



**Food for today.
Change for tomorrow.**

Together we shared **7,687,120 meals**

1.23 million increase from 2023

**ANNUAL IMPACT
REPORT 2024**

www.thefoodgroupmn.org



RISING

to the Challenge Together

Dear friends of The Food Group,

2024 was a transformative year for The Food Group. We embarked on a new chapter by joining forces with Hunger Solutions – expanding our programs and launching an advocacy branch. Since then, we’ve significantly broadened our reach and deepened our impact across Minnesota.

In the past year, we introduced former programs of Hunger Solutions like Market Bucks and the Minnesota Food HelpLine and began administering state funding to food shelves. **Thanks to your partnership, we’ve grown our network of food shelf and meal program partners from 244 to over 500 and expanded our service area from 30 counties to all 87 counties across the state.**

Your support equips us to respond to the immediate hunger needs of Minnesotans while also planning for long-term solutions that will nourish our community for years to come.

As food prices remain high, food shelf visits continue to rise, and we navigate a shifting political environment, it’s clear that we are facing an increasingly challenging world. But I remain hopeful about the difference we can make – together – right here in our own community. This is where we have the power to create change, and it’s what drives our work every day.

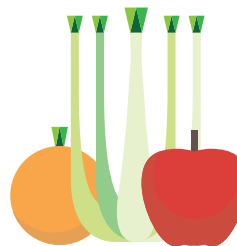
I am proud to share the progress we’ve made together over the past year and to look ahead at the exciting opportunities with our expanded capacity. Page four includes an overview of our new program areas, and in the following pages, you’ll see the strides we’ve taken over the last year. **While paging through, I hope you’ll take a moment to reflect on your essential role in all that we’ve achieved** and recognize how community voices are at the heart of everything we do – none of this would be possible without your dedication.

Thank you for your continued support and for rising to the challenge, together, to provide **7,687,120 meals for our local community members in need.**

With gratitude,



Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director



Fighting hunger. Nourishing our community.



PROGRAM AREAS

In 2024, we strengthened our program areas to continue building a stronger and healthier food system for everyone.



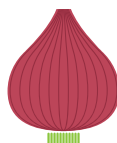
"Coming to the food shelf keeps me healthy. I go to my doctor appointments and hear about my health. I'm a diabetic. All the food I get is always good from the food shelf. I can eat healthier foods; it keeps me alive." – Theresa, Food Shelf Participant (NEAR)

Anti-Hunger



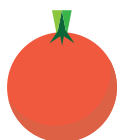
Together we distributed
23.4% more
culturally connected foods
& **26% more**
local foods than the year prior.

Sustainable Farming



Together we hosted
250 farmers from
15 states &
41 counties at the 19th annual
Emerging Farmers Conference.

Affordable Grocery



Together we brought affordable
groceries to
over 43,000
people through our Fare For All and
Twin Cities Mobile Market programs.

Advocacy



Together we gathered
over 200 advocates
to take part in Hunger Day on the Hill
and support anti-hunger policies at
the state capitol last March.

NEW AREAS

of Work with Statewide Impact



Former Executive Director of Hunger Solutions, Colleen Moriarty and Executive Director of The Food Group, Sophia Lenarz-Coy, at our joining forces celebration on March 1, 2024.

Hunger Solutions and The Food Group had been long-time partners with programs that complemented each other. When Hunger Solutions became a part of The Food Group in March 2024, The Food Group gained several high-impact programs, including the Minnesota Food HelpLine, Market Bucks, the Minnesota Food Shelf Program, and advocacy efforts, which led to the creation of our new Advocacy & Community Engagement branch.



Minnesota Food HelpLine

Your support meant that we could
answer the call to 14,978 households

in need of food help through our
Minnesota Food HelpLine.



Minnesota Food Shelf Program

We distributed
over \$7.4 million to 275 food shelves statewide

through the **Minnesota Food Shelf Program** in partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to ensure Minnesota food shelves have the resources, equipment and support they need to keep their shelves stocked and lights on.



Market Bucks

For every dollar a SNAP participant spends, they receive an additional dollar, up to \$10 each market visit at over 100 farmers markets statewide through our **Market Bucks** program.

