



## 2015 Highlights, Activities and Accomplishments

<p><b><u>2015 Members</u></b></p> <p>Greater Twin Cities United Way</p> <p>Hunger Solutions</p> <p>CEAP</p> <p>The Food Group</p> <p>Department of Human Services: Office of Economic Opportunity</p> <p>University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development</p> <p>VEAP</p> <p>ICA</p> <p>Keystone Community Services</p> <p>Minnesota Foodshare</p> <p>Metro Meals on Wheels</p> <p>Family Pathways</p> <p>Northpoint Health and Wellness</p> <p>Loaves and Fishes</p> <p>Catholic Charities</p> <p>Pillsbury United Communities</p> <p>Neighborhood House</p> <p>Matter</p> <p>Last quarter of 2015: Open Arms Minnesota Valley Community Outreach</p>	<p><b>History and Purpose:</b></p> <p>In 2006, Greater Twin Cities United Way convened a representative group of hunger relief agencies that worked together to develop a plan to address the problem of hunger in our communities. The plan was introduced to the public in 2007 with a commitment to this issue over time and a challenge to the larger community to unite in support of the goal to eliminate hunger. Twin Cities Hunger Initiative was created as a forum for leaders of hunger relief organizations to work together to end hunger and to strengthen the efforts of all by creating opportunities for collaboration and connection. The key premise of the work is the belief that more can be accomplished when organizations learn, plan and try new ideas together. The new name Minnesota Hunger Initiative was taken to provide a broader and more inclusive reach with a recognition of the broad and creative hunger relief efforts across the state.</p> <p>The composition of Minnesota Hunger Initiative include hunger relief organizations, food shelves, meal programs, food banks, policy advocates, the University of Minnesota, state government and faith based organizations with support from corporations and other community members.</p> <p>Despite all of the efforts of so many, hunger continues to be an issue in our communities throughout the state. There were over 3 million food shelf visits in 2015, rising numbers of seniors using food shelves with the number of seniors in our state growing significantly each day. In some areas we have actually lost ground. There are restrictions placed on SNAP in terms of communicating the program to eligible participants and to the population of adults without dependents who often rely on this support. Creative solutions are underway to address these issues through the work of many people and organizations.</p> <p>Individuals who are low income have to make tough choices between food, transportation, housing, medical care and other necessities which often means less food than is needed in a household. With sufficient food being a challenge, nutritious food is often even more of a challenge despite what we know about the return on investment of eating healthy food for students, employees, pregnant women, and older adults.</p>
---	---

**Individually and collectively, the members of Minnesota Hunger initiative strive to create strategies, awareness, policies and initiatives to alleviate hunger and its underlying causes. Following is a summary of meetings held in 2015.**

To facilitate collective impact the Minnesota Hunger Initiative Steering Committee meets 6 times a year to discuss strategic issues, shared challenges, new initiatives, and to update on the work of its committees.

In 2015, the focus areas include critical areas such as how to address the aging out of much needed volunteers for meal and food shelf programs to a number of approaches to increasing access to nutritious food for food insecure families and individuals as well as sharing progress on projects and new initiatives.

*Where have all the volunteers gone?* February 2015.

Minnesota Hunger Initiative had identified the changing demographics of volunteers in hunger as a key issue. Mary Quirk, of the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administrators (MAVA) came and spoke on this topic at the February 2015 Steering Committee meeting and facilitated a discussion of the members on how meal programs and food shelves, all heavily dependent on volunteers, could engage in recruitment strategies to enlist younger volunteers to help with the work.

[Best practices – Engaging Boomers & New Generations.pdf](#)

[Energizing new topics](#)

[Organizational Checklist - Boomers.pdf](#)

[PPT - Engaging New Generations - Hunger Initiative.pdf](#)

*Adopting promising practices toward better nutrition.* April 2015.

The topic for the Minnesota Hunger Initiative Steering Committee meeting in April was on Nutrition-focused food banks, food shelves and meal programs from Kristen Klinger and Nora Gordon, Minneapolis Health Department. They presented on the importance of adopting promising practices that support the purchase, donation and distribution of healthy foods. Key strategies include using behavioral economics to transform the client experience, adopting healthy foods policies to guide decision making, creating demand through nutrition education and proactively communicating to donors. Discussion took place on making more nutritious foods visible and appealing, increasing client demand for healthier foods, and demonstrating a nutritious focused philosophy. They showed a video highlighting behavioral economics in making healthier choices. The group discussed ways to make surplus foods accessible year round as frozen or canned nonperishables.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKff5QiTqgg>

