



Channel One
Regional
**Food
Bank**

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**



2022

COMMUNITY REPORT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I want to start off this community report by expressing my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support over the past year. Your collaboration and dedication have played an instrumental role in our ability to address hunger in our fourteen-county region. Without you, we would not have been able to alleviate hunger and make a positive impact in the lives of our clients.

As we faced the challenges of the past year, we witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of the ongoing hunger crisis in our community. Families, children, and seniors have been disproportionately affected, struggling to put food on their tables amidst rising costs and economic uncertainties.



Photo: Ken Klotzbach for MPR

The demand for our services has reached unprecedented levels, and it is disheartening to see so many of our neighbors facing food insecurity. However, in the face of these challenges, Channel One and our incredible network of supporters have risen to the occasion. Together, we have demonstrated remarkable resilience and resourcefulness, finding innovative solutions to ensure that no one goes hungry.

Through our partnerships with local schools, we have expanded our reach to address the needs of families, recognizing that hunger affects not only individuals but entire households. By piloting alternative grocery delivery options, we have been able to break down barriers of transportation and provide essential food items to those who are unable to access traditional food shelves. The introduction of Mobile Markets has opened doors for us to bring nutritious food directly to the neighborhoods most impacted by food insecurity, with the aim of fostering a sense of community and solidarity.

These achievements would not have been possible without the tireless dedication of our staff and volunteers, who have worked diligently to ensure the smooth operation of our programs and services. Their compassion and unwavering commitment to our mission have been instrumental in our ability to adapt and respond to the ever-evolving needs of our community.

Looking ahead, our 2022 - 2025 strategic plan sets the course for our future endeavors. By prioritizing the client and partner experience, we aim to provide holistic support to individuals and families facing hunger, offering not only nourishment but also resources and guidance to help them regain stability. Strengthening our core operations will enable us to optimize our efficiency and expand our reach, ensuring that we can serve even more individuals and communities affected by hunger.

Channel One is committed to utilizing the Minnesota Food Shelf Survey data to inform our food purchasing decisions and ensure that we are meeting the unique needs of our clients. By analyzing the survey results, we can better understand the types of foods that are most beneficial and desired by the individuals and families we serve.

The survey information allows us to make informed choices when selecting and procuring nutritious and culturally appropriate food items. We believe that by incorporating the voices and perspectives of our community, we can enhance the overall quality and impact of our services.

Additionally, we recognize the critical importance of client advocacy. We are committed to amplifying the voices of those we serve, advocating for policies and systemic changes that address the root causes of hunger and poverty. At Channel One, we believe in the power of collaboration and collective action. Together, we strive for a future where every community in our region is food secure.

By partnering with policymakers and joining advocacy efforts with statewide and national food banking partners, we can amplify our impact and effect lasting change. With our partners, we are working towards securing robust SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) funding, advocating for program enhancements, and raising awareness about the importance of the food system as a whole. We firmly believe that by standing united and voicing our collective commitment to fighting hunger, we can improve the charity food system and provide equitable food access.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you who has contributed to our mission in countless ways. Your support, whether through financial contributions, volunteering, or spreading awareness, has made a tangible difference in the lives of our neighbors. As we navigate the challenges that lie ahead, I have unwavering faith in our ability to overcome them together.

Channel One is privileged to serve our community, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to strengthening food access and building healthy communities. With your continued support, we can transform lives and ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need.

Sincerely,



Virginia Merritt
Executive Director
Channel One Regional Food Bank



SNAP 101

At Channel One, we recognize that SNAP remains a cornerstone of the nationwide effort to combat hunger. SNAP plays an essential role in ensuring that families have access to nutritious food.

It is crucial that we continue to support and advocate for the preservation and enhancement of SNAP, as it provides a vital safety net for our communities.

Collaborative Hunger Relief Efforts with Public Schools

In 2022, Channel One Regional Food Bank and Rochester Public Schools (RPS) partnered to help students attain consistent access to healthy food for the whole family. Shortly after the RPS partnership began, other Olmsted County schools also partnered with Channel One to implement a new approach to addressing hunger.

