

Nourishing Change

Summer 2025



Your support is engaging kids in learning the fundamentals of healthy food this summer.

Fueling Young Minds with Twin Cities Mobile Market

The Food Group's Twin Cities Mobile Market (TCMM) offers affordable groceries on wheels and travels to communities across St. Paul and Minneapolis. It stops in neighborhoods that don't have easy access to full-service grocery stores. One of our newest locations is at the Harold Mezile North Community YMCA in North Minneapolis.

Ceadric Ashford, Senior Program Coordinator at the North Community YMCA saw our TCMM bus on Highway 94 and thought to himself "how do I get that mobile market to come to the YMCA. The Aldi closure in North Minneapolis took a primary grocery store away for a lot of people in the community."

Simultaneously, Ceadric's coworker connected with The Food Group about starting a TCMM site. From there, TCMM launched a new site at the North Community YMCA and has been going every Wednesday since April.

"One of the most heartwarming moments was seeing a senior eagerly waiting at the door for the [TCMM] bus, excited to be part of this new experience. Moments like these remind us why we do what we do!" – Ceadric Ashford

This summer, Ceadric plans to infuse TCMM into his youth programming. He leads a Junior Chefs Club at the YMCA where he will have kids shop for products on the TCMM bus that they will use in their cooking program that day. **This will allow youth to learn the fundamentals of food – how to shop for food**, what to look for in ingredients, how to prep food and make a meal out of items purchased.

"The Food Group is very intentional about the work they do. They are good at seeing the gap and trying to fill the gap." – Ceadric Ashford

Your support is increasing access to affordable groceries while engaging youth in lifelong skills, thank you!

Your Support Is Preserving Culture Through Food

Maysay first visited CAPI USA Food Shelf when her bills started piling up. She was able to cover her utility bills but didn't have enough for other necessities. She shared with us that she "heard from others that CAPI has a food shelf that is able to give us Asian food."

Culturally connected food has always been at the heart of CAPI's work. It's a value The Food Group shares.

Paul Andrighetti, CAPI USA Director of Community Advocacy, said,

"The Food Group has always strived to find locally sourced cultural foods that both support diverse local farmers and culturally sensitive food shelves like ours."

Paul added, "food shelves need to be more than just a place to get food. They need to be in the work of cultural preservation.

Poverty should not prevent you from being able to make your cultural dishes."

Immigrants experience unique barriers to food access, such as transportation. Paul explained that new immigrants may not have a driver's license, access to a car, or family that is able to drive them to get food.



Another barrier to food access for Minnesota immigrants is age. Paul shared that "the vast majority of the Hmong senior clients we serve are in extreme poverty and fall well below the poverty lines." For immigrant elders who came to the US as an adult, their social security payout is much smaller because they have not been paying into it as long. For most, it's not enough to cover rent let alone weekly groceries.

Maysay is 77 years old and takes care of her ex-husband who has Parkinson's while his kids are at work. "I do help him in terms of feeding him, taking him to the hospital and picking up food here [at CAPI USA Food Shelf] for him. We love that there's rice and people here who also speak Hmong," Maysay explained.

Thanks to your support, The Food Group partners with food shelves like CAPI USA to provide and increase access to food that is meaningful to different cultures.





"This summer we had two families that have used EBT the past several summers who came this year, and I asked if they needed EBT and they said no we aren't EBT anymore but love the market so much we keep coming. I love seeing how this program encourages good eating and shopping habits that stick around even when folks are no longer on assistance."
– Market Manager at the Bagley Area Farmers Market

Increasing Access To Nutritious Food At Farmers Markets

Market Bucks is an incentive program The Food Group administers in partnership with over 100 farmers markets statewide. The program allows households enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called food stamps) to purchase fresh, affordable food at local farmers markets and receive a dollar-for-dollar match – up to ten dollars each market visit.

The program is a triple win – it increases access to local produce for households most in need, supports local farmers, and boosts the local economy with increased economic activity!

Plus, households can receive the match and spend Market Bucks at Twin Cities Mobile Market, furthering access to fresh, local food!

Our partner at the Bagley Area Farmers Market mentioned how families utilize the program in the summer and involve their children. "We had several families who came as a whole family, and the kids would be in charge of holding the bag of tokens and market bucks and the parents used it to teach the kids about shopping and using money. It's so sweet."

Market Bucks is an important program that **allows families to stretch their food budgets while engaging in community activities** and all that farmers markets offer in the summertime. From live music, browsing the variety of booths to feeling part of a community, **you are increasing access to nutritious foods while supporting a place for all Minnesotans to gather – thank you!**



Twin Cities Mobile Market Campaign Success



In summer 2022, The Food Group launched a campaign to raise capital support for our Twin Cities Mobile Market (TCMM). TCMM is a "market on a bus" and an innovative solution to address distance and income barriers to healthy food access. Our goal was to purchase two new propane powered buses to replace the existing gas-powered buses that were over 20 years old and invest in essential warehouse upgrades for the long-term reliability of the program.

Thanks to your support, we met our goal and the new TCMM buses are in operation, making nutritious foods more accessible to our local community.

After a long process of working with our vendors to build, retrofit, and wrap each new bus, the first one hit the road in early October 2023, followed not long after by the second new bus in January 2024. We also have made warehouse infrastructure updates with a new drive-in ramp and drive-through doors.

We have already received great feedback from customers on the refreshed shopping experience, have been able to operate the program more dependably due to fewer breakdowns, and have felt the positive impact of reduced fuel costs.

Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation
The WEM Foundation
Hugh J. Andersen Foundation



Thank you to the above key supporters and all other individuals and organizations for your investment in this project. **Your commitment is creating more equitable access to food in the Twin Cities and is building a stronger local food system.**

THANK YOU FOR MEETING THE SUMMER MATCH!

Your support is providing 2x the nourishing meals to families with children this summer. Thank you to our match partners:



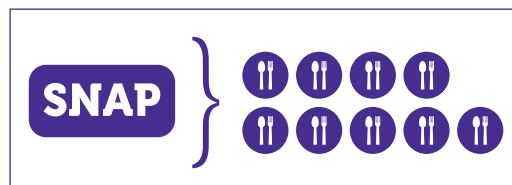
Addressing Childhood Hunger With Increased Access To Nutritious, Affordable and Culturally Connected Food



Summer is here! I love the longer days, warm sun, and time spent outdoors that many of us look forward to all winter long. But this summer feels different.

As I welcome the light of the season, I'm also deeply aware of the growing number of families who are facing uncertainty. Especially when it comes to putting food on the table while kids are home from school. Recent and dramatic federal funding changes, including cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), are beginning to take shape. These cuts will ripple through our communities, and their impact may be felt for years to come.

For every meal the network of food banks & food shelves provide, SNAP provides NINE meals.



This will be reduced to 6 meals with cuts to SNAP.



Yet even in the face of these challenges, our mission remains unchanged – to fight hunger and nourish our communities – today and tomorrow. **With your help, we will continue to work toward a just and equitable food system.**

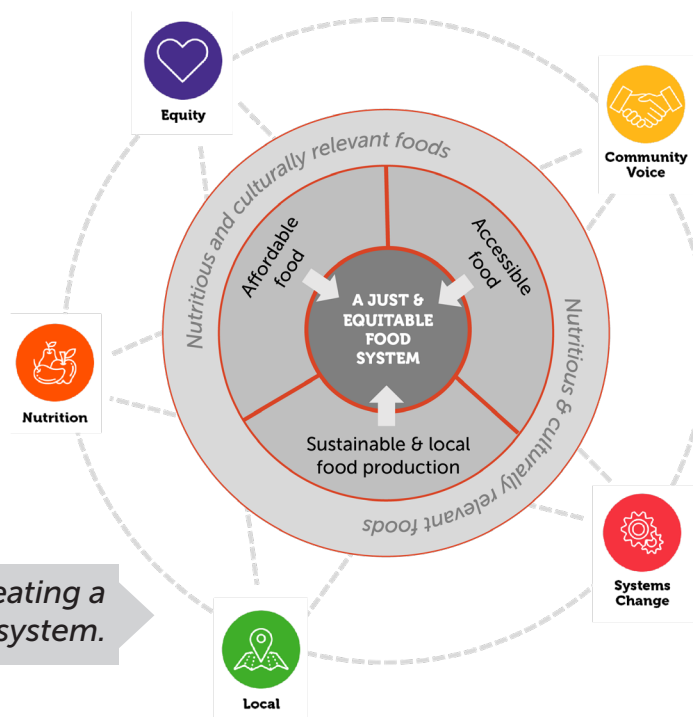
From increased access to nutritious foods at farmers markets, affordable groceries, and culturally connected foods, together, we are creating a more sustainable food system that works for everyone.

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

With Gratitude,

Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director

The Food Group's framework for creating a more just and equitable food system.



Coming Together To Stamp Out Hunger



Together, we collected
41,796 lbs. of food – equivalent to nearly 35,000 meals –
on May 10th!

HORWITZ
Together, anything is possible.

Thank you to our Stamp Out Hunger partners – Horwitz, the United States Postal Service (USPS), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), to all those who participated, and the many volunteers who delivered food to our community partners.



Calendar of Events

Big River Farms Tour
August 20th from 10-11am
Marine on St Croix

•

AgriSolar Open House & Tour
August 21st from 3-6pm
Big Lake

•

New Hope Warehouse Tour
September 10th from 10-11am
New Hope

RSVP to Mai Kaying Yang at
myang@thefoodgroupmn.org
For more information visit:
thefoodgroupmn.org/events/

Update: Uncertain Federal Funding and Threats To Food Assistance

The federal funding landscape remains uncertain for anti-hunger organizations and individuals relying on federal nutrition and food programs.

Impacting the community right now is the reduction in TEFAP CCC free food The Food Group distributes to our Hennepin County and Tribal Nation partners. **This means food shelf partners across the state have less food to distribute to their communities as they struggle to meet the increased need.**

Over the past year, this portion of TEFAP for The Food Group equated to 1,951,399 pounds of nutrient-rich foods.

The Food Group has also regained access to federal grant funds that had been frozen; however, we have also seen other federal grants end. Additionally, **SNAP cuts will have a devastating impact on individuals in our communities.**

Thank you for your steadfast support through all the federal changes and uncertainty.

Stay Engaged & Connected

- ▶ **Give Time** – Volunteer with us or at a local food shelf.
- ▶ **Donate** – Continue to give financial support to sustain vital anti-hunger work.
- ▶ **Support Local** – Buy locally, support emerging BIPOC farmers to build up our local food system.
- ▶ **Advocate for Change** –  Sign up for our action alerts.
- ▶ **Build Community** – Share a meal with a neighbor, friend or loved one.

