



Channel One
Regional

**Food
Bank**

MEMBER OF

**FEEDING
AMERICA**



2021
COMMUNITY REPORT



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This past year was tough for many of our neighbors. Not only have we all been trying to collectively recover from a global health crisis, but we've also been hit by supply chain challenges and increased costs of necessities, like food, utilities and housing.

I am, however, consistently impressed by the ability of our communities to come together and support one another throughout the challenges we face.

Channel One's mission to strengthen food access and build healthy communities means more to us now than ever before. The following annual report not only exemplifies the work that employees at Channel One are doing to meet the need for food access, but also the work that every community in our fourteen-county region is doing to provide support for those facing food insecurity. We could not do this work without you, as someone who has stood by us and our neighbors in need.

Mission

Channel One Regional Food Bank
strengthens food access
and builds healthy communities

Vision

Every community in our region is food secure

It is also important that I acknowledge a federal investigation into the mismanagement of funding at a nonprofit child nutrition program in the Twin Cities. It is devastating that any organization entrusted to feed kids would act in their own self-interest, especially so close to home. These allegations lead people to question the work of meal programs statewide and nationally. Channel One Regional Food Bank and our partners at Feeding America are not affiliated with the nonprofit 'Feeding Our Future'. We have never partnered with nor granted funds to the organization.

We want to assure you that we at Channel One, as well as the staff at Channel One's 183 agency and program partners, take our work seriously. We accountably provide over 9 million pounds of food (or roughly 10.8 million meals) to Southeastern Minnesota and Western Wisconsin each year. The region is relying on us to address hunger through our programs, advocacy initiatives and healthcare partnerships— and we know you count on us to do this work responsibly, as do the state and federal food programs we partner with. Our operations, policies and procedures adhere to their and our high standards of financial stewardship and client-centered service.

Values

People experiencing food insecurity are at the center of everything we do.

We create an inclusive culture that welcomes and respects the diversity of the people we serve, employees and volunteers and honors the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals.

We build and foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

We work in partnership with local communities and our peers to improve nutrition and promote food security.

We know that more families are seeking assistance from Channel One's agencies and programs throughout our region than in 2019. At the Channel One Food Shelf, we're seeing nearly twice as many households each month as we were before the pandemic. The pervasiveness of hunger has become undeniable. Channel One and our agency partners have worked hard to have enough healthy food options available to those that need it. I truly feel that we're on a path toward real change as we continue to provide the nutritious food options our neighbors need to live healthy lives.

This past year, we have cultivated partnerships with local and state government leaders, other food banks in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and other nonprofit organizations. These partnerships are invaluable in the work we all continue to do to achieve Channel One's mission of strengthening food access and building healthy communities – but this work is not over.

This year's community report focuses on our work to transform the charitable food system for the better and describes new programs we began in 2021 to address our communities' increased need for food access. I am immensely proud of the team at Channel One for rising to meet the challenges we've faced this past year and continuing to put our neighbors facing food insecurity at the center of everything we do.

In our next fiscal year, I am confident we will see the development of new food programs, improvements to our existing services aimed at addressing hunger and transformation of the charitable food system as a whole.

We count on your trust and continued support, and with your help, we can ensure that our neighbors have access to food resources when they need it.

On behalf of Channel One Regional Food Bank and our partners, thank you.

Sincerely,



Virginia Merritt
Executive Director
Channel One Regional Food Bank

“I am immensely proud of the team at Channel One for continuing to put our neighbors facing food insecurity at the center of everything we do.”

Transforming the Charitable Food System through Co-Design

Channel One has been working with community members in our region that have been affected by hunger. These co-designers are collaborating with Channel One's existing partners and other local leaders to create new community informed hunger solutions.

