

The number of hungry Minnesotans is increasing. Since 2000, individual visits to Minnesota food shelves increased 58% to 624,000 household visits. Children account for 50% of all food shelf clients. Seniors are 20% of food shelf clients. The emergency food system, historically used to help people through troubled times, has become a monthly supplement for many families who cannot make ends meet.

For too many Minnesotans, skipping meals due to lack of enough food has become the norm. One out of every eight children on food assistance programs skips meals due to lack of funding for food. Hunger causes inattentiveness, poor concentration, and learning and behavioral problems throughout the school day. For far too many Minnesotans, the decision to pay for electricity, heat, medicine, *or food* has become an unpleasant and ongoing choice.

## **Minnesota Partners to End Hunger 2008 Public Policy Agenda**

The following strategies are fundamental to the legislative agenda for 2008.

- Organize a statewide system to support meal programs. The Minnesota Meal Program Alliance will organize statewide to collect data, share resources and best practices and advocate for food shelf clients.
- Increase awareness of the Food Support Program (formerly the food stamp program), as an important nutrition assistance program for people who work for low wages, senior citizens, disabled individuals and families. Partners to End Hunger will support policies that reduce barriers to participating in the Food Support Program, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and other federally funded nutrition programs.
- Endorse actions to maintain and maximize state use of federal child nutrition funds.
- Advocate for statewide universal free breakfast for all Minnesota children in public schools.
- Advocate for funding for kindergarten milk, school wellness programs and WIC and the expansion of summer feeding programs.

## **Why is this work needed?**

**Increased food shelf funding is needed** to keep pace with the demand for food shelf capacity building in Minnesota. We will work to increase that funding 45% to \$1,853,100. Funding has not changed since 1995; the level of spending has been \$1,278,000 for twelve years while the number of hungry people in Minnesota has increased.

**Increasing food stamp participation** will be good for Minnesota's economy. The Minnesota Food Support Program (funded by the Federal Food Stamp Act) is a federally funded program that helps low-income families buy nutritious food from local grocers. However, only about 60% of eligible households participate in the program. This means that Minnesota is missing out on more than \$150 million in additional federal funds to help low-income households, money that would be spent in local communities and help families and retailers during lean economic times.

Minnesota Partners to End Hunger will work to increase participation rates by extending programs such as the Minnesota Food Assistance Program and advancing policy changes that will reduce barriers to the participation.

**Supporting the work of the Commission to End Poverty** advances the hunger cause as well by organizing members of the hunger community to give voice to the hunger issue at hearings, in presentations and in final recommendations of this relevant work.

**School readiness is critical** to give all children an equal opportunity to succeed in school. Proper nutrition through universal access to school breakfast and school milk and increased nutritional integrity and choices in school meal programs will help create this success.

The Minnesota Partners to End Hunger will take the following actions to support child nutrition:

- Support efforts to raise awareness of the value of the universal school breakfast.
- Support state WIC programs and efforts of the National WIC Association
- Encourage and support efforts of local governments, school districts, faith based communities and nonprofits to sponsor summer food sites
- Endorse efforts by the Minnesota Food and Nutrition Network and the Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota Initiative to improve nutrition in the schools and youth agencies

**Adequate senior nutrition** is needed to ensure all seniors can maintain their quality of life. Access to healthful food that is easy to transport and providing access to participation in congregate and home delivered meals program will help seniors remain independent.

Specific recommendations are to:

- Support the successful execution and full funding of the Older American Act, which focuses on home delivered meals and congregate dining.
- Support the expansion of Seniors Farmers Market coupon program.
- Support enhanced food safety efforts to reduce food borne illness which the seniors are particularly vulnerable
- Support maximum use for seniors and young families of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Support increasing the minimum amount of food stamps allocated to seniors.

**Federal hunger programs** are a critical piece to providing enough food for the hungry. The Minnesota Partners to End Hunger will take the following actions to support nutrition programs included in the reauthorization of the Farm Bill 2007.

