



You shared **6,452,163** meals
with our community in 2023



Annual Impact Report 2023: Working Together Toward Change



Working Together Toward Change



Have you heard the saying: “Be the change you want to see?” The world changes around us all the time, and we change too, but what role do we play in creating change that makes our community better?

At The Food Group, we are both listeners and leaders in facilitating positive change by increasing food equity and access in our community.

We know that we cannot accomplish change without you, our donors, volunteers, allies, collaborators, partners and friends. We start with a vision that **everyone should have access to the food they need**. You will read about ways you are helping that vision become more real in this **Impact Report** for fiscal year 2023.

- Hunger relief continues to be at the heart of our work with 188 partner food shelves and meal programs.
- Access to affordable groceries continues to expand as we partner with 33 Fare For All sites and 24 Twin Cities Mobile Market locations.
- We offer education, land access and other support for emerging farmers through our Big River Farms programs.
- We are exploring innovations in land use and energy generation with an Agrivoltaics solar farm pilot site.
- We grew and deepened our engagement with volunteers, corporate and foundation partners, donors, and non-profit partners.
- And so much more!

In addition to the hands-on work, we continue to expand our role in the conversation about policies that impact hunger, the food system, agriculture, and related issues. Watch for more news in 2024 about ways you can engage with us to achieve long-term changes and solutions.

Strategic Goals

With thoughtful engagement and input from food shelf participants, Twin Cities Mobile Market customers, farmers, and Fare For All users, our staff and board have developed strategic goals to guide our work for the next three years.



The Food Group will actively engage in policy and advocacy to influence food systems change.



The Food Group will deepen and diversify partnerships to collectively advance food justice.



Community voice and user input will inform all levels of The Food Group.

Work on these goals has already begun and the momentum will continue as we enter a new chapter as an organization. We are proud to have our strategic goals grounded directly in input from program participants and community voices. Thank you for joining us on this journey toward change!

Sophia Lenarz-Coy, Executive Director

Increased need requires strong response

According to data reported by Hunger Solutions Minnesota, the state recorded more than 7.5 million food shelf visits in 2023, breaking 2022's record by more than 2 million visits – a more than 30% increase. More Minnesotans also received SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) funds in 2023 than any year since 2016, with an average monthly enrollment of almost 450,000 residents.



The causes of these record numbers are multiple and complex, including wages not keeping pace with the rising cost of living, the loss of food access due to grocery store flight, the end of federal emergency relief, and more. But the result is clear: a skyrocketing need for free and affordable food in our community.

In response, your support in 2023

Distributed

132% more culturally connected foods

Partnered with

7 Tribal partners & 2 Native producers as suppliers

Provided

6,452,163 meals to our community (+56,000 since 2022)

Distributed

139% more local foods (+500,000 meals)

Partnered with

188 community-based emergency food shelves and meal programs for responsive hunger relief

Sharing meals strengthens family relationships

Here is one family's story of how a neighborhood food shelf that partners with The Food Group makes a difference in their well-being.

Ivy, 70, and her husband, Deosarup, 77, moved from Guyana to Minnesota to support their family. They share a home with their son, his wife, and four grandchildren, ages 5, 6-year-old twins, and 8. She and her daughter-in-law both deal with chronic and debilitating health conditions, treated with medications costing thousands of dollars every month. **The family finds a community of support at The Food Group's food shelf partner, Friendship Community Services (FCS), a ministry of Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in South Minneapolis.**

Ivy says, "It's like a little grocery store. I get everything I need – onion, pepper, garlic, goat meat." Ivy uses ingredients from FCS to cook Caribbean dishes her family loves – curry goat, curry chicken and potatoes, roti (a type of flour tortilla), and more. She says, "I want to put something on the table every day to feed my grandkids." Eating and talking together "makes me feel good inside."

Ivy remains hopeful, despite the challenges. She shares with others, bringing a can of food or a hot plate of curry to a neighbor struggling to get by. "If you see that somebody needs help, you help them." To learn more about Friendship Community Services, follow them on Facebook.



Scan to visit FCS Facebook page

Changing the face of farming



Photo: Bai Vue has completed his first year of training at Big River Farms

“What I appreciate most about Big River Farms is the classes. The formal education we get at The Food Group office and in the field—those planned learning experiences—allow me to get into the more theoretical side of things. I have practical experience but never understood how things work together as an ecosystem.” - Bai Vue

Agricultural practices and methods are constantly changing and evolving, but we have an opportunity over the coming years to change the face of farming. We work with farmers of color to break down barriers for them to be leaders in agriculture and have successful businesses. That vision is at the center of the programs offered at Big River Farms.

In 2023 you:

- Supported the work and success of 16 farm teams.
- Hosted 221 farmers from fourteen states and three countries at the 18th Annual Emerging Farmers Conference.