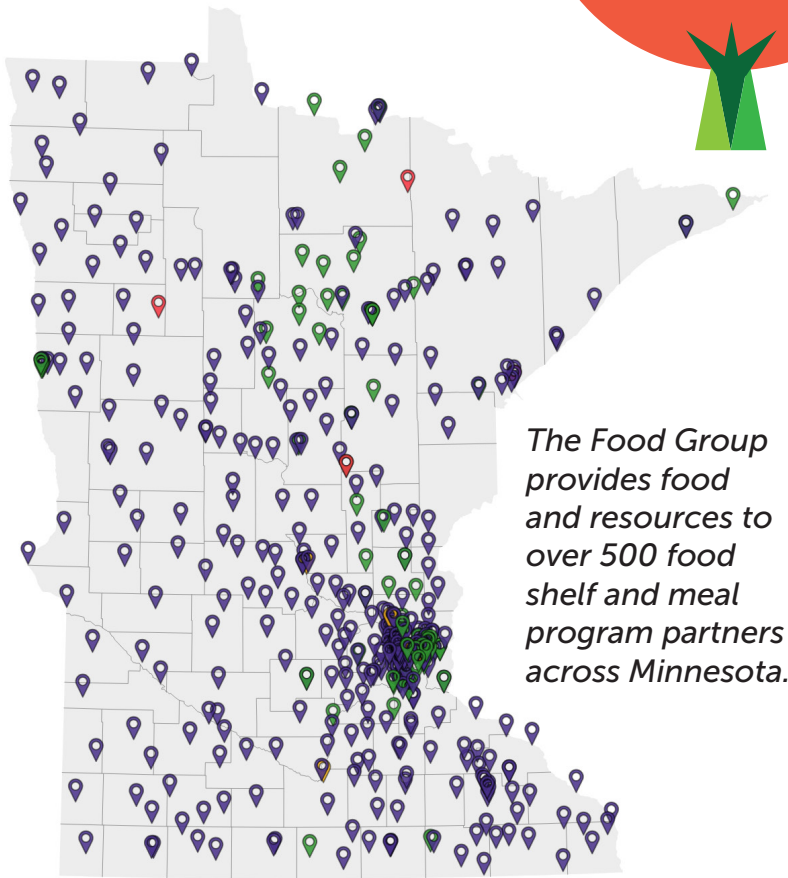


Advocacy & Community Engagement

Advocacy & Community Engagement weaves our direct programming and the voices of those with lived experience with hunger to help engage community members in efforts to shape anti-hunger policies.

STRIDES

in Fighting Hunger



Created with Datawrapper

500 food shelf and meal program partners statewide



and provided our local community with **7,687,120** meals

1.23 million more than 2023



Your support matters more than ever. In 2024, Minnesotans made over 8.9 million visits to food shelves – a new record high that reflects the growing need in our community. **Thanks to your generosity, we delivered food and grant funding** in partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to keep food shelves stocked, collected data from 487 food shelves to understand hunger trends, and supported our partners in meeting the rising demand.

Thank you for fostering a community where everyone can access the nutritious, culturally meaningful food they need and deserve.

Your Impact. Her Story.

You made a difference in the lives of people like Danielle. NEAR Food Shelf helps her with the food she needs and she volunteers and gives back as she can. Danielle shared, "This is the best food shelf there is. We get the cabbage, greens, onions, and potatoes. The produce is good. The food shelf helps me keep food on the table."

- Danielle, Participant at NEAR Food Shelf



View more information on the food shelf location map. Source: https://www.datawrapper.de/_/hjRTr/

Food shelf data is collected by The Food Group in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.