The Olmsted County schools and Channel One focus their joint efforts on student populations with the highest need and limited access to other community food resources. Channel One identifies these student populations by considering factors such as the proximity of existing community food resources and local poverty heat maps.

The schools work to connect families with Channel One's full-service food offerings, which include fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, dairy, and shelf-stable products. Additionally, Channel One offers delivery of these services to homes if families lack transportation, removing the burden from children having to carry home food for the family from school.

This new approach to addressing hunger replaced the previous childhood hunger initiative called the 'BackPack program,' which initially began as a summer hunger program in 1994.

The change in approach involves three key steps—

- School staff who interact daily with students, such as social workers, receive training from Channel One about how to refer students to resources that can consistently meet their needs.
- Channel One provides social workers and support staff at partnering Olmsted County schools with 'food stability boxes,' which contain two days of shelf stable meals for a family of four while staff work to connect them with full-service offerings.
- To serve neighborhoods with concentrated food security needs, Channel One collaborates with area schools to offer Mobile Market events in identified neighborhoods.



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

High grocery and gas prices and the impacts of inflation are hitting families hard. Channel One and Olmsted County schools want to make sure that students and their families have the nutritious food they need.

“We know that the BackPack program was beloved by the community and was an innovative program when it started,” stated Virginia Merritt, Executive Director at Channel One, “However, we’ve learned a lot of lessons about the ongoing need for food in our community because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Channel One’s community engagement efforts through our co-design project, and this new wave of need driven by inflation.”

Merritt continued, “When a student does not have enough to eat, there are usually others in the household who are also in need. Over the last two years, we have learned the value of training people that families trust, like school staff, to connect families to robust resources. We have also learned how to efficiently distribute food via Mobile Markets to communities with access barriers.”

In 2022, Channel One saw a nearly 40% increase in shopping visits, surpassing the demand experienced during the height of the pandemic. Moreover, during the 2022-23 school year, families had to sign up their students to receive free and reduced school lunch for the first time in two years. It is important to note that although the governor of Minnesota has signed a bill to provide free school breakfasts and lunches to students starting July 1st, 2023, this legislation does not address food insecurity for other members of students’ families.

“Food is a basic need. We can’t expect our students to do their best and participate well in their education when they are lacking this basic need, or when they are worried about family members who don’t have access to food,” said Dr. Kent Pekel, superintendent of Rochester Public Schools. “[The] partnership between Rochester Public Schools and Channel One gives the opportunity to not only meet the needs of the students, but also their families.”

Merritt added, “The partnership that Channel One had with RPS during the pandemic, where we worked alongside Student Nutrition Services to hold school meal distributions so that families could get ‘Channel One food’ and ‘school lunch’ in the same location, was transformative for the community. School meals are vital to student nutrition and, along with SNAP, are the most important factor in preventing hunger in Rochester.”

Together, Channel One and Olmsted County schools are taking on a new systems-transformation approach to combat hunger in our communities.

Channel One Food Shelf Helps a Family with a Fresh Start

A single mom named Kayla had been shopping at Channel One Food Shelf for two years. She and her children had been living in a hotel, struggling to find stable housing. However, recently, they were able to secure an apartment, marking a significant milestone in their journey. Kayla had signed up for grocery delivery, hoping for a seamless transition, but unfortunately, the Food Shelf team didn’t receive her address change in time, initially making it impossible for them to deliver her groceries.

Understanding the importance of ensuring Kayla had food in her new home, Channel One went above and beyond to support her. The Food Shelf team quickly made special arrangements for a delivery to her apartment. Kayla was deeply grateful for their efforts, expressing her appreciation, “I’m very thankful for the Friday morning delivery.” The timing couldn’t have been better, as she mentioned that she had family visiting for the weekend. The additional food provided by Channel One not only eased their financial burden but also made Kayla more comfortable inviting loved ones over to her new home.

The Continued Rise of Food Costs and its Impact on Our Neighbors

Rising food costs affect everyone. However, it is crucial to recognize that those already grappling with food insecurity bear the brunt of inflation's consequences. The most recent data from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) reveals a disheartening reality: food prices in March 2023 were a staggering 8.5% higher compared to the same month in 2022.

