

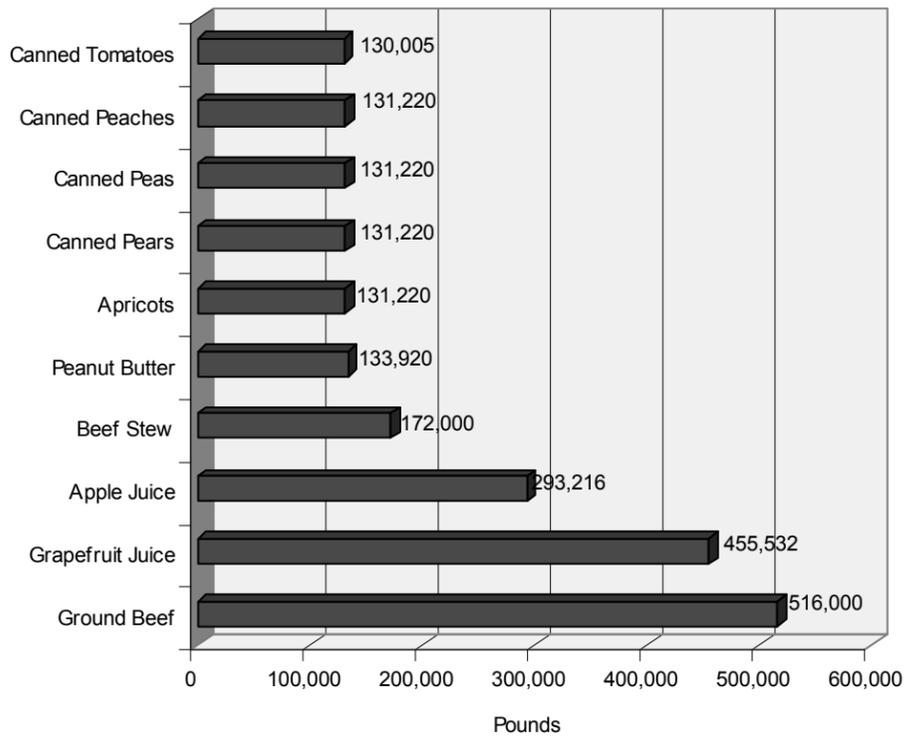
## The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) was initiated in 1981 to aid the hungry and farmers through the distribution of surplus commodities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture buys the food and ships it to Minnesota. HSM manages the statewide allocation to six regional food banks based on a formula for poverty and population.

In 2008, the distribution of TEFAP commodities to Minnesota totaled 6.3 million pounds of quality food for people in need.

The adjacent graph depicts the variety of products and illustrates the top 10 items received in 2008.

### Top 10 TEFAP Foods



### VOICES OF HUNGER

"I'm kind of embarrassed, but I need the food. It's a necessity (to visit the food shelf)." - Food Shelf Client, Lake Elmo

"The majority of new clients are former middle-class folks, some of whom used to be donors. That scares me to pieces." - Food Shelf Director, Stillwater

"Their stories are so heart-breaking and things can go from bad to worse so quickly. All it takes is for someone to get sick or the car breaks down...and with all the foreclosures...it doesn't take much in these tough times." - Food Shelf Director, Anoka

"We have people who had 30-year careers who are delivering pizza. It's disheartening to see so many people hit by this economic downturn." - Food Shelf Director, Cottage Grove

"It costs more, now, things like meat, eggs and milk, I get \$147 a month in food stamps. ... It doesn't take long to spend it; I would say they last me about a week and a half." - Food Shelf Client, Duluth

"The food shelf is our lifeline. With our family of six trying to live on \$18,000 a year, that food is so important, and they'll give you a hug when you feel like crying." - Food Shelf Client, Plymouth

"Food shelf visits and mortgage foreclosures -- both sharply on the rise in our county -- are leading indicators of a bigger picture." - Dakota County Researcher



Hunger Solutions Minnesota (HSM) is a comprehensive hunger relief organization that works to end hunger in Minnesota. We take action to assure food security for all Minnesotans by supporting agencies that provide food to those in need, advancing sound public policy, and guiding grassroots advocacy. HSM advocates for the maximum use of all federal public nutrition dollars available and works to improve low income Minnesotans' access to all nutrition programs. HSM recommends that people struggling with hunger and poverty screen themselves for public program benefits by using the Bridge to Benefits tool.