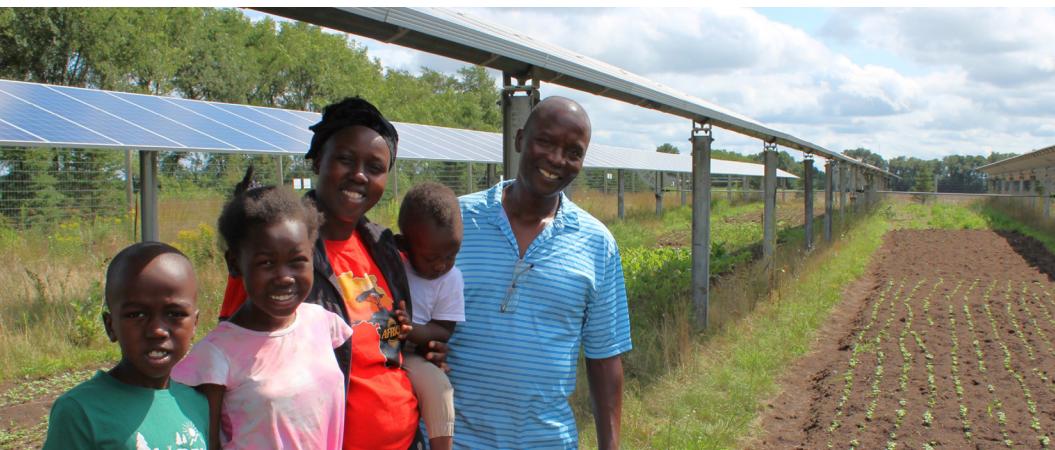
GROWTH

in Sustainable Farming

Your support is helping us tackle the challenge of building a more sustainable food system for future generations through climate-smart farming practices. Over the past year, we've explored and piloted AgriSolar – the practice of farming beneath and around solar panels in Big Lake, MN in partnership with US Solar.



May Lee, staff and farmer at The Food Group, offering farm education at our Big River Farms. She was one of the first Hmong farmers to become USDA-certified organic in the U.S.



Thanks to Your Support

Our AgriSolar work is gaining national recognition and positioning us as a leader in Minnesota. Last year, we received the Environmental Initiative Award in Minneapolis and were honored to win the Solar Farm of the Year Award at the 2024 Solar Farm Summit in Chicago.



In 2024,
you supported
the work and
success of
**23 farm
teams.**



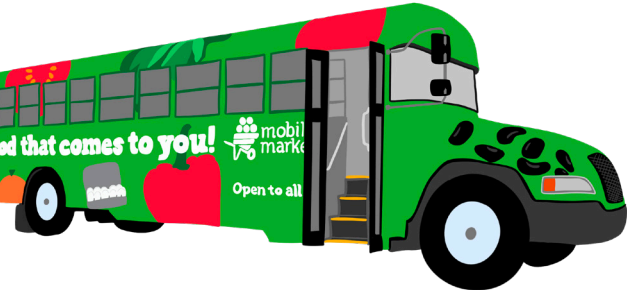
"We appreciate this land opportunity so that we can grow more foods for our community. We've farmed organically in Kenya and coming here the price for organic food is so expensive. I want to grow a lot of organic foods, but I can only do this if I have more space. I am still learning about farming here in MN, but it's cool I get to learn how to do it between solar panels. I did not know there is so much space to grow food here."

*— Simion Nyairo,
one of The Food Group's
AgriSolar farmer partners.*

EXPANDING ACCESS

to Affordable Groceries

Your efforts contributed to the **45% growth** for our affordable grocery programs, Twin Cities Mobile Market (TCMM) and Fare For All (FFA) in 2024.



"My mom usually visits Fare For All, but this is my first time visiting for her and she loves the produce, the discount, and like the community aspect of everything."
– Garret, Fare For All Program Participant



"The Twin Cities Mobile Market bus sells a lot of healthy food, and it's very affordable. I love it!"
– Sparkle, Twin Cities Mobile Market Participant

Your support brought groceries to **13,230 people** at 1,073 Twin Cities Mobile Market stops and launched five new sites.

Your support helped **30,366 people** access affordable groceries through our Fare For All pop-up sites.

DEEPENING HEALTHCARE

Partnerships to Address Hunger

Your support is meeting the challenge of addressing the intersection between health and hunger. Throughout the year, our healthcare partnerships have continued to grow and strengthen.

"Our partnership with Hunger Solutions [now part of The Food Group] has made it easier and quicker for WIC staff to refer families needing SNAP application assistance or other food resources. The soft handoff increases the chances that families will get the assistance they need. By connecting families to additional nutrition resources sooner, our hope is that families are continuing to get healthy foods beyond WIC."

–Maita Lee, Ramsey County WIC Supervisor



Our HelpLine staff pictured here.



Through our partnership with Fairview, **7% of FFA** sales and **22% of TCMM** sales were from Fairview patients in FY 24.

We assisted **4,463 patients** through **SNAP Rx** in the last fiscal year compared to 3,434 assisted the year prior.



Longtime volunteer, Mary O'Toole, reclaiming produce at the Minneapolis Farmers Market.

