

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS TO END HUNGER

Twin Cities 5-Year Plan 2008-2013

Community Recommendations to End Hunger

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Forward

Greater Twin Cities United Way and the many hunger partner agencies that participated in this initiative express deep and sincere gratitude to one another for bringing this project to life. The hunger partners salute United Way for its visionary leadership in convening this effort and dedicating the resources to propel it forward. United Way expresses its appreciation to the hunger partners for their dedication to collaborating and their tireless engagement in this year-long endeavor to develop the Community Recommendations to End Hunger. Furthermore, United Way and the hunger partners commit to continuing to work together to bring these recommendations to fruition.

Prologue

Hunger in the Nine-County Area *

Hunger is often invisible but it is a prevalent and serious problem in the midst of the Twin Cities communities. For a wide range of reasons, tens of thousands of people—many of them children--are hungry or uncertain about where or how they will obtain their next meal.

In response to this reality, generous individuals, companies, and organizations, as well as government programs, have created safety nets to help “food insecure” families and individuals. These safety nets have evolved into an interconnected but sometimes loosely affiliated system of food banks, food shelves, on-site meal programs, collaborations, and government supports to provide emergency food to those in need.

But the need is growing. According to United States Department of Agriculture, the average rate of food-insecurity, as measured by the number of people at or below 100 percent of the poverty level in Minnesota, grew from 7.6 percent during the period from 1996 to 1998 to 8.6 percent during the period from 2003 to 2006. In addition, current economic, employment, and housing conditions have created an entire new group of food insecure people, people who must make difficult daily choices between paying bills and purchasing groceries. As a case in point, 43 percent of visitors to food shelves in the nine-county area in 2006 were working families.

In spite of the extent and escalation of hunger and food insecurity in our communities, anecdotal evidence suggests that a large percentage of people are unaware of or discount the reality of the situation. Negative attitudes and misperceptions, reflected by comments such as, “People just need to get a job,” or “There aren’t any hungry people in my neighborhood,” are not uncommon. Until the hunger situation becomes visible to a wide cross section of people and organizations in our communities, it will become more acute.

** While these recommendations address the nine-county metro area only, the Twin Cities Hunger Steering Committee intends that the recommendations in no way have negative repercussions for the rest of the state. Rather, it is their hope that this body of work may serve as a model for the entire state.*

Genesis of the Community Hunger Initiative

Hunger partners in the metro area have long collaborated, informally and formally, in their efforts to fight hunger. But in 2006, Greater Twin Cities United Way launched its strategic new Basic Needs Impact Plan which includes, among other critical initiatives, a goal to reduce hunger in its service area by 20 percent by 2009. Accomplishing this goal clearly requires the energy, talent, and resources of the entire community so United Way, serving as a catalyst, invited a small group of hunger partner executives to develop a plan for tackling the goal. This group became the Hunger Steering Committee and it developed and endorses this document and its goals and recommendations.

The Hunger Steering Committee represents 14 hunger partner organizations. It began meeting in the summer of 2006 to forge an initiative and recommendations that would galvanize all hunger partners and the community at large around a goal to not only reduce hunger but to eliminate it. The results of that year-long effort are the recommendations described in this document.

Hunger Initiative Steering Committee and Endorsees

Members of the Hunger Initiative Steering Committee, which led this effort and endorse the recommendations, are listed below. The Steering Committee also acknowledges and deeply thanks the scores of other individuals and dozens of organizations that assisted in this project; those contributors are listed in a special section at the end of this document.

Twin Cities Hunger Steering Committee Members

Tim Barnes, *Emergency FoodShelf Network*

Jane Brown, *Second Harvest Heartland*

Clare Brumback, *Hope for the City*

Gary Cunningham, *NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center*

Marcia Fink, *Greater Twin Cities United Way*

Dave Goodwin, *Reviva*

Connie Greer, *Minnesota Office of Economic Opportunities/Department of Human Services*

Dan Hoxworth, *Neighborhood House*

Carla Johnson, *Second Harvest Heartland*

John Kemp, *Neighbors Inc.*

Amy Maheswaran Lopez, *Greater Twin Cities United Way*

Colleen Moriarty, *Hunger Solutions Minnesota*

Renae Oswald-Anderson, *Neighborhood House*

Annette Marie Poeschel, *Intercongregation Communities Association (ICA)*

Barb Thell, *Minnesota FoodShare*

Greg Wandersee, *Keystone Community Services*

Dean Weigel, *Loaves and Fishes*

Patty Wilder, *Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis*

Lynn Moline, *Lynn Moline Associates, Inc., consultant to the project*

Vision, Mission, and Goals

Steering Committee members came to early agreement that to simply reduce hunger by 20 percent was unacceptable and inadequate. Instead, the members quickly and unanimously concurred on a vision that no one goes to bed hungry.