Food prices are expected to grow more slowly in 2023 (6.6%) than in 2022 (11.4%) but remain above historical-average rates. This relentless rise in food prices continues to affect the lives of individuals and families nationwide, making the fight against hunger an increasingly daunting challenge.



Photo: in partnership with Feeding America

Many of the food items that will be seeing continued price increases in 2023 are items that families need to live healthy lives. Prices are expected to continue increasing at high rates for nine categories that also experienced consistent growth throughout 2022. The foods increasing in price are consistent with statewide food shelf survey data, indicating that the foods most valued by people facing food insecurity tend to be the most expensive items to purchase in grocery stores.

Rising food costs not only strain the budgets of individuals and families but also have ripple effects throughout the economy. As grocery bills continue to rise, our neighbors are forced to make difficult choices, compromising on the quality and variety of their meals. Moreover, the burden of inflated food prices disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including low-income households, children, and the elderly, exacerbating the already challenging issue of food insecurity.

Inflation's impact on rising food costs extends beyond mere statistics, it affects the daily lives of our neighbors facing hunger. The anticipated significant price increases in 2023 for crucial food categories, which play a vital role in maintaining a nutritious diet, emphasize the important work that Channel One Food Bank and our agency partners do to address hunger in our region. By prioritizing collaborative efforts, we can continue to strive towards Channel One's vision that every community in our region is food secure.

Essential Food Categories with Expected Price Increases



**Dairy
& Fats**



Proteins



Produce



**Baking
Supplies**

Navigating Food Insecurity: Stories of Resilience and Support

About two months ago, Anwar lost his job at a gas station. He's been driving Uber ever since, but with inflation, high fuel prices and a family of six to feed, the money he makes doesn't stretch very far.

Recently, Anwar visited the Channel One Food Shelf. He brought along his sons Muhammad, 5, and Ibrahim, 7. Anwar loves to cook for his family, and he was excited to learn that the food shelf provided meat and fresh produce. "Food is really expensive right now," he said. "All of this helps."



For Kelli Eddins, "losing my ability to work felt like losing my ability to survive." Kelli worked 50-hour weeks until she was 8 months pregnant. Knowing she wouldn't qualify for maternity leave at her full-time job, she picked up extra cash delivering food after work. She needed money for rent and utilities, which had recently gone up. With inflation, her grocery bill had also increased. "I was meeting my necessities with nothing to spare," she said. "I earned that money working myself into the ground... I needed help, but I wasn't eligible."



She had to stop working for health reasons, but "I feel like I might as well have been at work because that's a guaranteed paycheck in comparison to what I was putting myself through." She applied for assistance through SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), but it took weeks to receive any help. Though she qualified for WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), her daughter was nearly a month old when the money came through.

She began to donate plasma so she could buy baby formula and meet her basic needs. She remembers how her mother struggled to care for her five children. They didn't always know where their next meal would come from. Kelli learned to stretch her money. "I would skip meals," she said. "I would buy the least expensive, most unhealthy stuff on the shelf."

Channel One is a place where you can get help right away without waiting and without barriers. Through Channel One, Kelli is able to shop weekly for fresh healthy food to help her through. Finally given a chance to breathe, she is thinking about what she wants to do next. She is inspired by social workers and therapists she met during difficult moments in her life. "I can remember certain women in my life that made an impact, and I want to be that for someone else," she said. "I want to break those generational curses so my daughter never has to experience those things."

2022 Minnesota Food Shelf Survey Results



Photo: in partnership with Second Harvest Heartland

Food shelves are doing essential work in communities across the region and the state. The annual Minnesota Food Shelf Survey is an important opportunity to hear what food shelves are doing well and where there might be room for improvement for our clients and communities. The Minnesota Food Shelf Survey provides a critical opportunity to gather feedback from individuals visiting food shelves.

These voices have the ability to inform the priorities of food shelf services and the hunger relief system as a whole. The survey takes place every 2-3 years, and prior results from 2017 and 2019 have provided important insights on the most requested food items and most valued client experiences at a food shelf.

