

May 9, 2022

Dear HHS Conference Committee Members,

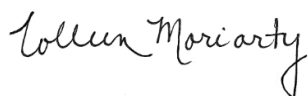
Thank you for including language that would increase the gross income threshold on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from 165% to 200% of federal poverty (House Article 16, section 4; Senate Article 5, section 1). We have heard first-hand from families with incomes between 165% - 200% of poverty that are struggling to afford the essentials including food, housing, childcare and other daily living expenses. This change would leverage federal funds we are currently leaving on the table and allow more low-income Minnesota families to work, provide food for their families, and continue to move toward economic stability.

We would urge the committee to adopt the House language that includes food support funding and capital improvement grants (House Article 24, section 2), in the final Conference Committee Report. Since the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, food shelves in Minnesota have seen record high numbers of visits - topping at 3.8 million visits a year. With many COVID relief measures phasing out, we are already starting to see a rise in food shelf visits and indicators of more significant food insecurity to come. Currently, 1 in 9 Minnesotans are facing food insecurity, and Minnesota's network of over 300 food shelves throughout the state are often the first line of defense against hunger, helping put over 92 million pounds of food on the tables of low-income households each year.

By investing in food shelves, food banks and tribal nations in our state, we can ensure that they are able to keep their shelves stocked with food despite rising food costs; are able to transport and deliver food to many who need it, including the growing number of seniors who depend on their local food shelves; and ensure that food shelves are set up with the appropriate storage, equipment and infrastructure to meet the growing demand in our state.

During a time of increased need, we urge your support.

Sincerely,



Colleen Moriarty, Director, Hunger Solutions Minnesota