THANK YOU

Volunteers

Our volunteer gleaners reclaimed **18,986 lbs** of produce at the Minneapolis Farmers Markets and gleaned **4,640 lbs** of produce from farms that would have otherwise gone to waste.

"What I love about reclaiming produce at Minneapolis Farmer's Market is being a part of a cooperative effort to connect and empower individuals, communities and cultures in our area."

– Mary O'Toole, Volunteer of The Food Group



2,288 volunteers rose to the challenge and collectively gave **16,175 hours** this year to fight hunger and nourish our community! A huge thanks to everyone who volunteered their time – individuals, families, community groups, schools, and work groups.

KEY CORPORATE & Foundation Support

Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation



MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION



"At Takeda, we believe in the power of supporting community organizations to drive lasting impact. We support The Food Group because they provide nutritious food to those who need it the most and their work is critical to reducing the risk of disease and chronic illness, while also improving overall well-being."

– Chris Barr, Corporate Philanthropy partner from Takeda

2024 MINNESOTA

Food Shelf Visits

KEY INSIGHTS

▶ **2024 WAS ANOTHER RECORD YEAR** for food shelf visits in Minnesota.

▶ **HUNGER IS A STATEWIDE ISSUE** impacting URBAN, SUBURBAN, and RURAL communities.

▶ **FOOD SHELVES HAVE EXPANDED SERVICES** to meet the need.

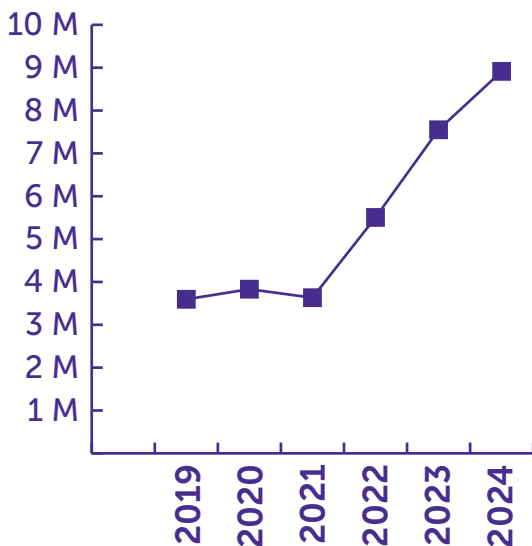
▶ **FOOD ASSISTANCE NEEDS HAVE DRAMATICALLY INCREASED** from pre-pandemic levels.

▶ **INCREASED FOOD PRICES AND DECREASED SNAP BENEFITS** are driving rising need.

▶ Food shelf visits are a measure of **RESPONSE TO INCREASED FOOD INSECURITY.**

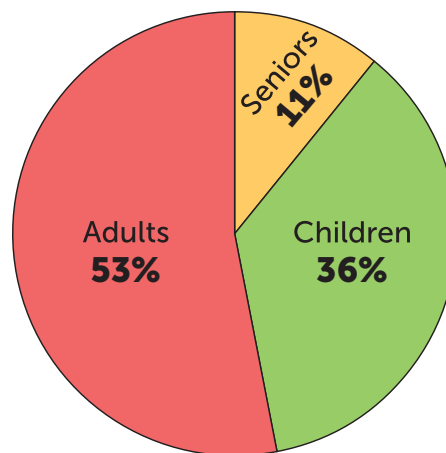
NEED CONTINUES TO RISE

Nearly **9 MILLION** food shelf visits in 2024.



Minnesotans made 2.5x more visits in 2024 than pre-pandemic 2019.

Who is visiting Minnesota food shelves?



Visitors in 2024

Adults 4,705,574
Children 3,230,534
Seniors 977,602

8,913,710
Total Visitors

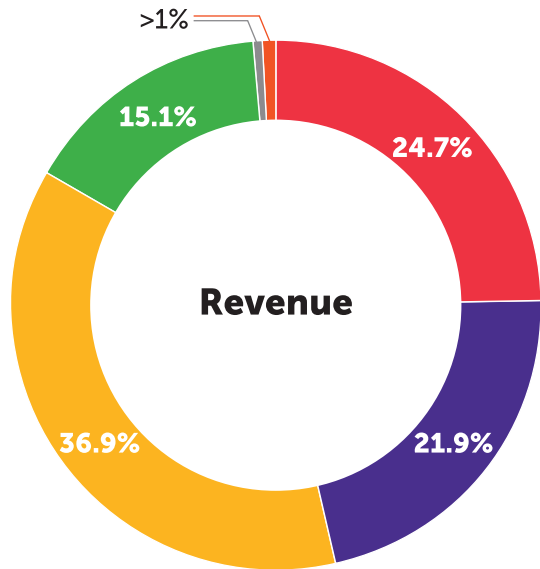
Scan the QR Code for the full 2024 Minnesota Food Shelf Visit report.



