



Annual Report 2022
Finding Strength in Local

Together we shared **6,395,803** meals



Local Solutions to Global Challenges

Across the world, public health challenges and economic uncertainty have pushed the food system on every level. In 2022, there were a record 5.5 million visits to food shelves in Minnesota alone.



Global factors like inflation, climate, political events, and the effects of the pandemic continue to put strain on our food system, impacting food security for many. We know reliable access to nutritious food has profound effects on the health and wellbeing of families. Influencing these stressors can often feel beyond our reach, but we believe we can—and must—strengthen local foodways and create innovative solutions for the long term health of our community.

With support from you in 2022, we worked together to grow local solutions to global food access challenges by:

- Distributing nutritious, culturally connected food for free through 224 partners across urban, greater, and tribal Minnesota.
- Increasing equitable access to land, farmer education, and sustainable growing practices in the midwest.
- Sharing quality, fresh groceries at 40% off retail prices at a neighborhood level through our mobile market sites.
- Buying nutritious food directly from 53 local producers.

Your support and generosity is essential to a future without hunger. Together we are planting the seeds to build a stronger, more equitable food system for tomorrow.

Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director



2022 AT A GLANCE

5.5M visits

to MN food shelves

(Hunger Solutions 2022)

6,395,803
meals shared

240,372

pounds of local produce, protein, and grocery staples sourced from:

53

local vendors and farmers of whom 50% are BIPOC led

33,120

pounds of produce reclaimed by volunteers from local farms and farmers markets

Distributed to our community in partnership with:

224

food access partners

including food shelves and meal programs

57

mobile market sites

1800

volunteers lending 13,674 hours



Meet Nate: Farmer at Big River Farms

2022 at Big River Farms:

- 6+ languages spoken among farmers
- People with indigenous roots accessed the land at no cost beginning this year
- The year of the perennial! Farmers planted strawberries, hazelnut trees, black currants, and raspberries!

Nate Diah just enjoys farming. Growing food is a way of life for him and his family back home in Liberia. Today he and his wife are owners of Bethel Empowerment Farming Venture, a MN based farm business grown with support from Big River Farms, a program of The Food Group that supports emerging farmers with access to certified organic land, markets, farm tools, and education.

Nate is one of the 18 teams who grew his farm business at Big River Farms in 2022. Get to know Nate!

What are you growing?

We're doing habanero peppers, okra, squash, tomatoes, and green peppers. This year we also added carrots, squash, and melons. We're just trying little amounts to get growing experience and ideas, you know?

Share your favorite part about being a small farm business owner!

To be honest, you connect with people more, especially at farmers markets.

Vision for the future?

To be full time farmers. When the time is right it's a goal to own our own farm – but it's always good to take it step by step.



Any challenges as an 'emerging' farmer?

One of the bigger challenges is doing it alone. That's always a barrier—balancing between work and farming. It's possible but just strenuous. This year I cut my job down to part time because I wanted to have more time in the summer weekdays. Last year we lost a lot of produce because I wasn't available.

What's it like growing with Big River Farms?

It has created opportunities to grow and learn things I haven't before. It's really hard to find other places that are mentoring people. Big River Farms is open, they teach how to be independent, how to grow different plants, how to incorporate your farming ideas. It has been very helpful.

Supporting our Neighbors: Hunger Relief in Minnesota

Elizabeth moved to Minnesota recently. She lived on her own with a job in home healthcare that didn't pay much. She was just starting out and getting on her feet in her new home. That's how she came across Neighbors Inc, a Twin Cities food shelf.

Neighbors Inc is one of The Food Group's 224 food access partners sharing fresh produce, quality meats, grocery staples, and culturally specific food. **Our work depends on partnerships with organizations like Neighbors Inc that value the goals, lifestyles, and nutrition needs of the local community.**

With her recent housing and work shift, Elizabeth experienced health events that made her unable to eat sugar and gluten—ingredients common in processed foods. Unfortunately, in our food system, it is often the processed and sugary foods that are more affordable.

