job!

# March Campaign Community Presentation Outline

This is a general presentation outline for food shelves to use at a community gathering.

## 1. Introduce yourself and what you do at the food shelf.

## 2. Explain why you are speaking at the event:

You represent the local food shelf and you want the group to participate in the March Campaign.

## 3. Explain the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign:

- Minnesota FoodShare is a statewide effort - all food shelves are working together to raise food and dollars for their communities at the same time.
- Minnesota FoodShare is a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches and has been sponsoring the campaign since it began in 1983.

## 4. Talk about the need at your food shelf and in your community:

- A local food shelf is an opportunity for neighbors to help neighbors in need.
- Talk about the kinds of people who are finding themselves at the food shelves. Men and women who have lost their jobs for the first time, seniors, etc. People like to hear the stories. Never use any names.
- Give your statistics from the previous year. You can include how many people you served, how many volunteers work in your food shelf, and the amount of food that was given away.
- If you want cash donations, let your community know that. Can you spend the dollars more effectively? Explain how you can get items from the food bank, if you do.
- Hand out a list of what your food shelf's needs are.

## 5. Why March?

- Food shelves are usually getting empty after the generous holiday season.
- In the Christian Churches, it is the Lenten season - a time for giving.
- You are trying to refill the shelves for the spring and early summer months: a traditionally lean time of year when not many donate, and a time when families need more food as school is closed.

## 6. What does Minnesota FoodShare provide to the food shelves?

- Posters, resources, and other information free of charge to food shelves, congregations and other groups interested in participating.
- And most important: FoodShare provides free money to food shelves who participate. It is an incentive. Minnesota FoodShare raises dollars statewide from individuals, corporations and foundations. All food shelves who participate in the March Campaign receive a part of the total amount raised by Minnesota FoodShare.

## 7. Sum up how the community can help:

Schools, churches, and community groups are in a unique position to help those in need. Unfortunately, hunger is a very real fact of life in Minnesota but there is something we can all do about it. Food shelf usage continues to increase each year. As resources continue to dwindle, communities need to work even harder to help the those who find themselves in crisis. Together we can all make a difference.

# Sample Resources

Using Minnesota FoodShare's resources you can create your own community information sheets. The blank sheets can be found on FoodShare's website under the "Promote It" section of the March Campaign.

The next two pages are great examples of using your food shelf statistics to tell your story to your community. The grocery bag and hunger facts flyers are available on the Minnesota FoodShare website and can be personalized with your information.



### Hastings Family Service

Any donation to Hastings Family Service, whether actual food or monetary (\$1.00 = 1 pound) is catalogued. All donations are kept in Hastings for Hastings families, and by participating in the Minnesota FoodShare March Campaign we receive an additional monetary incentive that we can use to purchase food.

- In 2007, there were 637 requests for food from 331 different families (1112 individuals: 550 adults, 562 children). There were 53 requests serving 181 people on average per month.
- 65% of food shelf recipients work; only 5% listed “welfare” assistance.
- In an average month, 33% of families requesting food reported that someone in the household had missed a meal due to not having enough money to purchase food.
- 54% of people needing the food shelf in 2007 had not been in the previous year.
- Of the families receiving food, 78% were in only once or twice during the year while experiencing crisis. The three main reasons indicated that resulted in a family using the food shelf were unemployment, major expense and illness.
- 86% of the families have lived in Hastings for more than six months.
- 100% of the food given by the food shelf is donated by individuals in our community or purchased with donated money for use by Hastings area families in need.
- The HFS food shelf provided 45,738 meals in 2007; more than half were for children. Adding Christmas food, the numbers rise to 65,793 total meals, with a total of 34,797 meals for children.

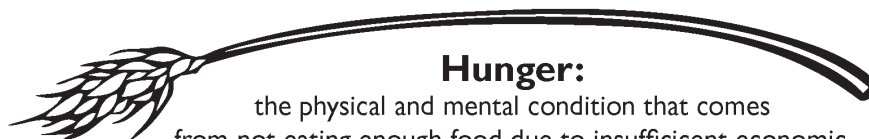
### The following items are needed at the food shelf:

- |                                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Boxed Side Dishes                   | • Sugar             |
| • (rice, pasta, potato, and stuffing) | • Flour             |
| • Vegetable Soup                      | • Hamburger Helper  |
| • Spaghetti Sauce                     | • Fruit Juices      |
| • Beef Stew or Chili                  | • Spaghettios       |
| • Saltine Crackers                    | • Toilet Paper      |
| • Jelly or Jam                        | • Laundry Detergent |
| • Pancake Mix                         | • Dish Detergent    |
| • Syrup                               |                     |

# 2008 Hunger Fact Sheet

## Friends in Need Food Shelf

*Serving South Washington County*



### **Hunger:**

the physical and mental condition that comes from not eating enough food due to insufficient economic, family or community resources. Hunger exists in families where members take turns eating or eat smaller meals to make food last longer.

- ◆ In 2007, our food shelf served a total of 11,702 people.
- ◆ Over half of those served were children and 20 percent were seniors.
- ◆ 259 new families visited the food shelf.
- ◆ We distributed approximately 425,000 pounds of food.
- ◆ Our holiday train stop was one of the most successful of all of the stops in the United States.
- ◆ Visitors reported that job losses and health issues are reasons they need to use our food shelf.
- ◆ We have a very generous community and so far we have been able to keep up with the growing demand year after year.
- ◆ There are more than 300 food shelves in Minnesota, serving every county in the state.

Minnesota  
FoodShare

[www.gmcc.org/foodshare](http://www.gmcc.org/foodshare)