Food shelf data is collected by The Food Group in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

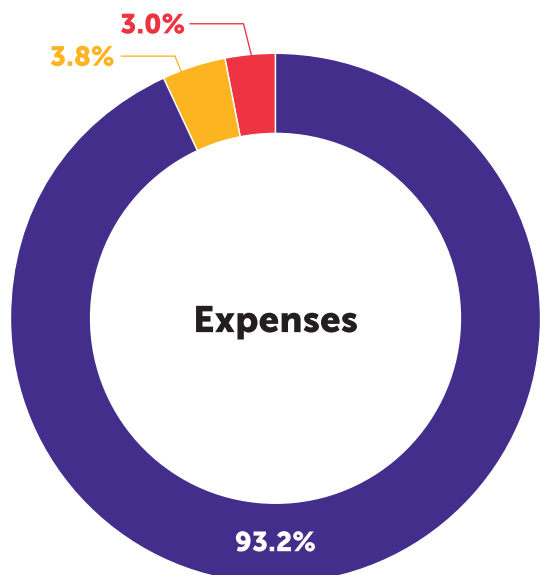
2024 FINANCIALS

Audited



In-kind Contributions	\$7,188,014
Financial Contributions	\$6,356,191
United Way	\$5,371
Government Grants	\$10,733,613
Program Revenue	\$4,386,790
Special Event Revenue	\$149,317
Other	\$234,878

Total Support & Revenue **\$29,054,174**



Programs	\$25,947,083
Administrative	\$1,052,058
Fundraising	\$843,754

Total Expenses **\$27,842,895**

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash	\$559,237
Investments	\$1,848,678
Accounts Receivable	\$9,676,832
Grants Receivable	\$117,820
Prepaid Expense	\$44,867
Inventory	\$1,143,425
Total Current Assets	\$13,390,858

Property & Equipment - Net	\$4,754,419
Total Assets	\$18,145,277

Liabilities

Current	\$8,402,003
Long-term	\$566,420
Total liabilities	\$8,968,423

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$7,623,514
Temporarily Restricted	\$1,553,337
Total Net Assets	\$9,176,851
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$18,145,274

*FY2024 ended with a surplus. This was driven by multi-year funding grants restricted for programming in FY2025-FY2028.



Thank you!

From our Board & Leadership Team

Leadership Team

Sophia Lenarz-Coy, Executive Director
Emily Eddy White, Director of Advancement and Culture
Rachel Holmes, Director of Advocacy and Community Engagement
David Peebles, Director of Programs
Jim Lesch, Director of Operations
Anne Melendez, Director of Finance
KaZoua Berry, Director of Big River Farms

Board of Directors

Dave Schmiechen, Chair
Kurt Johansen, Treasurer
Bridget Hayden, Secretary
Leah Porter, Development Chair
Steve Krikava, Policy Chair
Andrew Chelseth
Sarah Kinney
Keith Narr
Assistant Commissioner Patrice Bailey
Georgi Nguyen
Sharmyn Phipps
Sharon Roberg-Perez
Stephanie Spence
Rhys Williams

Hunger Solutions Subsidiary Board of Directors

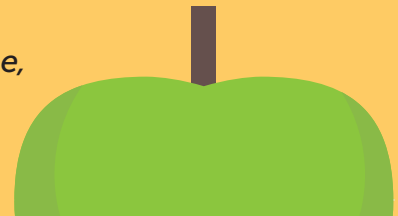
Heather Alden
Kurt Johansen
Carla Kohler
Steve Krikava
Mary Mitchell

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, our efforts to fight hunger and nourish our community received meaningful press coverage that helped showcase the work we're doing together and the difference it's making.



Scan the QR code to read stories from the Star Tribune, Sahan Journal, WCCO and the Guardian.



**Fighting hunger.
Nourishing our community.**



(763) 450.3860
info@thefoodgroupmn.org

www.thefoodgroupmn.org
f i l y @thefoodgroupmn