[Slides for MN Hunger Initiative presentation\\_042215.pdf](#)

[Healthy Foods to Prioritize.pdf](#)

[Healthy meals policy overview January 2015.pdf](#)

[FoodShelf Healthy Foods Policy Infographic.pdf](#)

### **Feedback on nutritional measures to help inform decision making June 2015.**

In June we heard from Robert King, PHD, Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota about the Healthy F.O.O.D. Project (Healthy Eating Index). This project involved Minnesota Hunger Initiative through members: The Food Group, Second Harvest Heartland, I.C.A. Food Shelf and Greater Twin Cities United Way. There were some overall positive results from this work. Additional lessons learned that will be a part of future research to create a tool that is easy to use by the food shelf

[MNHI.Presentation.6.8.15.pptx](#)

### **Farm to Table & Meals on the Road August 2015.**

Our August meeting was held at Peace Lutheran Church Gardens in Coon Rapids at the edge of the community farm managed by the Church on behalf of Loaves and Fishes – their Farm to Tale Garden funded by United Ways’ Centennial Volunteer Project Grant award. Kale, Swiss chard and other fresh greens go directly into the meal programs to be served the next day. Finding ways to secure fresh produce for meal and food shelf programs was discussed. Loaves and Fishes has community farms in Richfield, Frogtown and Eagan in addition to the Coon Rapids site. The cost was \$100,000 a year to sustain the operation. The return on investment of this type of garden operation would be important to determine over time. We also saw Loaves and Fishes Mobile Food Truck with its ambitious meal delivering plans.

### **Innovative Solutions - Mobile Market and Food Market with Co-located Services October 2015.**

In October Adair Mosely presented from Pillsbury United Communities on the North Market, a first of its kind social enterprise in Minnesota where food retail, health care services and community education programs are strongly integrated to provide the North Minneapolis community with a strong foundation to help improve their health outcomes.

Leah Driscoll from Wilder Foundation presented on the Twin Cities Mobile Market, which increases access to healthy affordable foods in “food deserts” and other low-income neighborhoods. Using a retrofitted transit bus, the Mobile Market sells fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy and basic dry goods at below-market prices- filling a gap in the food system for thousands of families.

<https://www.puc-mn.org/venture/north-market>

[2MN Hunger Initiative mobile market presentation.pptx](#)

### **Reviewing the past and Planning Ahead**

The December Minnesota Hunger Initiative's Steering Committee had Carlo Cuesta from creationINcommon join us to review our mission and values. This was seen as timely to be relevant and current with the societal changes that have taken place since the initiative was first launched in 2007. We discussed how to expand our engagement for collective impact and how to align our work. We also engaged in the annual planning session resulting in the adopted work plan for 2016.

[TASK FORCE plan overview 2016 February 2016 \(2\).docx](#)

[MN Hunger Initiative - Strategic Framework - 20151207 DRAFT.pdf](#)

As noted in the Task Force Overview, the annual work plan, the focus areas selected are divided into task force committees and work groups that meet during the year on particular areas of interest and projects, reporting back to the larger Steering Committee meetings during the year. In 2015 there were three priority Task Force Areas as well as additional involvement in committees and community efforts. The Task Forces are outlined in goal areas below.

### **Goal number one: Increasing Access to Healthy Foods Task Force**

The Healthy Eating Index was in full swing engaging with food shelves throughout the state to measure the amount of nutritious foods provided by the food banks and how their decisions on purchasing nutritious foods changed with feedback over time. The results of this work were highlighted at a Steering Committee meeting in June.

The Faces of Senior Hunger conducted two comprehensive on line surveys with first the Twin Cities Food Shelves and soon after Greater Minnesota Food Shelves to gather input on the issues they were facing and the ideas they had for serving older adults in their programs. This information was useful in the work during the year toward a senior toolkit for food shelves.

### **Goal number two: Public Awareness/Impacting Public Policy**

The launch of the new website at the onset of the year provided a foundation for increasing communication on the collective impact efforts of Minnesota Hunger Initiative as well as to feature the individual members, their events, their ideas and other aspects. An RFP to support the website occurred during the year with Metro Meals on Wheels getting the project and dedicating time to help make the site more robust with research and other information. A facebook and twitter account helped move the initiative forward with additional social media support. Each month a member was featured along with key shared events. The Communication Leads group was established to help drive the social media efforts and other communication strategies with marketing, website and communications staff from each of the 21 organizations. A new grant from the Schulze Family Foundation helped to fund these and other efforts of the Minnesota Hunger Initiative such as the Walk to End Hunger being promoted at appropriate times during the year.