Furthermore, the Steering Committee committed that its mission is to:

- Determine what will be required to reduce and end hunger in the Twin Cities, and
- Organize the resources needed to reduce and end hunger in the Twin Cities.

Of course, the Steering Committee acknowledges that to truly end hunger will require eliminating poverty, and that long-term battle is being fought on many fronts. In the time being, actions currently being taken to feed the growing number of people who are hungry and food insecure must be redoubled.

Thus, the shared goals became these:

- Strengthen the emergency food distribution system and the amount of food available to ensure access to nutritious food.
- Increase public awareness of hunger.
- Identify barriers to reducing hunger and strategies for removing them.
- Work collectively to make strategic recommendations related to building the capacity of the emergency food distribution system and affecting public policy.
- Increase participation in the Food Support program (food stamps.)
- Increase communication between hunger partners in the emergency food system.

Community Recommendations for Ending Hunger

In view of the current and emerging realities surrounding hunger, the Hunger Steering Committee offers three recommendations to be implemented in phases to end hunger in the nine-county Twin Cities area. It also extends a challenge to the community to consider an entirely different approach to addressing hunger in the future, beyond the immediate horizon of these recommendations. At this time, the Steering Committee has reached agreement that this is a five-year plan that will be implemented from 2008-2013.

Due to the urgent nature of hunger in the Twin Cities, our target is to complete the plan in five years. Ultimately, we are committed to fulfilling our vision that no one in the 9-County Twin Cities area goes to bed hungry. If unanticipated events occur, we are committed to see the project through completion.

The Steering Committee emphasizes that the clear, unequivocal intent and laser focus of all of these recommendations is to feed hungry people. It is the Steering Committee's hope that all partners, donors, funders, government agencies, and the broader community in general will unite in support of this intent and collaborate to truly focus on customer needs.

Goal 1: As a Community, We Commit to Ending Hunger by Increasing the Amount of Healthy Food Available for Distribution in the Emergency Food System.

Objective 1.1: Design and conduct a multi-year, multi-media Public Awareness Campaign to engage targeted sectors in the community in ending hunger.

Ending hunger depends on building a critical mass of people who understand that the extent of hunger in the Twin Cities is not tolerable in our community, and who thus are willing to contribute resources and to support public policy changes. Hence, the goal of the campaign is to create greater awareness among legislators, the business community, faith communities, and young people, including users of the emergency hunger system, by dispelling myths and changing attitudes toward and perceptions of hunger.

	<u>COMPLETION</u>	<u>CONVEYOR</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a Creative Brief for a multi-year, multi-media campaign to be developed on a pro bono basis by a Twin Cities communication agency. 	October 2007	Public Awareness Task Force (a group of hunger partners)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select an agency and manage ongoing campaign plans and operations. 	Early 2008.	United Way to convene the Task Force.

Objective 1.2: Work with food donor corporations to increase the amount of healthy food in the system.

	<u>COMPLETION</u>	<u>CONVEYOR</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a demand-based food supply chain for the emergency food system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure and manage the most desirable foods that food banks want and need. ▪ Manage an efficient system for transporting food to food banks. 	Underway	United Way to convene food banks to manage all tasks for this objective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive efficiency improvements in the current food supply chain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a goal for securing more donated perishable food items. ▪ Improve efficiencies of waste stream reclamation. ▪ Develop a strategy for managing shelf life issues. 		

Goal 2: As a Community, We Commit to Ending Hunger by Enhancing the Capabilities of Emergency Food Programs to Serve Customers

Objective 2.1 Strengthen food shelves to provide better access; greater capacity for distributing food; and more flexible, customer-oriented service.

The Steering Committee envisions food shelves that collectively and individually are even better able to provide for customers’ needs than they are today. In that vision, food shelf access is easy; those in need know where to find food shelves because information about them proliferates throughout the community. Choice is the rule, not the exception: customers receive what they need based on their personal circumstances rather than on a formula or a policy. In many circumstances, they can choose which food shelves they visit and can often select for themselves the types and quantities of nutritious food they receive. No one is turned away and hours are convenient. Wherever they go, they experience respectful, customer-focused service. Furthermore, customers can be linked to the many public resources available to economically disadvantaged people. (Strategies for creating this capability are described later under Goal 3.)