"It's important I eat healthy. If I don't, my energy goes down, my health goes down. It's more expensive to eat healthy."

Choosing food that fits Elizabeth's health needs hasn't always been accessible.

"Gluten free is really expensive. I've tried to ignore the fact that I'm allergic to gluten. There's no getting around it."



When Elizabeth gets groceries at Neighbors Inc, she doesn't have to ignore her health needs, noting there's always a variety of options available.

At The Food Group, we believe low and no cost access to quality, nutritious food is a right. We are intentional about distributing foods like dairy or gluten free products, plant based proteins, and fresh produce to partners who value meeting health and cultural needs of different types of households.

"I've felt like this place has really helped me get ahead. . . we all need to eat, we all are part of this community."

Access to nourishing food is one essential piece to the wellbeing of our food system. With food and relationships, The Food Group community is fueling a better future.

The Food Group's Local Food System

From production to distribution



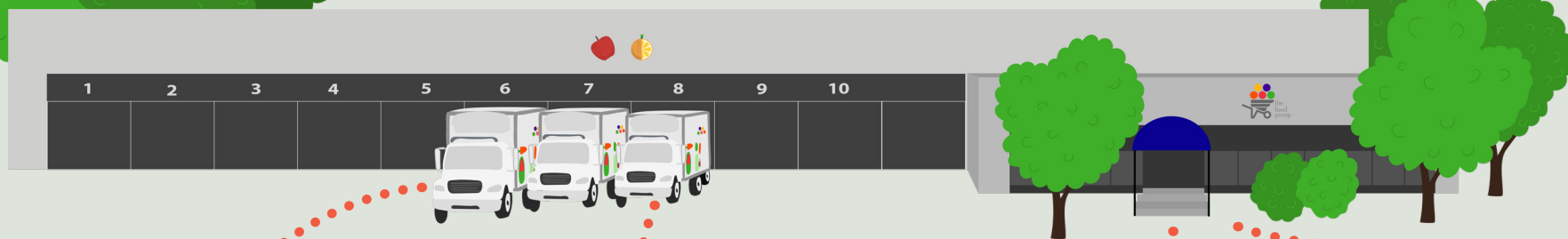
Twin Cities Mobile Market

Sharing fresh, quality groceries at affordable prices in urban neighborhood spots with fewer grocery options.



Anti-Hunger Partners

We deliver to food shelves and other organizations who are key to sharing free food that is connected with each community's culture and needs.