651-486-9860

hungersolutions.org

# Keeping Food on the Table

Presented by

**HUNGER**  
SOLUTIONS MN  
A Statewide Partnership of Organizations Fighting Hunger



"We've made great strides but there are still other things that need to be done— There are still 35 million Americans who do not have enough to eat."

-Former U.S. Senator George McGovern at the Voice of Hunger Rally—July 2008, St. Paul, MN

A Quarterly Review of the State of Hunger in Minnesota

Released March 2009

2008

Review



## 2008 FOOD STAMPS

For the first time since 2000, more than 300,000 Minnesotans are using food stamps.

This is a barometer of economic conditions. Increases in the number of food stamp recipients are the single best early warning signal of increases in poverty.

Last summer, Minnesota had the 11th largest increase in food stamp caseload in the US.

Currently there are 308,000 recipients – this is 69% of eligible people. Only 2 out of 10 eligible seniors receive food stamp benefits.

Food stamps are designed to be a supplement to individual food budgets. Food stamps extend buying power and assure adequate nutrition so people are not forced to choose between healthy meals and paying other bills.

Food stamp spending is widely believed to be one of the surest ways to stimulate the economy. Moody's Economy estimates that every \$1 increase in food stamp spending generates \$1.73 in increased economic activity.



## SPECIAL FOCUS

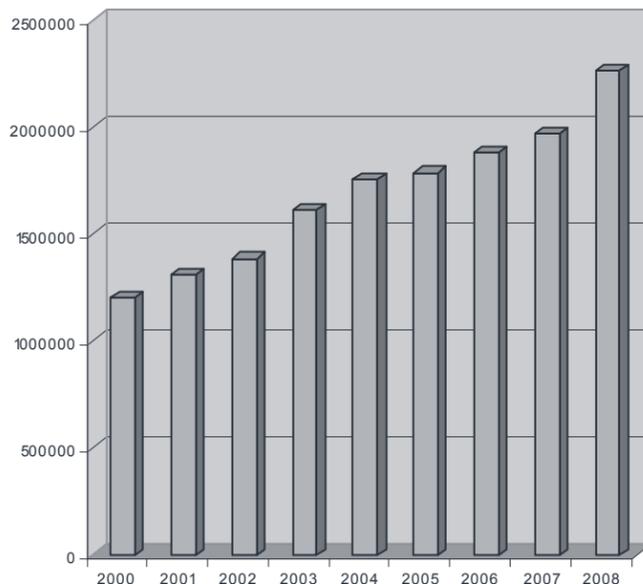
### Alarming Increases in Suburban Hunger

It may be surprising that our suburban food shelves report high demand for service. Washington County is a startling example. With the second highest household median income in the Twin Cities metro area, there was a 21% increase in visits to area food shelves. Friends in Need (FIN) Food Shelf serves South Washington County. 2008 brought a huge increase in clients. In 1998, FIN served 3,000 people a year — in 2008, they served 16,600. More families who are completely new to the food shelf experience are seeking help. New clients often say that they've given for years but never dreamed they would be on the receiving end. FIN serves homeless families. This means stocking sleeping bags, portable propane stoves, and tents to accommodate the families who do not have a place to live. The county also reports that people applied for food support benefits in record numbers.

## 2008 REVIEW OF MINNESOTA HUNGER FACTORS

The recession and food inflation in 2008 strained many families to the breaking point. Rising joblessness, falling wages, and rapidly rising food costs pushed middle class families with livable wages to low incomes that are stretched to the limit. Housing now takes up more than a third of their income, leaving less money for food. Because of the unprecedented growing need for emergency food assistance, in 2008 State Representative John Benson of District 43B, successfully introduced a bill that granted the first-ever increase in state funding for food shelves. This has alleviated some of the stress on food shelves, but it is not sufficient to meet the steeply climbing demand for food.

### 2008 Statewide Food Shelf Visits



2008 was the first time we've seen over 2 million visits to food shelves in Minnesota.

