

Food for today. Change for tomorrow.



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2025

Together we shared 6,334,070 meals



www.thefoodgroupmn.org

THE POWER of Community-Led Solutions

In a year marked by challenge and change, our community – *you* – showed up. Together, we turned moments of crisis into opportunities for collective action, ensuring that everyone has access to nourishing food and a voice in shaping the systems that provide it.

Even as federal cuts put added strain on the emergency hunger relief system, your generosity meant that **6,334,070 meals reached families across Minnesota during a challenging year.**

In 2025, you helped advance community-led solutions rooted in our values of local food, nutrition, equity, community voice and systems change to strengthen Minnesota's food system by:

- **Empowering more than 500 food shelves statewide** with food, resources, and collaborative solutions to meet growing demand and ease strain on the emergency hunger relief system.
- **Expanding affordable grocery access**, helping thousands of households stretch their food budgets while maintaining choice, dignity, and quality - especially as grocery prices at traditional retailers continue to rise.
- **Investing in local farmers and sustainable agriculture** by supporting diverse growers who strengthen our food system and increase access to fresh, locally grown products.
- **Advocating alongside community members** to protect critical food assistance programs and shape policies that promote long-term food security for all Minnesotans.

As we recognize our fiftieth year, **I'm reflecting on how far we've come and where we're headed – and I know we can't get there without you.** The Food Group was built on the belief that everyone deserves access to nutritious food, and that basic human right continues to guide us today. Thank you for making a meaningful impact in 2025 and for continuing to strengthen our local food system.

With gratitude,



6.3 million meals provided



6 new affordable grocery sites



25 emerging farm teams supported



\$5 million secured for food shelves & Tribal Nations

Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director

FOOD FOR TODAY, CHANGE FOR TOMORROW.



NAVIGATING CHANGE

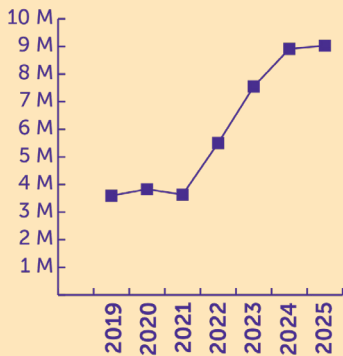
Federal Uncertainty & Rising Community Need

Federal Uncertainty & Rising Pressure

In 2025, federal cuts to hunger relief programs had an immediate and far-reaching impact across Minnesota. **The Food Group received 32% less free food to share with community partners** – reducing the availability of nutrient-dense staples for families facing hardship. At the same time, **key federal hunger relief programs, including SNAP, abruptly ended or were cut**, with future funding uncertain. Together, these changes placed added strain on **food shelves working at full capacity to meet rising demand**.

Food Shelf Visits Remained at Historic Levels

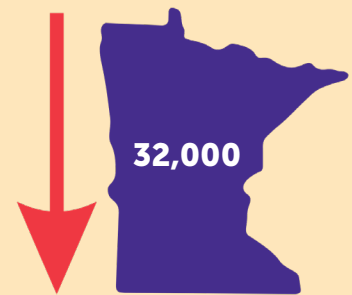
In 2025, Minnesota food shelf visits totaled more than 9 million visits – up 151% since 2019. Immigrant communities were among those most affected, as policy changes and fear created additional barriers to accessing food.



Growth in food shelf visits
from 2019 to 2025.

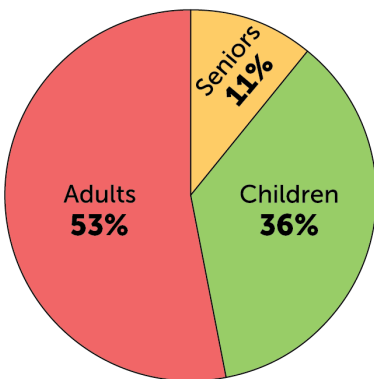


31% increase
in grocery costs
since 2019.