The 2022 survey was conducted through a partnership of several statewide organizations. The lead implementing organizations were University of Minnesota Extension and Foundation for Essential Needs (FFEN). Funding was provided by Minnesota Department of Human Services, SNAP-Ed. Hunger Solutions MN and SuperShelf also served as collaborating partners.

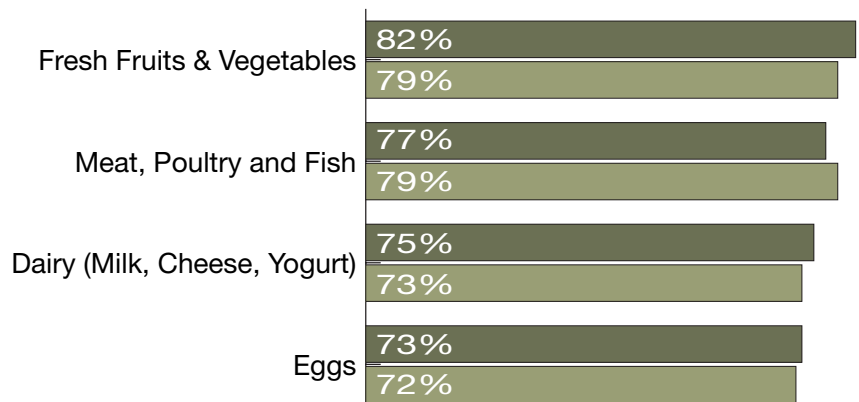
In the client survey, these partners heard from 7,014 food shelf clients from 288 food shelves across the state of Minnesota, including 1,460 clients from 53 food shelves in Channel One’s service area—even more than previous surveys.

Statewide and regional results are key to Channel One’s strategic goals for both food sourcing and client experience. Channel One’s strategic plan outlines two goals that the food shelf survey results inform.

First, Channel One is fully committed to creating a network of agency partners and programs that have client-centered operations with a focus on choice, nutrition, and a welcoming environment.

Second, Channel One Regional Food Bank will strengthen core operations to best meet the short and long-term needs of those facing food insecurity within our region.

What foods are most important for you to have every time you visit?



● Region ● State

2022 was a year marked by ongoing stress from the COVID-19 pandemic, record-setting food shelf visits, and challenges in sourcing food. In this context, even more clients shared their feedback to inform and improve food shelf services. Key insights from the survey point to the current strengths, challenges and needs for further investment in this essential community asset.

Previous survey results have shown the top five requested food items. However, this year, only four categories were statistically significant enough to be considered most important to shoppers. Fresh fruits and vegetables, and meat, poultry, and fish emerged as the most preferred categories, with dairy and eggs following closely behind. Overall, fresh, healthier foods remain a priority.



In addition to identifying the most requested food items, the surveys provide insights into the experiences that food shelf shoppers value the most. These valuable insights allow us to improve the client experience, ensuring that every individual feels supported when they visit our food shelves.

Statewide, choice remains the most sought-after experience year after year, with an increased emphasis on ease of selection and convenience. Channel One Food Shelf shoppers also overwhelmingly prioritize choice as their top experience, with approximately 75% of those surveyed stating that it is the most important aspect during their visits (compared to 57% statewide).

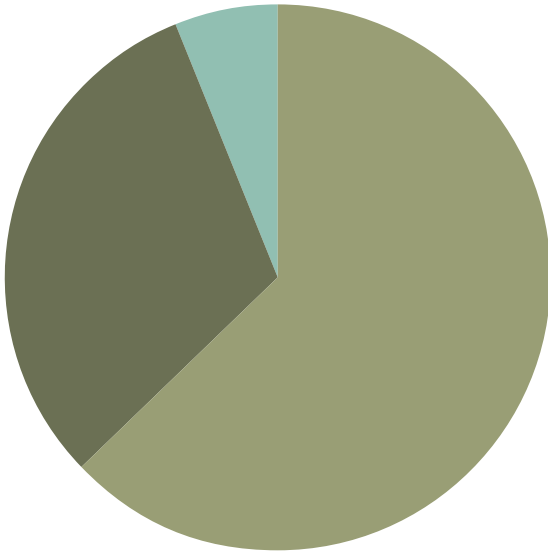
Another priority for people accessing food through Channel One is that the volunteers and staff provide a welcoming environment. 64% of those surveyed at Channel One’s Faribault County Mobile Distributions stated that they most value volunteers or staff welcoming them when they pick up their groceries. Another 29% valued volunteers or staff listening to them.