The Steering Committee acknowledges that this vision is ambitious and that it may not be possible for all existing food shelves to be transformed in such a way. However, it also recognizes that some aspects of this vision are already reality and others are not far beyond today’s reach. So the Steering Committee recommends the following actions and timetable for implementing this vision for food shelves.

	<u>COMPLETION</u>	<u>CONVEYOR</u>
To provide better access:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt a common source for disseminating information about emergency food services, such as United Way 2-1-1 or a public web site, and strategically publicize it so all customers, partners, and the community at large can use to find emergency service locations. 	2008- 2010	Ongoing; United Way to convene a group of CEOs and/or directors of food shelves in the nine county area to lead this task.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate boundaries. Investigate the utility of existing food shelf boundaries and the value of reconfiguring or eliminating them. A small study group will analyze the cost/benefit and all consequences and implications of the existing boundaries, and then recommend what, if any, changes should be made. 	2008-2010	MN FoodShare and EFN to convene study group.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Streamline the process of collecting customer intake information and sharing it among emergency 	Late 2008-2011	United Way and EFN to jointly

food system partners. Shared access to such information will allow for tracking of service-related customer needs and for resource planning and sharing among emergency food system partners.

2010-2012

convene a group of CEOs and/or directors of food shelves in the nine county area to lead the effort. United Way and EFN to jointly convene a group of CEOs and/or directors of food shelves in the nine county area to effort to find resources.

- Find resources to study the feasibility of developing a secure, web-based, interactive data base to support the customer intake information process described in the task above. If feasibility is demonstrated, work with expert assistance (pro bono where possible) on a comprehensive data management project to research, design, and roll out the data base.

To provide greater food distribution capacity:

- Acquire resources for increasing hours of operation and improving food storage and handling capacity by:

- Introducing and winning approval of legislation crafted to generate additional funding for food shelf staffing, physical plant, and equipment.

2008-2011

Partners to End Hunger

- Collaborating among food shelves and their partners to secure additional private funding and in-kind donations.

2008-2011

Hunger Solutions and Hope for the City

- Automate food inventory tracking and customer use patterns by incorporating inventory management into the data base described above.

2010-2012

TBA

To provide more flexible, customer-oriented service:

- Fast track efforts to create and adopt guidelines for creating a common, excellent customer service experience.

Underway

Blue Ribbon Project, Hunger Solutions Minnesota

- Coordinate formation of an ongoing benchmarking effort so that food shelves can identify and adopt

Underway

Blue Ribbon Project HSM

best practices from one another.

Objective 2.2: Strengthen meal programs

In the process of creating these Community Recommendations, a new entity called the Minnesota Meal Program Alliance evolved. This organization has become the network tasked with accomplishing Objective 2.2 throughout Minnesota.

The Minnesota Meal Program Alliance will take a leadership role by creating a common voice on legislative matters, assessing and understanding needs, sharing best practices, developing minimum standards for service, and seeking opportunities for resource sharing.

Specific goals for strengthening meal programs are the following:

	<u>COMPLETION</u>	<u>CONVEYOR</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strengthen service delivery▪ Improve nutritional value of food served▪ Improve safety of food preparation▪ Assess needs and gaps of meal programs, searching nationwide for best practices for delivery▪ Improve data collection to track service▪ Influence public policy with a common voice	Underway	Hunger Solutions to continue convening the MN Meal Program Alliance to lead this objective.

In addition, this objective, like the food shelf objective, includes efforts to ensure that meal program customers experience respectful, focused service and that they can be linked to the many public resources available to economically disadvantaged people.

Goal 3: As a Community, We Commit to Ending Hunger by Increasing Utilization of Government Programs Throughout Minnesota

Objective 3.1: Improve accessibility to and use of federal food support dollars.

	<u>COMPLETION</u>	<u>CONVEYOR</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Make it easy for people to apply for federal food support. We recognize this will need to be part of a statewide effort.▪ Publicize food support availability via the Public Awareness Campaign and initiatives such as “Claim It.”	Underway 2008-2010	Partners to End Hunger to select a committee for all tasks for objectives 3.1.

- Enable emergency food providers to better link their customers with economic and food benefits available to low income people.
 - Provide food shelves with training, service descriptions, eligibility information, and other informational resources so they can refer customers to state and federal programs for low income people. 2008-2010
 - Implement a technology-enabled program such as the Benefit Bank to give food shelves and meal programs the ability to directly determine eligibility and enroll people in government economic and food benefit programs. 2010-2012

Objective 3.2: Increase use and availability of summer feeding programs for school children.