New horizons in farming: Agrivoltaics

Agrivoltaics connects organic farming and solar power for innovative solutions

Land access is a predominant barrier for new farmers to establish their business. In 2023 Big River Farms began an exciting pilot project in partnership with Great Plains Institute, Connexus Energy, US Solar, and The National Renewable Energy Lab, exploring how to use land at solar fields for agricultural purposes.

The name for this collaborative work is Agrivoltaics: the use of land for both agriculture and solar energy generation. It is a relatively recent concept, and we are the first to pilot it in Minnesota, but it may offer a long-term model of land access for emerging farmers. Stay tuned as we move forward on this approach to creating more land access for emerging farmers and acceptance of solar energy in communities across the country.



Photo: KaZoua Berry, Big River Farms director, tends plants on an Agrivoltaics pilot plot.

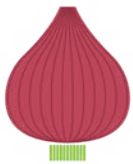


Fueling change through affordable and accessible nutrition

Paired with our food bank work are two innovative programs that reduce barriers to accessing groceries—Fare For All, which offers proteins and produce for up to 40% off retail prices, and Twin Cities Mobile Market (TCMM), a “grocery store on wheels” bringing affordable food to people lacking access to groceries.

In 2023, your support offered affordable groceries at 57 sites in urban, suburban, small town and rural communities.

Photo: Mobile Market driver, Rico Boyd, welcomes shoppers to the bus.



Thanks to generous support from the community, we were able to purchase two new buses for the Twin Cities Mobile Market.



The market now makes more stops each week and is serving an average of about 750 people each month.

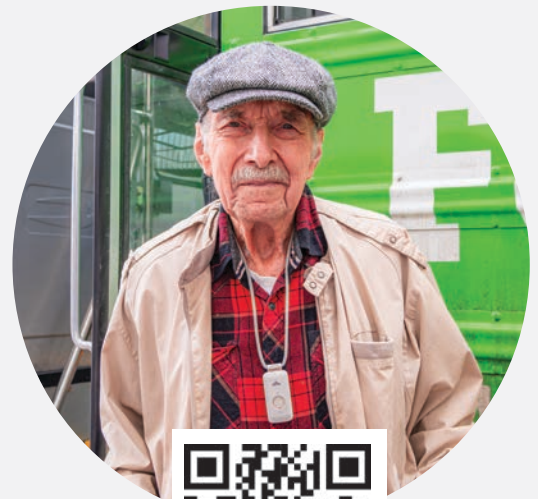
Grocery store on wheels meets a growing need for access

Reporter Jason Hackett from KARE-11 met up with our Twin Cities Mobile Market and interviewed executive director Sophia Lenarz-Coy. Here are snippets of the story he shared on the KARE-11 morning program.

The Twin Cities Mobile Market is a grocery store on wheels that comes directly to the customers. “People need to be able to find good, affordable groceries and that’s where Twin Cities Mobile Market comes in,” said Sophia Lenarz-Coy, executive director. “It provides retail access, and we lower the barriers for people.” The bus travels around the metro area to neighborhoods that don’t have access to full-service grocery stores.

“You see milk and eggs and fruits and veggies,” Lenarz-Coy said. “What we really try to do is make sure we get the top requested items, ingredients that lend themselves to preparing meals.” At the Ebenezer Park Apartments Mark Crownhart walks the aisle every week. “It just saves a trip to the grocery store, and so that’s good,” Crownhart said. “A lot of people in this building don’t have cars. I use public transportation.”

“For a lot of seniors, it’s difficult to take public transportation to try to haul groceries back to their apartments. So, if we can bring high-quality groceries to their door, it breaks down those barriers to eating well.”



Scan to see the KARE-11 story

Photo: Larry Krein, Ebenezer resident and TCMM shopper.

Appreciation and Recognition



Photo: A volunteer team from General Mills repacks bulk food into household-size packages.

Donors and volunteers are essential to every part of our work.

Your investments of time, talent and financial resources are immeasurably valuable to feeding our community and generating positive change in our food system. **A roster of our fiscal year 2023 donors is available for a limited time. Scan code for donor recognition list or visit: www.thefoodgroupmn.org/donor-list-2023**



In 2023 we welcomed **2,193 volunteers who contributed 16,257 hours**, the equivalent of almost eight full-time employees! Thank you!

Teams of volunteer gleaners:

Reclaimed
30,904 lbs
of produce
from the Minneapolis Farmers Market.