- The Partners to End Hunger oppose the use of administrative orders or proposals for legislative activity which would abolish eligibility for participation in federal programs.
- Strongly support all federally funded nutrition programs as a comprehensive approach to addressing hunger.
- Mobilize all services locally and nationally to communicate with federal representatives on the value to our local communities of food support (food stamps) and CSFP.
- Stress the value of strong nutrition programs and healthful foods to reduction of health care costs and improvement of educational outcomes
- Support the successful execution of the Ryan White Act, which focuses on people with AIDS.
- Work to increase summer lunch participation and streamline procedures and paperwork by expanding the number of Simplified Summer Program (Lugar Pilot) states, including Minnesota.

**The partner organizations or individuals listed below support the work of Minnesota Partners to End Hunger.**

Steering Committee members are noted with an asterisk.

If you would like to be added to this list, we invite you to visit [www.hungersolutions.org/do/peh](http://www.hungersolutions.org/do/peh)

Affirmative Options	St. Paul
Bemidji Community Food Shelf	Metro Meals on Wheels
Big Stone Lake Area Emergency Food Shelf, Ortonville	Milaca Area Pantry
Channel One Food Bank, Rochester	Minnesota Council of Nonprofits/Minnesota Budget Project
Children's Defense Fund*	Minnesota Dietetic Association
Christian Cupboard Food Shelf, Woodbury	Minnesota FoodShare*
Clear Lake Food Shelf	North Country Food Bank, Crookston
Climax Parish Food Shelf	Northfield Community Action Center Food Shelf
Community Aid Elk River	Open Your Heart
Community Food Shelf at First Lutheran, Aitkin	Peace Center Inc, New Prague
Crookston Emergency Food Shelf	People Reaching Out to Other People Food Shelf, Eden Prairie
Dick Goebel*	PRISM, Golden Valley
Dorothy Day Food Pantry Moorhead	Project Share of Wadena
Emergency FoodShelf Network*	Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, New Brighton
Falls Hunger Coalition, International Falls	Rush City Food Shelf
Family Pathways - Onamia Food Shelf	Salvation Army Carlton County Food Shelf, Cloquet
Family Pathways - Sandstone Food Shelf	Salvation Army Hibbing Food Shelf
Faribault County Food Shelf	Second Harvest Heartland*, Maplewood
Friends for Life Food Shelf, Watertown	Second Harvest North Central Food Bank, Grand Rapids
Friends in Need Food Shelf, Cottage Grove	Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank, Duluth
Grand Rapids Food Shelf	SEMCAC Dodge County, Dodge Center
Great Plains Food Bank, Fargo	Senior Food Shelf of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Greater Lake Country Food Bank*	Senior Services Consortium of Ramsey Co.
Greater Twin Cities United Way*	Sibley County Foodshare, Winthrop
Groveland Emergency Food Shelf, Minneapolis	Silver Bay Food Shelf
Hawley Food Pantry	Strandquist Area Food Shelf
Henning Community Food Shelf	The Helping Hand Food Shelf, Lafayette
Hibbing Area Food Shelf	The Salvation Army - Minneapolis South
Hope for the City	The Salvation Army - East St. Paul Office
Hunger Solutions Minnesota*	The Salvation Army - Need Office
Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy*	The Salvation Army - North Office
Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners, Wayzata	The Salvation Army - West Seventh Office
Legal Services Advocacy Project*	The Salvation Army - Virginia
Loaves and Fishes*	Tri-Community Food Shelf, Wright
Long Prairie Food Pantry	Two Harbors Food Shelf
Lutheran Coalition of Public Policy in Minnesota*	Willmar Area Food Shelf
Mary Pat Raimondi*	Winona Volunteer Services
Melrose Area Food Shelf, Grey Eagle	
Merrick Community Services Food Shelf,	