32,000 Minnesotans
impacted by historic
SNAP cuts.

Understanding Minnesota Food Shelf Visits in 2025



People of all ages relied on food shelves, from children in families to working adults and seniors, reflecting the **broad reach of Minnesota's hunger relief system**.

Scan the QR code to explore the full 2025 Food Shelf data and see how you are helping people across Minnesota access nourishing food.

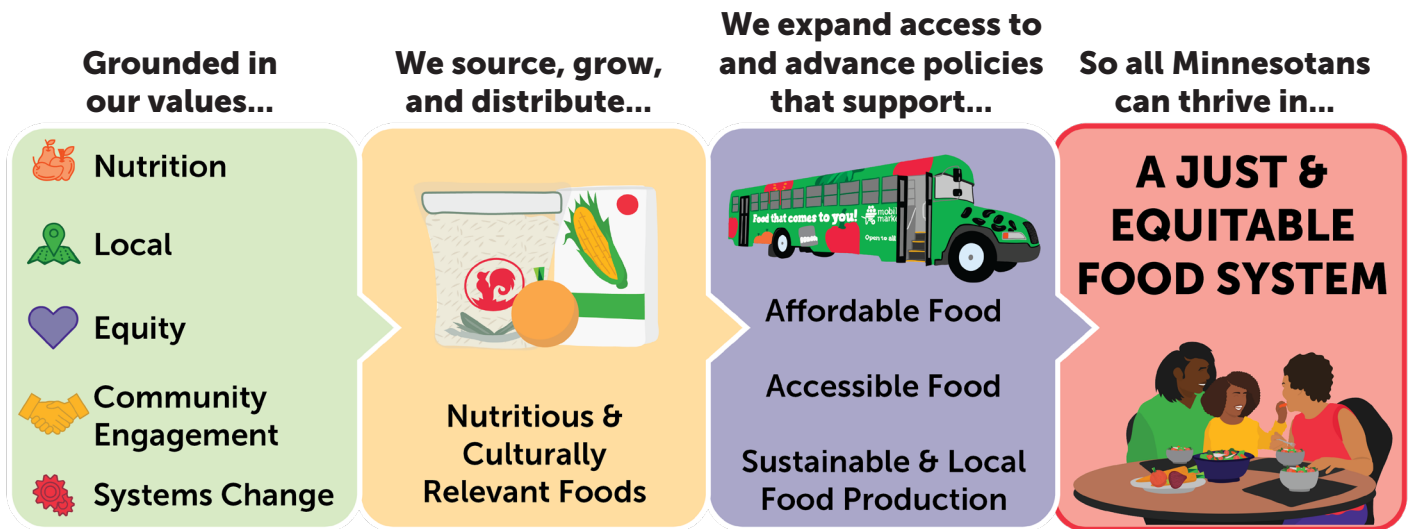


THANK YOU

You made it possible for families to access nourishing food despite rising need and declining federal resources. Together, we are **providing food for today and creating change for tomorrow**.

THEORY OF CHANGE

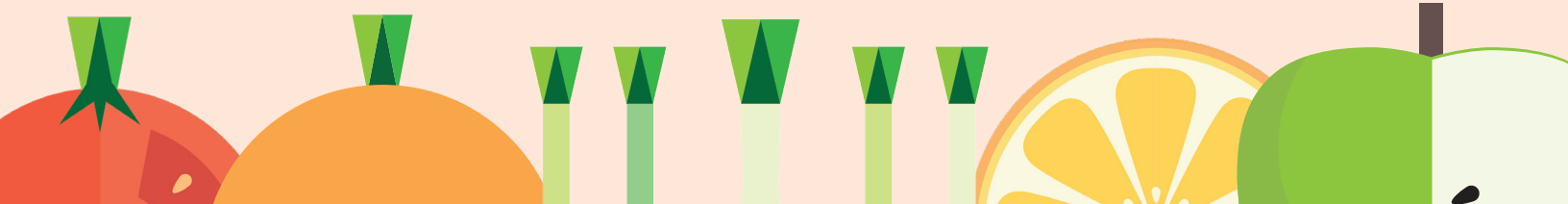
Framework for Building a More Equitable Food System