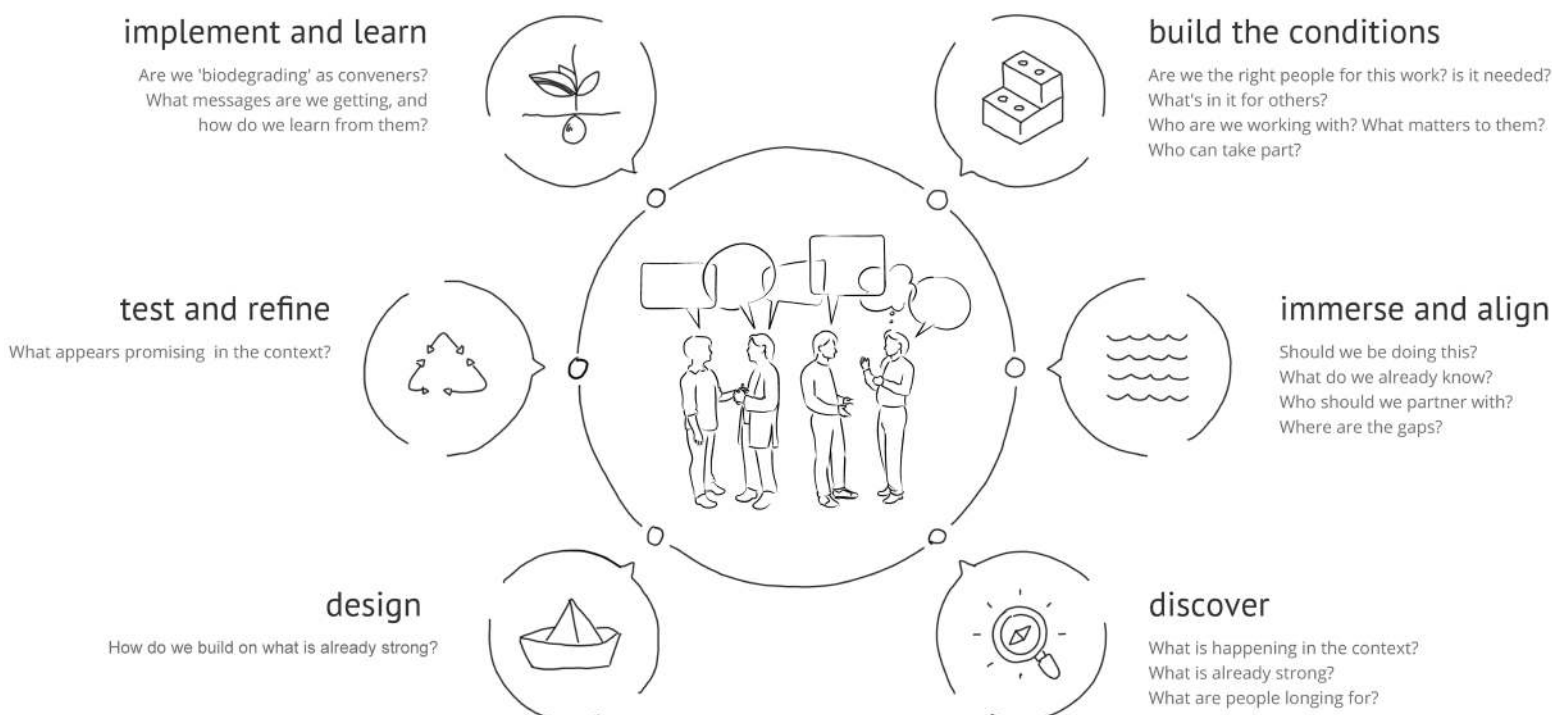
The "Food System Transformation" takes some of the concepts that we've learned through our own Food Shelf remodel, along with the themes learned from community stakeholders and co-designers, to better provide food resources to underserved communities.

Rather than enter a new community with boxes or pounds of food that are not relevant or healthy for the people facing hunger in the region, the co-design process emphasizes solutions that are not only informed, but also created by the community members directly affected by hunger.



