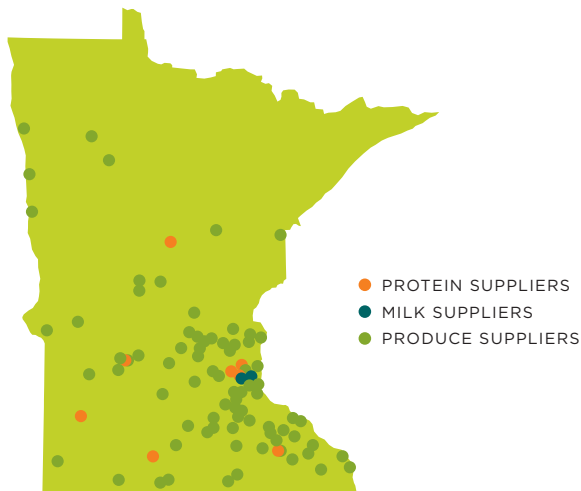




**HF 1554**

## Investing in Farmers and Neighbors in Need

Minnesota's Farm to Food Shelf program provides critical dairy, protein and produce for Minnesota's Feeding America food banks. At a time when food insecurity remains elevated in our state, additional funding is needed in order to meet increased demand for food assistance.



### FARM TO FOOD SHELF FUNDING REQUEST

We are asking legislators to **increase the Farm to Food Shelf biennial appropriation to \$12.2 million**, an increase of \$4.4 million per year. Of this appropriation, \$1.6 million each year would be dedicated to milk grant funding to ensure consistent access to free milk throughout Minnesota's network of hunger-relief organizations.

### ABOUT FARM TO FOOD SHELF

Minnesota's Farm to Food Shelf program enables the state's network of Feeding America food banks, food shelves and meal programs to provide millions of pounds of locally sourced produce, dairy and protein each year.



In 2022, Second Harvest Heartland distributed **6,071,569 pounds of locally grown produce** that would have otherwise gone unharvested or unsold, working with 32 different farmers.



Last year, Second Harvest Heartland distributed **343,711 gallons of milk** across the state. Due to increased cost and demand, the current annual appropriation of \$600,000 for milk grant funding lasted only three months.



In 2022, Second Harvest Heartland sourced **38,000 pounds of local protein** using Farm to Food Shelf funds.

Program funding is appropriated to Second Harvest Heartland, who helps to administer the program on behalf of the state's network of Feeding America food banks. **Food sourced through Farm to Food Shelf reaches hunger-relief organizations in all 87 Minnesota counties**, and each food bank is responsible for distributing products to the food shelves and meal programs within their service area.



# FOOD INSECURITY REMAINS ELEVATED

Minnesota recorded over 5.5 million food shelf visits in 2022, up 50% on average from the year prior and exceeding demand seen during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## We're seeing the hungriest winter in memory as food costs continue to strain family budgets.

- While inflation is beginning to subside and we're seeing some costs decline, the **price of groceries has soared 13 percent**. Some staple products, like flour, eggs, butter and margarine, have increased in price by 20% or more.
- With the **expiration of emergency SNAP** benefits this March, a COVID-era program that provided additional benefits to enrolled families, the emergency food system is expecting another surge in need on top of the historic demand seen in 2022.

## Minnesota's food banks are experiencing the same sky-high prices consumers are.

- Across the board, **prices are 20% higher than last year** for foods we need to purchase.
- The **amount of food we've needed to purchase has increased by 50%** as we seek to meet the increased demand and fill a 7-million-pound gap left by a 40% decline in food provided by federal commodity programs.
- Over the past year, the **price of the milk we purchase has soared 30 cents on the dollar** while demand for milk at our food shelf partners has increased 40%.

## Food banks can't rely on charity alone to end hunger.

- Second Harvest Heartland was able to distribute **over 113 million meals** last year in part because of the financial support we received from our state and federal government.
- This session, we are asking the Minnesota legislature to **invest in programs like Farm to Food Shelf** that will support Minnesota growers, producers and processors and help keep food on the table for our neighbors in need.



At Second Harvest Heartland, we work to end hunger together. As one of the largest, most efficient, and most innovative hunger-relief organizations in the nation, we leverage our unique position in the emergency food chain to make an impact. In close partnership with a network of 423 food shelf and nonprofit partners and 1,115 hunger-relief programs, we support those in our region facing hunger today.

More than a food bank, we're a leading partner in the policies and programs that work to end hunger, like SNAP, school meals and senior nutrition programs, and we're an innovator in the areas where food can be the solution, like FOODRx and Kitchen Coalition.

► Learn more at [2harvest.org](https://2harvest.org)