The Minnesota Food Shelf Surveys play a vital role in gathering feedback from individuals utilizing food shelves and food shelf managers, helping shape the services and priorities of these essential community resources. These surveys empower the voices of those we serve, shaping the future of food shelf services and prioritizing the needs of our communities. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive food system that ensures access to nutritious food.

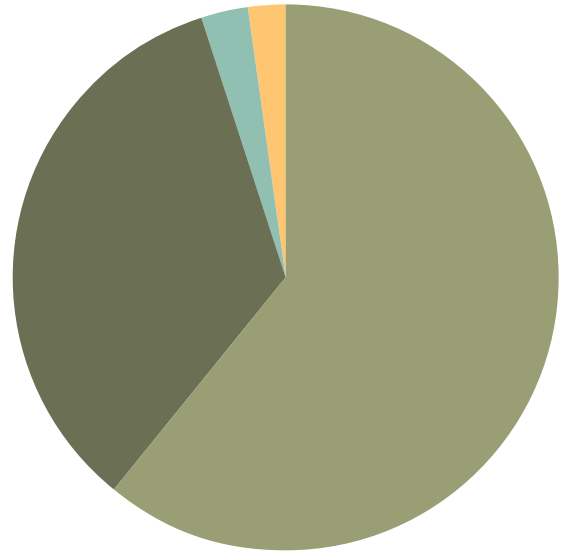
2022 Financials

Fiscal Year: July 2021 - June 2022



Income

Food Donations – In Kind	10,787,488	63%
Contributions	5,367,442	31%
Program Services	1,069,784	6%



Expenses

Food Distributed – In Kind	11,317,183	61%
Programs	6,383,577	34%
Fundraising Expenses	469,753	3%
Admin	422,072	2%

In 2022, here is what you helped accomplish!



3,098,842

pounds of produce to those without access to fresh food



10,990,644

pounds of food to those facing food insecurity in our region



12,257

volunteer hours in our Food Bank and onsite Food Shelf

In 2023, you will help us serve the over 45,000 people, including more than 15,000 children, at risk of food insecurity in our region. You will also play a part in providing nutritious food each month to over 700 vulnerable seniors at 50 different CSFP sites.

Thank you for doing so much to help those facing food insecurity!

Meeting the Challenge of Inflation

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



A shopper and her family started visiting the Food Shelf in 2020 after her husband was laid off. About a year ago, her husband was able to find a new job. However, money was still tight, and they felt like they were always playing catch-up since the layoff.

She expressed her gratitude for the support she received from Channel One Food Shelf over the past two and a half years. Not only is the shopper able to shop for herself, but she is also able to shop for her mother, and was able to sign her up for CSFP boxes. The shopper is very thankful that she can assist her mother, who is on a fixed income and has difficulty coming to the Food Shelf on her own.

Now, with the rising cost of groceries, it has become even more challenging to make ends meet, and the family continues to rely on Channel One for support.

The shopper has observed changes at the Food Shelf over the past six months and noticed how inflation has impacted even Channel One. She remarked on the increasing number of visitors, saying, “Sometimes you have to wait for a cart, it’s so busy—but there is still healthy food available, so we’ll continue to visit.”

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Rochester, MN 55904

Shop

helpingfeedpeople.org/food-shelf

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2022 Community Giving Partners

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Altra Federal Credit Union
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Broker Exchange Network
Century 21 Atwood
Compeer Financial
CRW Architecture and Design
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Foresight Bank
Fresh Thyme Farmers Market
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Holy Spirit Catholic Church
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