The co-design process also emphasizes refining the solutions, so that we are continuously keeping community members' needs at the forefront. This is not only consistent with Channel One's value of putting people facing hunger at the center of everything we do, but is also consistent with the value of building and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

The Co-Design Process



Overarching Co-Design Themes

Accessibility

Increased service access, with options such as frequent shopping (as opposed to once per month access); increasing or diversifying hours to include evenings and weekends; and offering the ability for persons outside of clients' immediate household to shop.

Dignity

Finding ways to normalize food access so supports feel like a hand up not a handout.

Access to Information

Proactive information about resources in the community shared through trusted voices. Information that is simple, clear, and easy to understand with positive messages.

Choice and Autonomy

The ability to not only choose food at a food shelf, but have fresh, culturally relevant foods available, to have options in the quantity of food and frequency of shopping and to choose service delivery model (delivery, pick-up, in-person shopping).

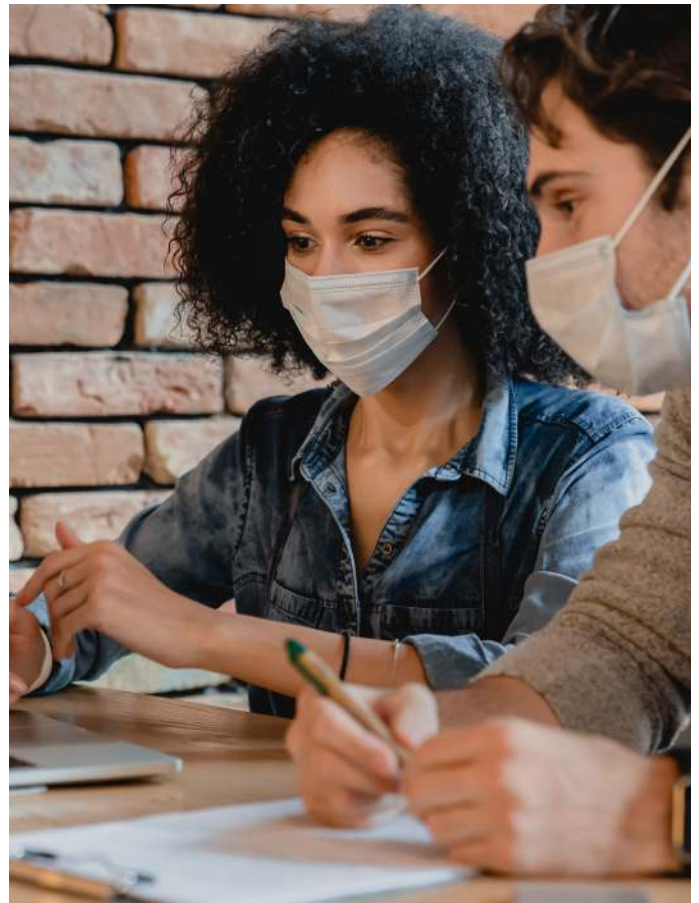
Food as Community

Support for diverse household units (extended families, non-traditional families) as well as cultural communities. Programs should support clients "helping themselves" and not feel patronizing.

The themes brought forward by co-designers are not entirely new. Rather, they are concepts that have informed our work for several years. However, as part of the co-design process, it is important that we hear what is currently important to our clients and to note if anything has changed year over year. In order to design new programs, improve upon existing programs and develop effective partnerships, we must continuously learn from those impacted by hunger.

The themes are not only being used by Channel One agencies developing new "Food System Transformation" programs, but also are being shared with all of our existing agencies and programs region-wide. The goal is that all of Channel One's agencies will take community feedback into account as they implement change to their processes and provide increased food access.

Since people facing food insecurity are at the center of everything we do, these concepts that come from community members are extremely valuable as we continually improve our services.



Food System Transformation Projects in Development

Channel One is providing each of the counties participating in Food System Transformation projects with a \$100,000 investment thanks to grants from the Larson Family Foundation and ConAgra. Some projects are developed in partnership with the Foundation for Essential Needs and the Minnesota Design Center at the University of Minnesota.

