

Keeping Food on the Table

Presented by

HUNGER
SOLUTIONS^{MN}

A Statewide Partnership of Organizations Fighting Hunger



A Quarterly Review of the State of Hunger in Minnesota

Second Quarter 2011

What's for lunch?

Closing the summer hunger gap.



Each year, when school ends, and summer vacation approaches, families across Minnesota wonder how they will be able to provide enough food for their children. Over 200,000 students are at-risk for hunger during the summer because they do not have access to meals at school.

Summer Food for Homeless Youth

Groveland Food Shelf purchases food for the homeless youth they serve. This special program distributes single-serving, non-perishable, light-weight, and healthy food to youth that have no means of transportation or a place to store/cook food. Having access to food that makes sense allows the youth to eat more regularly and be more healthy in the choices they make.

To fill the summer hunger gap facing these children, parents turn to Minnesota food shelves to supplement their groceries. Minnesota food shelves face a steep uptick in demand, especially for child friendly food. Historically, summer is also a time when donations decrease. Last year, there were 198,894 child visits to food shelves in July and August alone ~ 4% more than in 2009.

To address this need, Hunger Solutions and Open Your Heart to the Hungry and Homeless will launch the 2nd Annual Food Shelf Challenge Grant. This provides matching dollars to food shelves' fundraising. Last year the Challenge generated \$1,000,000 in support to food shelves across the state. Over 150 food shelves will raise funds to support their child food programming.

Minnesota sees sharp increase in Food Support caseload



Good nutrition can be expensive and out of reach for many Minnesotans. Today, 1 in 10 Minnesotans are not getting adequate nutrition. And for many, putting food on the table is a financial challenge.

The nutrition safety net of school meals, food shelves and Food Support help to keep food on the table and stave off deep poverty for many Minnesota families.

In the last two years, Minnesota witnessed steep increases in the use of Food Support.

Minnesota Department of Human Services reports that there was a 30% jump from 2008—2009 and another 20% increase from 2009-2010.

Who supplements their grocery budget with food support?

- The average adult in a family case is 35 years old, female, and white.
- Seventy-three percent have graduated from high school and 35% are married.
- Family cases average 4 members.
- Twenty-two percent of people enrolled in Food Support are disabled and 15% are seniors.

The 6th highest jump in the nation

515,000 Minnesotans were enrolled in Food Support in Minnesota in April 2011 compared to 434,000 in April 2010.

An 18.8% increase in one year.

Food shelves fill empty plates



There would be days when my child would just eat cereal if it wasn't for the food shelf."

-St. Cloud food shelf visitor

Minnesota food shelves help families obtain the groceries they cannot afford to purchase on their own. Many clients served by neighborhood food shelves report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or other bills.

The number of people visiting food shelves has been gradually rising since 2000, with a more pronounced increase in 2008—2010 during the economic crisis.

In the most recent reporting period, our member food shelves have reported the following statewide service statistics.

During January-March of 2011 food shelf visits have increased 7.5% over 2010. Child food shelf usage is up 6.7%.



Food shelf use has been on the rise in Minnesota since 2000. This graph illustrates the steep incline in need after 2007. This tracks the same timeline as the recession.

Non traditional food shelves

For years food shelves have been located in churches and community centers. Because of the duration of the recession, we are seeing more unique models.

In a previous report, we featured the food shelf in the Hennepin County Medical Center. Now, we have seen a rise in schools meeting the needs of their low income, and some cases, homeless students.

The Star Tribune featured a story recently about schools in Anoka county with food shelves. We applaud this creative and respectful approach to help nourish students living in poverty.



This is an essential service as research shows that hunger lowers student's grades, increases rates of suicide and, counter-intuitively, increases obesity.

Source: <http://www.startribune.com/local/north/121476434.html?page=1&c=y>

HUNGER FREE MN SNAPSHOTS:



Hunger costs Minnesota up to \$1.2 billion annually in direct and indirect health care and education expenses.



Hunger in Minnesota has doubled in 5 years – it's an urban, suburban and rural dilemma.



Hungry Minnesotans miss an average of 10 meals each month.

HSM is proud to be a founding member of Hunger Free Minnesota: an emerging movement to end hunger in our communities, initiated by a coalition of partners united in the common belief that food is a basic and essential human right that every Minnesotan should enjoy. Learn more at: www.hungerfreemn.org



Eat well to be well.

Healthy food is one phone call away. . .

1-888-711-1151

The Minnesota Food HelpLine provides vital support for families facing hunger. With one call, we provide nutrition and other program eligibility screening as well as referrals to food/grocery help near their home.

You can feel confident referring families to the Minnesota Food HelpLine. We have the most current information on nutrition programs and can offer local hunger solutions in every part of the state.

The Minnesota Food HelpLine is a program of Hunger Solutions Minnesota. We answer the call to end hunger in Minnesota by helping thousands of low-income and newly poor families and seniors. With Hunger Solutions assistance, people learn about the range of food programs available and how they can access them.

HelpLine Hours: Monday – Friday ~ 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Answering the Call to End Hunger

People like Suzanne call the HelpLine every day:

Suzanne lost her job and has had no income since September, with only occasional child support from her ex-husband who is also out of work.

With nowhere else to turn, Suzanne called the HelpLine. Suzanne was distraught – she was out of food and there would be nothing to eat when her daughter got home from school that day.

We led Suzanne through the screening that would provide her and her daughter with emergency food benefits that would start within 24 hours. We also connected Suzanne with a food shelf nearby.



Navigating the system in order to find sources of food can be overwhelming when a family is in crisis. With one phone call, Suzanne received the information and support she needed to stabilize her family's crisis situation and ensured she could take care of her daughter.

In the first 5 months of 2011, the HelpLine received calls from 75 different Minnesota counties. 95% of all callers that were screened were eligible, but not yet enrolled, in Food Support.

HUNGER
SOLUTIONS MN
A Statewide Partnership of Organizations Fighting Hunger

651-486-9860

hungersolutions.org

Hunger Solutions Minnesota is a comprehensive hunger relief organization that works to end hunger in Minnesota. We take action to assure food security for all Minnesotans by supporting agencies that provide food to those in need, advancing sound public policy, and guiding grassroots advocacy. HSM advocates for the maximum use of all federal public nutrition dollars available and works to improve low income Minnesotans' access to all nutrition programs.