Gleaned
9,973 lbs of produce
from farms & delivered them
to 6 food shelves



For a total of
40,877 lbs
of produce gleaned in 2023
& **555 volunteer hours** contributed

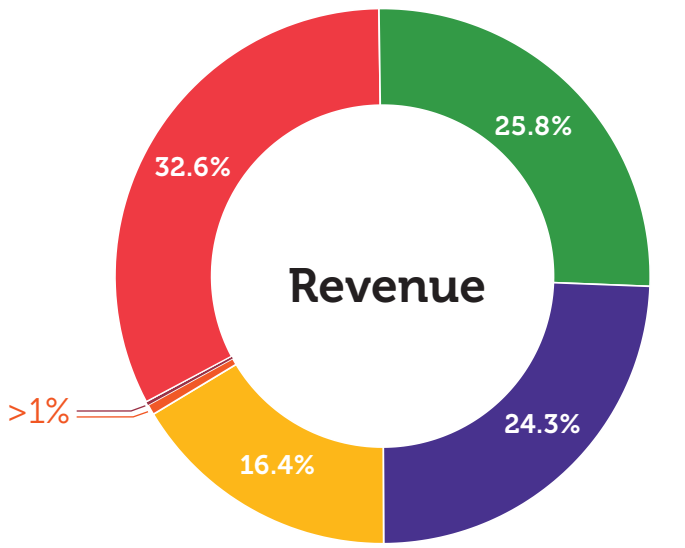
Photo: Volunteer gleaner, Minette Saulog of Ramsey County Environmental Health, displays fresh-picked broccoli.

"I found The Food Group through my school. I like what you do and what you stand for and wanted to be a part of it."

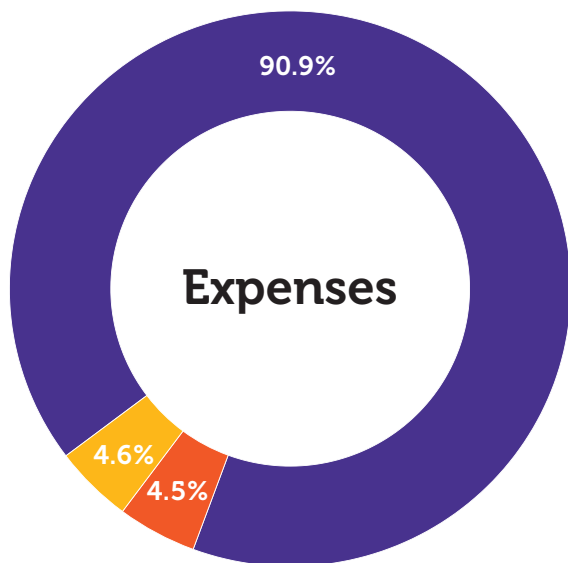
Seth Xiong, Volunteer

2023 Financials (Audited)

October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023



In-kind Contributions	\$6,086,032
Financial Contributions	\$4,547,464
United Way	\$6,402
Government Grants	\$3,071,265
Program Revenue	\$4,826,851
Special Event Revenue	\$117,848
Other	\$34,845
Total Support & Revenue	\$18,690,707



Programs	\$16,324,623
Administrative	\$821,176
Fundraising	\$814,248
Total Expenses	\$17,960,047

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash	\$696,722
Accounts Receivable	\$109,803
Grants Receivable	\$648,048
Prepaid Expense	\$1,339,828
Inventory	\$168,038
Total Current Assets	\$2,962,439

Property & Equipment - Net	\$4,293,632
Total Assets	\$7,256,071

Liabilities

Current	\$779,409
Long-term	\$551,650
Total liabilities	\$1,331,059

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$5,553,636
Temporarily Restricted	\$371,376
Total Net Assets	\$5,925,012
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$7,256,071



*FY2023 ended with a surplus. This was driven by capital grant funds received for Twin Cities Mobile Market and program equipment as well as in-kind food received in excess of distributed.



The Food Group Minnesota
8501 54th Ave N
New Hope, MN 55428

Food for today. Change for tomorrow.



We are filled with gratitude for your partnership! **Read about the impact of your support inside.**

An abundance of gratitude by Joseph A. Larson

Board of Directors

- Keith Narr, Chair**, Cargill
- Dave Schmiechen, Vice Chair**, Andersen Corporation
- Kurt Johansen, Treasurer**, Ameriprise Financial
- Bridget Hayden, Secretary**, Dorsey & Whitney
- Leah Porter, Development Chair**, Propel Nonprofit
- Naima Dhore**, Somali American Farmers Association & Naima's Farm
- Lindsey Hunter**, Hennepin County
- Sarah Kinney**, Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation
- Georgi Nguyen**, Keystone Community Services
- Sharmyn Phipps**, University of Minnesota Extension
- Sharon Roberg-Perez**, Robins Kaplan LLP
- Stephanie Spence**, General Mills
- Rhys Williams**, Farmer, Community Member

Leadership Team

- Sophia Lenarz-Coy**, Executive Director
- KaZoua Berry**, Director of Big River Farms
- Emily Eddy White**, Director of Advancement & Culture
- Tom Mercer**, Director of Operations
- David Peoples**, Director of Programs

“Eating and talking together makes me feel good inside.” Read Ivy’s family’s story on page 3.

thefoodgroupmn.org
@thefoodgroupmn | (763) 450-3860