Mower County

In Mower County, the Le Roy Food Shelf is using grant funding to purchase refrigeration, allowing shoppers to have greater access to healthy food options. The Austin BackPack Program will be transitioning to a school pantry with a delivery option and CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio) is building a new food shelf in Austin to better serve those who are not able to attend their monthly mobile distributions.



Fillmore and Houston Counties

La Crescent Food Shelf is using funds to better market their services to those facing food insecurity in Houston County. Semcac Food Shelves (Kasson, Rushford, Preston and Caledonia) are sharing a grant to provide a consistent food shelf experience across each of their sites.

The Houston Community Food Shelf recently completed renovations and its clients are able to return to indoor shopping.

Laurie Le Grand, manager of Houston Community Food Shelf, sent Channel One this note, "I am writing to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your financial support of the remodel of the Houston Community Food Shelf. Our space is beautiful! Our shoppers were overjoyed. Thank you so very much."

Goodhue County

Red Wing Food Shelf and Pine Island Sharing Shelves are each developing separate projects to increase hours and storage. Together, they are also working on a shared community project to provide grocery delivery and co-branded marketing.



United Way
Welcome Pantry

Freeborn County

United Way of Freeborn County is planning to open a new food shelf, The Welcome Pantry, in the fall. The Welcome Pantry is designed to be a 'hub' for existing Freeborn County food shelves to access fresh produce and for clients to access comprehensive, wrap around services. This food shelf will complement and support existing food resources to help expand the capacity of food programs in Freeborn County overall.

Rising Costs Affecting Neighbors Facing Food Insecurity

It should come as no surprise to consumers that the cost of food is on the rise – and that many grocery stores are facing item shortages. The U.S. Department of Labor states that food prices went up 3.4% over 12 months. Items that consumers prepare at home went up 2.6% with meat, poultry, fish and eggs jumping up almost 6%.¹

What consumers may not consider, however, is how the increased costs and scarcity of items affect those facing food insecurity. “With the lasting effects of the pandemic, rising cost of food due to inflation, plus supply chain and distribution challenges, many families are struggling to put food on the table,” stated Virginia Merritt, executive director of Channel One Regional Food Bank.



According to statewide survey data, the items most requested from food shelf visitors are meat, poultry and fish; fresh produce; dairy; eggs; and cooking and baking supplies.² Each of these items has seen a jump in price over the last year, making it more expensive for Channel One to provide healthy food options for food program clients and shoppers.

Many of Channel One’s clients have a scarcity mindset from their lived experiences with poverty or lack of food access. Channel One endeavors to provide consistent access to food for all of its clients and shoppers to eliminate this feeling of scarcity.

“Support from donors and volunteers is even more essential right now as the communities and programs throughout our region face additional challenges,” Virginia continued, “It’s not only food costs that are on the rise, but also the cost of transportation, housing, energy and heat, health care and other barriers to food access that our clients may face.”

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cpi.pdf>

² <https://www.supershelfmn.org/minnesota-statewide-survey>

Shop

helpingfeedpeople.org/food-shelf

Consistent access to fresh produce, dairy, protein, and other grocery items

No limits on how much food you can shop for

Weekly shopping suggested—no longer a monthly limit on number of visits

Volunteer

helpingfeedpeople.org/volunteer

Join our community of more than 400 volunteers each month!

By donating a few hours of your time, you’ll help us to provide food and hope for the 57,000 people who face food insecurity in our region.

Donate

helpingfeedpeople.org/donate

Channel One can turn every \$1.15 into 4 meals for people in need.

Your company, department, or community group can also host a virtual food drive through our website.



Minnesota Central Kitchen (MCK) is an initiative that was originally developed as a pandemic response by the Feeding America Food Bank in the Twin Cities, Second Harvest Heartland. MCK aims to provide restaurant-quality prepared meals to those facing food insecurity and support local restaurants. Second Harvest and Channel One partnered to scale the prepared meals program to Rochester and the surrounding communities.