- Launch a study to determine how this can best be accomplished, followed by implementation. Immediate 2008-2010 Partners to End Hunger to select a committee.

Objective 3.3: Influence policy makers to maintain and increase budgets for food programs.

- | | <u>COMPLETION</u> | <u>CONVEYOR</u> |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Support the Partners to End Hunger legislative agenda on state and federal issues. This includes efforts to capture the maximum allowable for federal nutrition programs available to Minnesota; to increase state support for food shelves; and to reinstate statewide universal school breakfast. | Underway
2008-2011 | Partners to
End
Hunger |

Metrics for Gauging Progress Toward Ending Hunger

As implementation of these recommendations progresses, the Hunger Steering Committee is currently investigating the best measures for ending hunger in the Twin Cities and targets that tracks process towards accomplishing the goals. A target will be established for how many additional pounds of food is needed to end hunger in the 9-County area as well as a target for the percent of food is of nutritional value. It will be the steering committee's priority to conduct a thorough analysis on the best targets and measures by the end of March 2008.

Goal	Metrics
Overall Project Goal: reduce and ultimately eliminate hunger <i>Target: TBA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratio of number of pounds of food distributed and the number of food insecure people (as indicated by USDA measures of food insecurity trends and prevalence.)
Goal 1: Increase the amount of healthy food available for distribution in the system <i>Target: TBA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total pounds of nutritious food distributed Total number of meals served annually
Goal 2: Enhance the customer service capabilities of emergency food programs <i>Target: TBA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total pounds of nutritious food distributed Total number of meals served Number of food shelf visits per month per client vs. total number of desired visits. Number of people turned away
Goal 3: Increase utilization of government programs <i>Target: Food support use up from 63% to 71% of those eligible (12% increase in user)*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trends in utilization of federal food programs (Ratio of eligibility to utilization)

* This target will undergo further investigation, but is our best estimate of how many potential additional pounds of food can be distributed per individual if the Food Support Program is utilized by an increase of 12%.

Epilogue

A Challenge to the Community to Examine Core Assumptions

The three goals for ending hunger constitute crucial, focused efforts that the Hunger Steering Committee believes will have immediate, significant impact on reducing hunger in the nine- country Twin Cities area and perhaps throughout the state. At the same time, the Steering Committee also recommends that our community strategically examine the very assumptions upon which the current emergency food system is based.

To do this, the Hunger Steering Committee offers a final recommendation to critically evaluate the community-wide effectiveness and total embedded cost of the current emergency food system in the nine-county area. Such a cost/benefit analysis would allow the community to understand the true cost

of the current system, thus providing a basis for considering entirely different models for feeding the hungry.

If the community agrees that such an evaluation is desirable and feasible, the next steps would include identifying a process for performing the analysis, estimating its cost, and forming a research team to conduct it. Upon completion of the analysis, results would be used to study and recommend ways to strengthen the efficiency of the present system and/or to pilot potential new models to ensure that people have access to the healthy food they need to support themselves and their families.

We have open minds and no preconceived ideas as to what any new model might entail. But we do know that ending hunger is our vision and if a new paradigm is more effective, then we would be short-sighted to exclude that possibility as we look to the future.

In Appreciation to Other Contributors

Members of the Twin Cities Hunger Initiative Steering Committee express deep gratitude to the following individuals and their agencies for their invaluable contributions to the Community Recommendations to End Hunger. These individuals generously served on special task forces and provided information, resources, and other support.

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Rhonda Eastlund, *Pillsbury United Communities*
Ted Evans, *Emergency Food Network*
Vicki Ferran, *Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis*
Frank Forsberg, *Greater Twin Cities United Way*
Jessica Francis, *Hunger Solutions Minnesota*
Jill Hiebert, *Hunger Solutions Minnesota*
Nancy Holden, *PROP*
Christine Johnson, *Greater Twin Cities United Way*
Curt Johnson, *Pillsbury United Communities*
Dave Johnson, *The Salvation Army, Twin Cities Area*