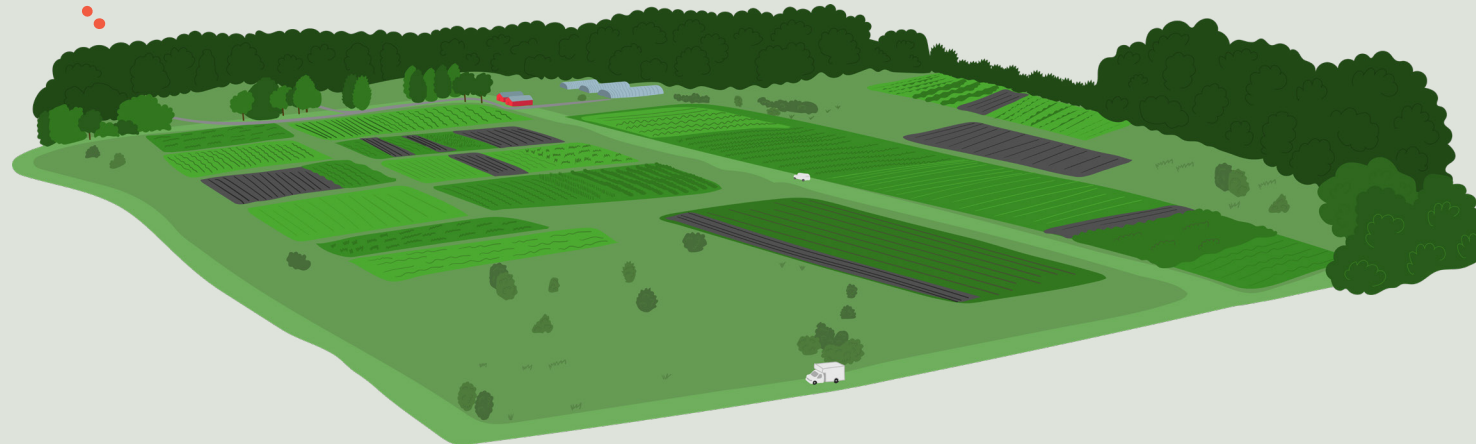
Supporters & Partners

Volunteers, partners, and donors help keep food moving to people who need it most, investing their time and money in our local food system.



Big River Farms

Supporting emerging farmers with land and resource access AND putting more organic and sustainably grown food into local foodways.



Sourcing

We purchase and reclaim products from local growers and producers to support small businesses and increase access to fresh foods.



Fare For All

Making packs of fresh produce and quality meat more accessible in rural towns, tribal communities, and food insecure spaces across the state.





Local & Affordable Mobile Markets

Fare For All and Twin Cities Mobile Market are two programs of The Food Group that bring fresh, culturally connected groceries directly to MN neighborhoods at affordable prices.

Transportation and mobility barriers, inflation, and system-wide inequities make it difficult for many to fuel their families and futures. In 2022, our affordable grocery programs provided over 30,000 households across Minnesota with access to quality groceries at 40% off retail prices.

“Fare For All not only connects residents to affordable, nutritious foods but it builds a sense of community by engaging volunteers who appreciate being of service and truly enjoy connecting with others.” – Jessica Anderson, City of Richfield

Sourcing Locally

As global challenges diminish buying power and food needs continue to grow, The Food Group is looking to local partners for strength and sustainability. Last year we sourced food for our affordable grocery programs from **15+ local producers**, keeping reliable supply up, fuel costs and environmental impact down, and prices low for shoppers.

**In 2022
Fare For All
shoppers
saved
\$370,000**

**Twin Cities
Mobile Market
regularly visited
23 sites in Mpls
and St Paul**

**Fare For All
visited 34 sites
across the state
each month**

Volunteers & Supporters

Sharing gifts of time, talent, and financial resources, our generous network of supporters are essential in strengthening the local food system. As volunteers, you help grow, collect, pack, and distribute the nutritious, culturally connected foods local families need to thrive. As donors, you invest in the future and health of our community by turning gifts of money into meals.

Thank you for your commitment to fighting hunger and nourishing our community.



Corporate Partner Spotlight: Cahill Financial Advisors

Local businesses are key contributors in the work to fight hunger and nourish our community. Employees from Cahill Financial Advisors volunteered throughout the year to pack and glean more than 1000 lbs of jasmine rice, barley, and apples, and funded a special project to assemble over 550 hygiene kits to distribute in the local community.

Thank you to Cahill and our other business partners who shared their support in 2022!



Reclaiming Local Produce

This year, volunteers reclaimed and distributed 33,120 lbs of fresh, sustainably-grown fruits and vegetables from local farms and farmers markets to share with our local community. Reclaiming produce that would have otherwise been composted is one of the many roles volunteers play in creating more equitable access to nutritious foods.



Farmer, Donor, Volunteer: Bob Young Walser

“When COVID happened, I was thinking, I need to do something helpful. Then I thought, we have a farm, let’s grow some food!”