With the expansion of Minnesota Central Kitchen to Rochester, Channel One Regional Food Bank pairs its ability to source donated and rescued food with restaurants' expertise in food preparation to fill a crucial need. In 2021, we distributed 10,695 meals through MCK to those facing food insecurity.



With the help of these prepared meals from Minnesota Central Kitchen, Nansi and her family gather to eat dinner together around the table and talk about their day.

Nansi

"I feel very blessed and grateful because there's already not enough time to have with my kids," she said. "But having the meals already ready for you, hot and healthy for your kids, and they love it... it helps us a lot, we're having more family time and bonding more."



"A day when I get a meal is way less stressful, because otherwise, on the days when I don't get a meal, I have to worry about what I'm going to cook."

Rachelle

Rachelle appreciates that the meals not only save her time and stress but help her stretch her budget to feed her family. "I've got my own place, so I've got the resources to cook it, but sometimes I'm short on money," she said, "I'm so glad I can plan this in my weekly budget on what I'm going to spend for food."



"It's awesome to know that I don't have to worry about cooking dinner or about going out last-minute to get something to eat with a limited budget"

Belinda

Belinda said that she thinks food is one of the ultimate gifts, because it really shows you care, "To give someone food, you don't really know what that could really mean to someone. I definitely know that first-hand."

Restaurants and food producers that partner with MCK as a production kitchen receive many benefits. Production kitchen staff are motivated by producing high quality meals that feed our neighbors who may not otherwise be able to sit down to a nutritious dinner. They feel proud of the meals they are producing and are thrilled to participate in providing for their community. Participating in MCK also provides stable work shifts for many in the service industry who may need more work hours.

For some people, hunger is not addressed with a box of ingredients or a trip to their local food shelf. For these individuals, the time, resources, kitchen equipment and knowledge required to turn food ingredients into a meal are a barrier; a prepared meal is the solution.

Think about seniors who are too sick or frail to make wholesome, regular meals for themselves; children/minors who have not yet learned the skills to safely prepare a meal at home by themselves; individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity for whom access to a kitchen to cook and safely store food is not available; or for folks in our community who have fallen on hard times for any number of reasons and for whom right then/there, a ready-to-eat meal is a critical response.

While a prepared meal can provide dignity and convenience, most importantly, there are scenarios in which prepared meals are the only option to meet the food needs of our neighbors.