About The Food Group

Since 1976, we have worked to **provide food for today and create change for tomorrow** for neighbors who need it most in our community. The Food Group works at the intersection of food access, equity, and nutrition statewide. **Our programs include hunger relief, affordable grocery, sustainable farming, and advocacy.** The Food Group has a food systems change approach with a focus on providing nutritious, local, and culturally connected foods to families fighting hunger.

Our programs are guided by our values of nutrition, equity, local food, community voice, and systems change. At the heart of everything we do, **community-led solutions drive lasting impact and shape how we meet the needs of our neighbors.**



FIGHTING HUNGER

Nourishing Our Community

100+ partners convened to meet growing need

500+ food shelf & meal programs received food and funding

\$400K invested in local food

1.2M lbs of culturally connected food distributed

118 farmers markets offered Market Bucks, allowing SNAP customers to stretch their food budget

Together, we are fighting hunger and strengthening Minnesota's food system by connecting our neighbors with local, culturally connected, and nutritious food.

Last year, with your support, The Food Group **partnered with over 500 food shelf and meal programs statewide to distribute food, funding, and resources where they were needed most.** We also led statewide initiatives including our Minnesota Food HelpLine, the Minnesota Food Shelf Program and the Market Bucks Program that **expanded access to healthy food** and connected families to critical resources.

In partnership with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, **we provided \$12.4 million in funding to food shelves and Tribal Nations across Minnesota—** helping them sustain and expand their services despite rising demand and challenging external pressures.



Shopping for foods rooted in their culture at the Department of Indian Work, a partner of The Food Group.

Their words, your impact

"Having diverse food items available through The Food Group, allows us to serve with intention."
– Carolina Elizondo, Director of Programs at Eastside Neighborhood Services

"These funds have allowed our food shelf to be open six days a week and increase our meal program days from six to seven days a week." – The Camden Promise Food Shelf, Minneapolis

Our Minnesota Food HelpLine connected callers to immediate and long-term food support. Part of this program is partnering with Minnesota hospitals and clinics to **connect patients experiencing food insecurity with healthy, culturally familiar food** that supports their well-being. With your support, we reached even more households last year.

SNAP Rx Impact



36% increase in referrals from healthcare providers.



6,069 patients (a total of 13,008 households) were connected to critical food resources.

For many in our community, receiving support comes at a moment when the stress of making ends meet feels overwhelming. As one SNAP Rx patient shared, "I was emotional because I felt support in that moment I received help."

EXPANDING ACCESS

To Affordable Groceries

As grocery prices rise and federal support shrinks, more families are making difficult choices to stretch their budgets. The Food Group's affordable grocery programs – Fare For All and Twin Cities Mobile Market – played a critical role in **helping families access healthy, affordable food** while allowing us to stay nimble and respond quickly to emerging community needs.

For instance, Chisago County Health Workers reached out for help bringing affordable groceries to their area. We responded by opening a new Fare For All site at Rush City High School – bringing low-cost staples directly to families.

Similarly, last summer, after a grocery store closure in St. Paul created a sudden gap in access, the Twin Cities Mobile Market continued showing up at 14 nearby sites. Our presence ensured neighbors had a consistent, reliable place to shop for healthy food.



Affordable groceries helped neighbors stretch their food budgets.

"I couldn't make it week to week if it wasn't for the bus. My favorites are fresh vegetables. They have good prices for the vegetables as opposed to the store and I love the convenience."