Since fall of 2020, Bob Young Walser, a 68-year-old, second-career farmer has grown food to donate to his local community in the Sogn Valley at New Savannah Farm. **Bob has donated more than \$30,000 worth of winter squash and sweet corn to The Food Group and surrounding communities.**

Bob has learned that hunger and food access needs in Minnesota will continue to demand local food. **“My eyes have been opened to the scale of need. It absolutely astonishes me that in a state with the climate and soil we have that anybody should ever be hungry.”**



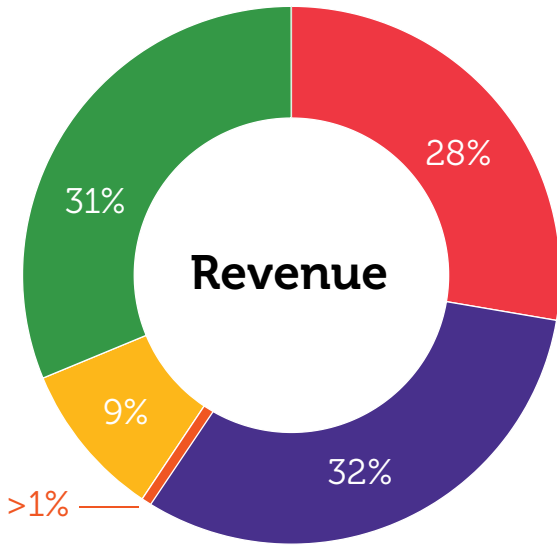
Key Corporate & Foundation Support:



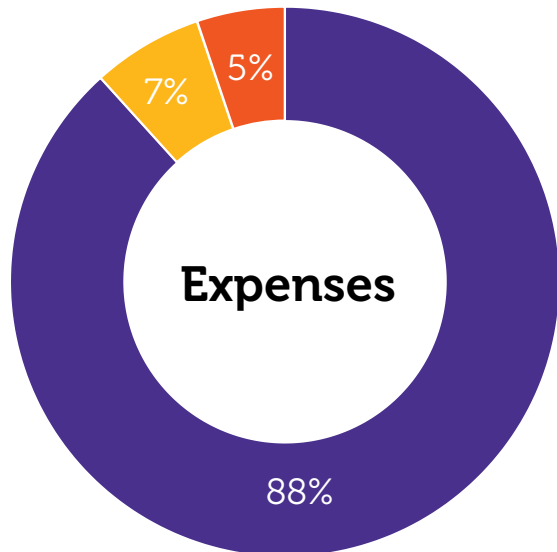
Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® of Minnesota and Blue Plus® are nonprofit independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



2022 Financials (Audited)



In-kind Contributions	\$4,145,380
Financial Contributions	\$4,731,818
United Way	\$11,702
Government Grants	\$1,406,257
Program Revenue	\$4,675,853
Other	\$2,558
Total Support & Revenue	\$14,973,568



Programs	\$13,227,998
Administrative	\$978,303
Fundraising	\$777,202
Total Expenses	\$14,983,503

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash	\$432,264
Investments	\$16,791
Accounts Receivable	\$258,992
Grants Receivable	\$1,059,497
Prepaid Expense	\$204,318
Inventory	\$998,144
Total Current Assets	\$2,970,006

Property & Equipment - Net	\$3,851,255
Total Assets	\$6,821,261

Liabilities

Current	\$893,321
Long-term	\$733,588
Total liabilities	\$1,626,909

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$4,389,284
Temporarily Restricted	\$805,068
Total Net Assets	\$5,194,352
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$6,821,261





The Food Group Minnesota
8501 54th Ave N
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Fighting hunger. Nourishing our community.

Thank You!

**From Our
Board &
Leadership
Team**

Leadership Team

Sophia Lenarz-Coy
David Peeples
Emily Eddy White
KaZoua Berry
Lissa Grabowski
Sadie Yang
Tom Mercer

Executive Director
Director of Programs
Director of Advancement & Culture
Director of Big River Farms
Director of Finance
Human Resources & DEI Manager
Director of Operations

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Bridget Hayden
Courtney Hamacher
Daniel Tilsen
Dave Schmiechen
Georgi Nguyen
Jennifer Marso
Kurt Johansen
Leah Porter
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Keystone Community Services
Allianz Life
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Propel Nonprofits
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Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation
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