[mnhungerinitiative.org](http://mnhungerinitiative.org)

[MN Hunger Initiative Ending Hunger in MN.html](#)

Minnesota Hunger Initiative members supported the Partners to End Hunger agenda throughout the session in various ways as well as the work of the Nutritious Food Coalition and other community coalitions.

Planning for a highly successful Walk to End Hunger took place throughout the year with a great walk taking place on Thanksgiving Day with many members participating and Hunger Solutions providing all aspects of administrative and coordinating support for the event. An “I walked” button was distributed for the second year by Minnesota Hunger Initiative.

Planning for an Issues Brief: Access to Healthy Food and Health Inequities with Robert Wood Johnson took place in 2015 (event held on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

Minnesota Hunger Initiative participated in the Kick Hunger Challenge starting in late summer which featured a member at the Kick Hunger Challenge website each week and involved promoting this challenge on member’s websites. Several members held events which resulted in more than \$3,000 and the Kick Hunger page and distributed revenue resulted in \$6,650 for the group as a whole.

[Minnesota Vikings KHC Flyer \(1\).pdf](#)

Minnesota Hunger Initiative met with the 40 United Ways in Minnesota following surveying them on how their work focused on hunger relief. A great discussion took place which showed interest in working together on the topic of hunger relief and sharing best practices on this topic.

A Community Report was developed which provided data on hunger and solutions in process was developed and distributed at the Food Access Summit.

[MN-Hunger-Initiative-Community-Report.pdf](#)

Minnesota Hunger Initiative supported the work of Ramsey County SHIP program and TPT in the production of the Food Justice Video and related webisodes, with members being featured in the video that illustrated the challenges faced by individuals to access nutritious food for their families.

[www.foodjusticemn.org](http://www.foodjusticemn.org).

### **Goal Three: Increasing the Capacity of Food Shelves and Meal Programs to Effectively Serve their Clients**

The Healthy Savings Card, following a successful pilot project in 2014, spent 2015 analyzing what was learned and developing a relationship with Medica Research Institute. Medica Research Institute helped to create a new evaluation tool to conduct a second pilot project that would increase the behavioral economic components. In addition this will provide more in depth analysis of the changes both in behavior and health from incentivizing individuals to purchase and consume more nutritious foods. The Greater Twin Cities United Way stepped up with a new campaign strategy, the “Stop the Growl” campaign due to their interest in the Healthy Savings Project with its link to many major food corporations. These corporations can sell, at discount, their most nutritious foods in this program to benefit lower income families. The concrete aspect of this program proved to be of interest to a number of companies who engaged in this campaign which raised nearly \$85,000 for the second pilot

project effort focused on the produce dollar benefit on the healthy savings cards for individuals. Agribusiness and Solutran were two of the major contributors in this campaign.

**Additional activities, opportunities, and data related to the Minnesota Hunger Initiative in 2015 follow:**

In 2015, Mary Quirk from Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administrators (MAVA) contacted Minnesota Hunger Initiative on the federal grant that they received for 2015 to focus on volunteers and hunger relief organizations. Minnesota Hunger Initiative was invited to co-sponsor events with MAVA and Hands-on Twin cities and to participate in leadership training as a part of this grant.

Additional data points are collected each year to look at changes in the number of pounds of food for food shelves as well as the enrollment numbers for SNAP.

<http://mn.gov/dhs/general-public/publications-forms-resources/reports/financial-reports-and-forecasts.jsp>

[United Way 2007-2016 Combined Data for EFN HFTC SHH - UPDATED2016 SHH 1-2016 \(2\).xlsx](#)

Staff and members participated throughout the year in the Nutritious Food Coalition, Partners to End Hunger and maintained relationships with members as well as community partners with shared goals.

During the year, members discussed how to be more inclusive in terms of representation and a statewide focus. Planning for the Health Equity forum in January would include Greater Minnesota Promising Practices. In addition, invitations to this event could go to a large number of entities.

Two new members were added during the last quarter of the year.

Additional organizations representing hunger relief as well as focus area experts were involved in the Task Forces and Committee efforts during the course of the year as well.

The website was again an opportunity to have a broader reach and involve more organizations.

**Summary: Efforts to strengthen collective impact, the awareness of hunger and ways to help alleviate hunger, as well as to share best practices continued throughout the year with plans to support similar efforts in 2016 and beyond.**