– Julie, Twin Cities Mobile Market Participant



26% increase in households served



49,357 households served



45 affordable grocery locations

"With three kids, I try to save as much money as possible while still eating healthy food and Fare For All helps with that." – Fare For All Participant



You helped seniors bring home the nourishing food they need.

GROWING FARMERS

Growing Food

The Food Group's Sustainable Farming Programs support emerging farmers with access to land, resources, and hands-on assistance at **Big River Farms**, our **Agrisolar Farm** and through our annual **Emerging Farmers Conference**. These programs equip historically underserved farmers to build skills, confidence, and sustainable farm businesses.

Last year, we expanded market access for farmers in our program – and across Minnesota – by purchasing more locally grown produce for Fare For All and Twin Cities Mobile Market, so our shoppers could feel connected to their food.

These partnerships created new, reliable markets for emerging farmers, helped them strengthen their businesses and build meaningful customer connections.

"Emerging farmers experience many barriers to market access. Through these partnerships, we're opening new markets for farmers and forging authentic connections between community members and local growers."
– KaZoua Berry, Farm Director at The Food Group



"I look at this as learning for my future. Being with Big River Farms is being able to explore different things."

– Sinying, 1st Year Farmer at The Food Group's Big River Farms



Sinying and her daughter harvesting their raspberries from Big River Farms.



Agrisolar pilot completed



25 emerging farm teams supported



250 farmers attended the 20th annual Emerging Farmers Conference

CREATING CHANGE

Through Advocacy

A key part of our work is **shaping public policy that strengthens food access for all**. This work is guided by our Lived Experience Leadership Cohort – community members who bring firsthand insight into the realities of hunger and help **ensure policy solutions reflect what people truly need**.



Members of our advocacy team in Washington, D.C., meeting with Senator Klobuchar to advance anti-hunger policy priorities.

"I'm realizing more every day that it's empowering for me to be able to show up and be able to advocate for others who don't have the chance, or who just aren't able. Thank you for that."

– Lisa, Lived Experience Leadership Cohort Member

Despite a challenging political landscape this past year, our collective advocacy led to a major win:

\$5 million

secured for food shelves and Tribal Nations statewide.

"Without this funding [for food shelves], more families will go hungry. Investing in food security supports Minnesota's workforce, reduces healthcare costs, and strengthens our communities."

– Mi Casa, Minnesota Food Shelf Partner



Hunger Day on the Hill brought together **213 Minnesotans**

to learn more about statewide anti-hunger policies and advocate for long-term change.



VOLUNTEERS & DONORS

Through their time, talent, and financial support last year, **our generous community of supporters strengthened Minnesota's food system.** Volunteers grew, collected, packed, and distributed nutritious, culturally connected foods that helped local families thrive. Donors invested in the long-term health of our community, ensuring that neighbors across Minnesota continue to have access to the meals they need.



Volunteers pack food for local food shelves, ensuring families have the meals they need.



Volunteers glean fresh produce from Big River Farms, bringing food to families across our community.

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

"I used Fare For All back when I needed it most. Now I'm in a position to give. Thank you for being there when I needed you. I hope you can help more people like me."

– Donor of The Food Group



6,920 volunteers engaged



13,271 hours of service



39,402 lbs gleaned from farms and farmers markets

THANK YOU

To Our Key Corporate & Foundation Partners

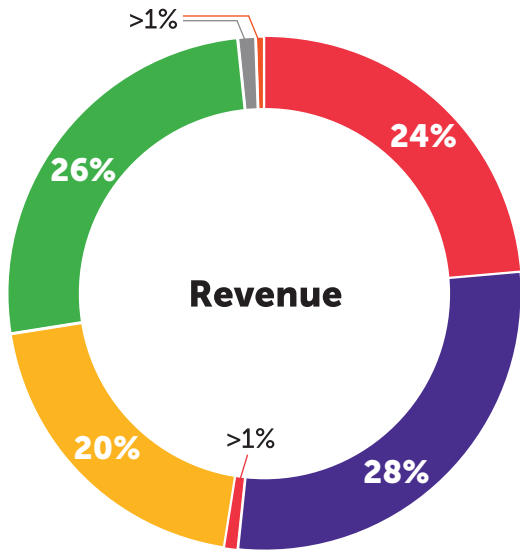
Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation

Hugh J. Andersen Foundation



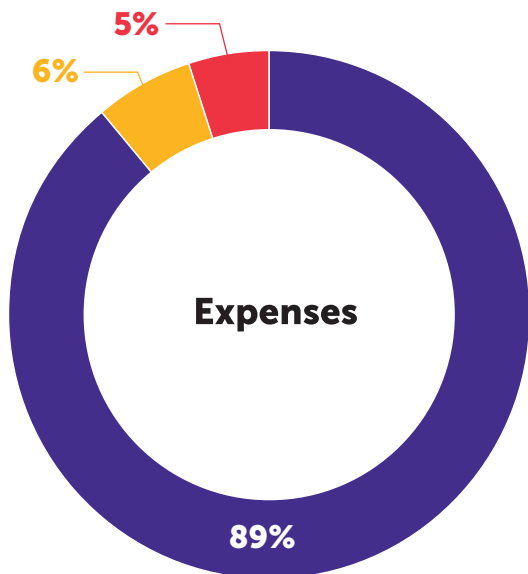
2025 FINANCIALS

Audited



● In-kind Contributions	\$4,601,191
● Financial Contributions	\$5,425,400
● United Way	\$151,768
● Government Grants	\$3,806,771
● Program Revenue	\$5,150,820
● Special Event Revenue	\$157,050
● Other	\$29,400

Total Support & Revenue **\$19,322,400**



● Programs	\$17,598,547
● Administrative	\$1,152,585
● Fundraising	\$921,658

Total Expenses **\$19,672,790**

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash	\$672,687
Investments	\$1,873,024
Accounts Receivable	\$542,169
Grants Receivable	\$1,441,516
Prepaid Expense	\$180,916
Inventory	\$898,737
Total Current Assets	\$5,609,049

Property & Equipment - Net	\$4,568,202
Total Assets	\$11,281,713

Liabilities

Current	\$1,305,866
Long-term	\$1,032,122
Total liabilities	\$2,337,988

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$7,732,097
Temporarily Restricted	\$1,211,628
Total Net Assets	\$8,943,725
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$11,281,713

**Year-over-year revenue and expense variances reflect the timing of a state contract, not changes in funding or program operations.*



Thank you!

From our Board & Leadership Team

Leadership Team

Sophia Lenarz-Coy, Executive Director
David Peeples, Director of Programs
Emily Eddy White, Director of Advancement and Culture
Jim Lesch, Director of Operations
KaZoua Berry, Farm Director, Sustainable Farm Programs
Rachel Holmes, Director of Advocacy and Community Engagement

Board of Directors

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Kurt Johansen, Treasurer
Bridget Hayden, Secretary
Leah Porter, Development Chair
Steve Krikava, Policy Chair
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Assistant Commissioner Patrice Bailey
Georgi Nguyen
Sharmyn Phipps
Sharon Roberg-Perez
Stephanie Spence
Dr. Chris Taylor
Rhys Williams

Hunger Solutions Subsidiary Board of Directors

The members of this advisory board temporarily supported The Food Group and Hunger Solutions; as we joined forces in 2024. This role has now concluded following a successful transition. We are grateful for their guidance during this time.

Kurt Johansen
Carla Kohler
Steve Krikava
Mary Mitchell

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, as federal cuts and ongoing uncertainty put increased strain on families, press coverage highlighted the importance of the work we are doing together to fight hunger and nourish our community.



Scan the QR code to read stories from the Star Tribune, MPR, Pioneer Press, Sahar Journal, and more.



Fighting hunger. Nourishing our community.



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