Production Partners

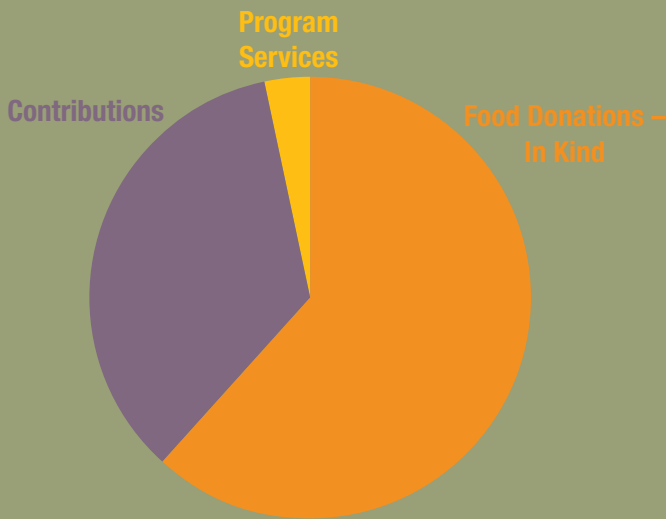


Distribution Partners



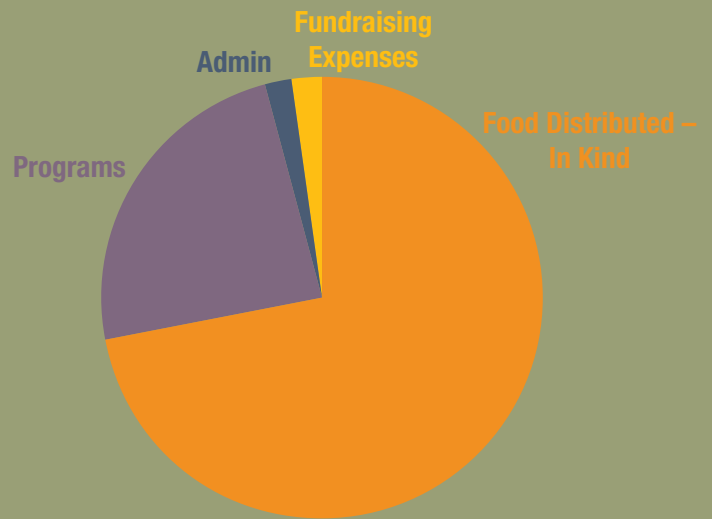
2021 Financials

Fiscal Year: July 2020 - June 2021



Income

Food Donations – In Kind	\$14,793,445	61.9%
Contributions	\$8,319,845	34.8%
Program Services	\$791,538	3.3%



Expenses

Food Distributed – In Kind	\$14,812,914	72.1%
Programs	\$4,891,270	23.8%
Fundraising Expenses	\$419,201	2.1%
Admin	\$408,432	2.0%

In 2021, Channel One...



delivered
1,474,168
pounds of produce to
those without access
to fresh food



drove
108,994
miles in Southern
Minnesota and
Western Wisconsin



distributed
9,037,776
pounds of food to those
facing food insecurity
in our region



volunteers provided
169,020
dollars worth of labor
in our Food Bank
and Food Shelf

**Every day, the Feeding America network of 200 food banks
and 60,000 food pantries & programs work to
support families without enough to eat.**

**In the United States, more than 38 million people, including 12 million children,
are food insecure. Food banks, as well as our agencies and food programs, need
your support to continue strengthening food access
and building healthy communities.**

Supporting Our Neighbors



For privacy, a Channel One client is not included in this photo

We recently met with a food shelf shopper to learn about how she uses Channel One's services. She explained that she's retired and temporarily disabled due to an injury. She uses the food shelf sometimes when she's struggling to pay for food alongside utilities and medical bills.

"I have friends who live in the senior high rises that spoke highly of the [CSFP program] deliveries, so I stopped by the food shelf to see what that was all about. The staff were so welcoming that I decided to sign up then and there.

I think the assistance I've received from Channel One has been really lifechanging. When I visit the food shelf, I always look for smiling faces of staff and volunteers first. I can see how much they're helping the other shoppers and there's no judgement.

The healthy food is great, but being disabled also means I don't always have a lot of person-to-person contact. It's as much a social outing for me as it is a chance to get food. The staff being so nice really means more than anything I'm given to eat."

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Sharon Rosen

Mayo Clinic



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Rochester, MN 55904



Sharing the thoughts of our supporters is one of the ways that Channel One can encourage donations, advocate for food resources and continue to provide healthy choices for our neighbors.

Share your story at
helpingfeedpeople.org/tell-us-your-story

2021 Community Giving Partners

Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union
Bayer
Broker Exchange Network
Canadian Pacific Railway
Christ United Methodist Church
Compeer Financial
Conagra Brands Foundation
Costco
Enterprise Rent-a-Car Foundation
Feeding America
First Presbyterian Church
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

Good Shepard Lutheran Church
The Henkel Foundation
Holy Spirit Catholic Church
IBM
J. A. Wedum Foundation
Kwik Trip, Inc.
Mayo Clinic
McNeilus Truck & Manufacturing
Morgan Stanley Foundation
Mount Olive Lutheran Church
NALC
Nuss Truck & Equipment

Olmsted County Dairy Association
Pharmaceutical Specialties
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