

Community Recommendations to End Hunger in the Twin Cities

By the Steering Committee
of the Twin Cities Hunger Initiative

Executive Summary Five-year Plan (2008-2013)

Background

Going to bed hungry and waking up hungry is experienced by far too many in our community. Those without enough food to eat, or the resources to do something about it, have been our neighbors for a long time. And the faces of those who are chronically hungry are not readily identified. Organizations serving people on an emergency food basis are concerned about the escalating trends in this area that must be addressed.



The fact is, as the Twin Cities experience growth and prosperity, the segment of our population needing food and going hungry is *growing*. This challenge is made worse because donations to emergency food programs (made up of local food shelves and food shelf networks) have been declining over the years, and it is estimated that 200,000 people in the Twin Cities do not have access to enough food.

Currently: 50 percent of food shelf users are children, and 20 percent are seniors. Of those using food shelves regularly, 11 percent of *children have to skip a meal* because there is not enough food at home, while 43 percent of parents using food shelves skip meals because there is not enough food in the home.

Collaborations between organizations have been in place for a long time, and efforts to fight hunger have been steadfast as the need has grown year over year. In 2006, upon the release of a strategic plan that called for a 20 percent reduction in hunger, Greater Twin Cities United Way invited a group of executives from hunger relief organizations to begin working together to develop a community plan to reduce hunger. This group became the Steering Committee of the Twin Cities Hunger Initiative and has representatives from 14 partner organizations (listed at the end of this summary).

Initial meetings of the Steering Committee galvanized member partners to commit to a goal *not only to reduce hunger, but to eliminate it*. It was unanimously agreed this work would require the energy, talent and resources of the entire community. This Executive Summary describes the broad recommendations to address ending hunger in the Twin Cities and is supported by a detailed report available by request.

Vision, Mission, and Goals

The Twin Cities Hunger Initiative has embraced the task of determining what it will take to end hunger in the Twin Cities. Though the recommendations address the metro area specifically, the intent is that this work may serve as a model for the entire state.

The mission is clarified, and the Initiative is committed to:

- Determining what will be required to end hunger in the Twin Cities, and
- Organizing the resources needed to end hunger in the Twin Cities.

The vision of this Initiative is to ensure that nobody goes to bed hungry.

The Initiative will engage existing and yet-to-be-identified partners, donors, funders, government agencies, and the broader community in general, to unite in support of this effort. With thoughtful analysis and planning, followed by strategic implementation, *it is within the reach of this community to end hunger.*



Putting systems in place to address the food needs of those without the resources to feed themselves will strengthen our community and benefit everyone who is a part of it.

Community Recommendations for Ending Hunger

Three goals have been identified as part of this plan. The complete plan addresses the detail supporting the objectives, includes timelines and identifies the lead partner for each goal.

Goal 1: Increase the amount of healthy food available for distribution in the emergency food system.

- Work with food donor corporations to increase the amount of healthy food in the emergency food system, understood to be food shelf networks and local food shelves.
- Create a multiple year awareness campaign to educate influential leaders in legislative arenas and food corporations about the state of hunger in our community.

Goal 2: Enhance the capabilities of emergency food programs to serve food shelf clients.

- Increase food shelf capacity through increased access, greater capacity for distributing food, and more flexible, client-oriented service.
 - Adopt a common source for disseminating information about emergency food services.
 - Analyze existing food shelf geographic boundaries; consider reconfiguring to enhance service delivery.
 - Acquire resources for increasing hours of operation and improving food storage.
 - Fast track efforts to create and adopt guidelines for creating a common, excellent food shelf client service experience.
 - Compile and benchmark existing procedures so that food shelves can identify and adopt best practices from one another.
- Strengthen individual meal programs and leverage the impact through collaboration.

The Minnesota Meal Program Alliance will take a leadership role by creating a common voice on legislative matters, assessing and understanding needs, sharing best practices, developing minimum standards for service, and seeking opportunities for resource sharing.

Goal 3: Increase use of government programs throughout Minnesota.

- Improve accessibility to and use of federal food support dollars.
- Increase use and availability of summer feeding programs for school children.
- Influence policymakers to maintain and increase budgets for food programs.



A Challenge to the Community

The goals for ending hunger constitute crucial, focused efforts that will have a timely and significant impact on reducing hunger in the Twin Cities metro area and perhaps throughout the state.

Current costs for state-wide hunger relief are known to be \$1.1 billion, but we do not know the total costs in the nine-county metro area. The Steering Committee recommends a strategic evaluation of the current cost of the emergency food system in the nine-county area.

A detailed analysis will result in understanding the true cost of the current system and will provide a basis for considering entirely different models for feeding the hungry, perhaps more effectively. Results would be used to recommend ways to strengthen the efficiency of the present system and/or to pilot potential new models to ensure that people have access to the healthy food they need to support themselves and their families.

Call to Action

It is critical that the broader community supports these recommendations. Various sectors will need to play a critical role in supporting the implementation of the plan.

There are a number of ways to get involved in supporting the effort to end hunger in the Twin Cities.

- Advocate for public policy
 - Call or write a letter to your local legislator to support bills addressing emergency or supplemental food programs.
 - Support the Partners to End Hunger Legislative Agenda by having your organization sign on to the list of supporting organizations at www.hungersolutions.org/do/peh
- Conduct nutritious and culturally specific food drives in your community.
- Ask your organization to support this effort to end hunger in the Twin Cities. Contact one of the lead partners to participate with a specific task (identified in the full plan.)

***“When a person lives in poverty, they have many problems.
When a person is hungry, they have ONE problem.”***

Jane Brown, Former Executive Director
Second Harvest Heartland

Twin Cities Hunger Initiative Members

The Steering Committee acknowledges and deeply thanks the scores of other individuals and dozens of organizations that assisted in this project.

Cargill Kitchen Solutions
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St.
Paul and Minneapolis*
CEAP
Centre for Asian/Pacific Islanders
Centro Cultural Chicano, Inc.
Division of Indian Works
Emergency FoodShelf Network*
Family Pathways
General Mills, Inc.
Greater Lakes Country Food Bank
Greater Twin Cities United Way*
Hope for the City*
Household of Faith
Hunger Solutions Minnesota*
Intercongregation Communities
Association* (ICA)
Keystone Community Services*
Land O'Lakes Inc.
Loaves and Fishes*
Lynn Moline Associates, Inc.*

Merrick Community Services
Minnesota FoodShare*
Minnesota Office of Economic
Opportunities/Department of Human Services
Moeller Consulting
Neighborhood House*
Neighbors Inc.*
NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center*
North Star Foodservice
Northwest Hennepin Human Service
Council
Ramsey County Human Services
Pillsbury United Communities
PROP
Reviva
Sabathani Community Services
Second Harvest Heartland*
STEP
Supervalu
The Salvation Army, Twin Cities Area

Steering Committee members are noted with an asterisk.
If we have failed to include any organizations who made a contribution of any kind
or if we have misspelled any names, please accept our sincere apologies.