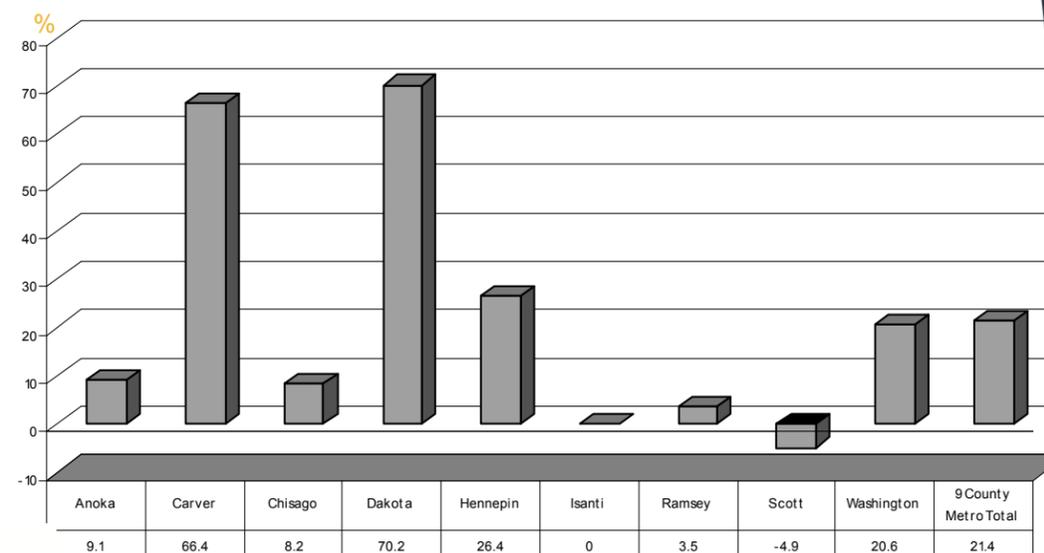
The statewide total was 2,263,890 visits — up 14.8% from 2007.

Visits (194,665) by senior citizens were up 18.7% from 2007.

Children make up 41% of food shelf users and children being served by food shelves increased 12% over 2007.

The 9 county Twin City metro witnessed a 21% increase in visits in 2008. Visits jumped to 1,185,011 from 979,777 in 2007.

### 9 County Metro Food Shelf Visits Percent Change 2007-2008



In September 2008, a new CAP food shelf began reporting in Carver County, reducing the statistics reported for Scott County. Combined, Scott and Carver Counties saw an 11.7% increase for 2008.

## 2008 FARM BILL

The US Farm Bill is the agricultural and food policy tool of the Federal government. The comprehensive bill is passed every several years by Congress.

A full 60% of this important federal bill funds nutrition programs that alleviate hunger and that serve as preventative health care measures.

The 2008 Farm Bill holds tremendous nutrition policy improvements including \$7.8 billion for Food Stamps and \$1.2 billion for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

A new name for the Food Stamp Program was launched with the 2008 Farm Bill. The program is now called SNAP— The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The Food Stamp program now also better supports working families by allowing people to retain retirement savings. The benefits are indexed for inflation for the first time since the program's inception 40 years ago.

After the 2008 Farm Bill took effect, Minnesota TEFAP commodities distribution increased by 24% from January 2007 to January 2009.



## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS



### Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is the USDA term given to describe households that struggle with affording enough food. Among the 9.5 percent of people in Minnesota households considered to be food insecure, 3.7 percent were living in households that were considered to have "very low food security." People that fall into this category had more severe problems experiencing hunger and cutting back or skipping meals on a more frequent basis for both adults and children.



### Childhood Poverty

Almost 12 percent of Minnesota children live in poverty, up by 35 percent since 2000. Hunger is not merely uncomfortable for children; it is dangerous—jeopardizing their health and normal development. Early childhood food insecurity endangers children's future academic achievement and workforce participation. The immediate and long-term impacts of childhood hunger are detrimental to the entire fabric of our state.



### Unemployment

The year-end 6.9% unemployment rate in Minnesota was a 22 year high. Unemployment drives demand for emergency food assistance. Also, according to the Upjohn Institute, a one point rise in unemployment results in a 6-8% increase in food stamp caseloads.