Sue Kainz, *Minnesota FoodShare/March Campaign*
Cindy Kimmel, *Second Harvest Heartland*
Julie LaPoint, *STEP*
Matthea Lee-Smith, *Sabathani Community Services*
Kenneth Litke, *Land O'Lakes Corporations*
John Livingston, *Second Harvest Heartland*
Vang Lo, *Merrick Community Services*
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Ty Morris, *Office of Economic Opportunities*
Bill Newman, *Land O'Lakes Corporations*
Cathy Patterson, *Hunger Solutions Minnesota*
Anita Perkins, *Northwest Hennepin Human Service Council*
Richard Pfeffer, *Household of Faith*
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Roberta Reberts, *Keystone Community Services*
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Roy Richardson, *NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center*
Jessica Rochester, *Emergency FoodShelf Network*
Hy Rosen, *Greater Lakes Country Food Bank*
Joan Schneider, *Sabathani Community Center*
Francisco Segovia, *Pillsbury United Communities*
Denise Stahura, *Greater Twin Cities United Way*
Heidi Stennes, *Second Harvest Heartland*
Guy Theisen, *Loaves and Fishes*

*If we have failed to include anyone who made a contribution of any kind
or if we have misspelled any names, please accept our sincere apologies.*

Glossary

Commodities: Shorthand for “USDA Commodities” which are distributed to people in need through programs such as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

Emergency Food System: The extensive network of social service organizations, government agencies, and donors that addresses the issue of hunger of Minnesota residents. Types of organizations within the emergency food system include food banks, food shelves, hot meal programs, and advocacy organizations.

Food Bank: A charitable organization that solicits, receives, inventories, and stores donated food and grocery products according to grocery industry and appropriate regulatory standards. These products are distributed primarily to charitable human service agencies which, in turn, provide the products directly to needy clients through various programs.

Food Insecurity: Hunger or not having access to enough food for active, healthy lives for all household members; hunger or risk of hunger. (USDA Economic Research Service)

Food Shelf: Similar to a small grocery store where clients or customers go to receive a short-term supply of groceries at no cost. Food shelves are funded by grants and donations from their local communities. Food shelves can also acquire food items from their local food bank.

Food Support Program (formerly food stamps): A federal program that enables low-income people to buy nutritious food by using Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Recipients spend their benefits to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores.

Healthy food: see “nutritious food”

Hunger: A situation in which an individual involuntarily goes without food for an intermittent or extended period of time. This situation can be caused by external forces that limit the individual’s resources or ability to obtain sufficient food and may result in detrimental physical and psychological consequences. (U.S. Government)

Hunger partners: a general term referring to any of the dozens of agencies, organizations, companies, and individuals who play a direct role in addressing hunger in the nine-county metro area.

Nine-County Metro Area: the nine counties served by Greater Twin Cities United Way. They are Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties.

Nutritious food: Food that meets the nutritional standards based on the USDA food pyramid which includes fruits, vegetables, dairy, grains, and proteins such as meats, fish, beans, and nuts.

On-Site Meal Program: An agency that provides food to clients in the form of meals or snacks at the agency's facilities.

Reduced or free lunch or breakfast: A student qualifies for free school meals if household income is no greater than 130 percent of federal poverty guidelines. Reduced-price school meals (no more than 40 cents for lunch and 30 cents for breakfast) are available to a student if income is more than 130 percent but less than 185 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): A federal program that provides food commodities at no cost to low-income individuals in need of short-term hunger relief. TEFAP serves the agricultural community by distributing surplus commodities purchased by the USDA from farmers and other producers. Commodity items range from fresh produce items to canned goods including vegetables, fruits, cooking oil, juice and meats.

Copies of the *Community Recommendation to End Hunger* plan will be available on the organization's websites represented on the Twin Cities Hunger Steering Committee.

**Organizations
represented on the
steering committee**

Catholic Charities of the
Archdiocese of St. Paul and
Minneapolis

Emergency FoodShelf
Network, Inc.

Greater Twin Cities United
Way

Hope for the City

Hunger Solutions

ICA

Keystone Community
Services

Loaves and Fishes Too

Minnesota FoodShare

Neighborhood House

Neighbors, Inc.

NorthPoint Health and
Wellness

Office of Economic
Opportunities/Department
of Human Services

Second Harvest Heartland

Websites

<http://www.ccspm.org/>

<http://www.emergencyfoodshelf.org/>

<http://www.unitedwaytwincities.org/>

<http://www.hope4thecity.com/index.htm>

<http://www.hungersolutions.org/>

<http://www.icafoodshelf.org/>

<http://www.keystonecommunityservices.org/>

<http://www.loavesandfishesmn.org/>

<http://www.gmcc.org/foodshare/about.html>

<http://www.neighb.org/default.asp>

<http://www.neighborsmn.org/>

<http://www.pilotcity.org/>

<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/>

<http://www.2harvest.org>