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Contact: Samantha Solberg, ssolberg@2harvest.org

2022 MINNESOTA FOOD SHELF SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS CRITICAL ROLE OF EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM AMID RECORD HUNGER

Respondents identify fresh produce and proteins as most in-demand items with dairy and eggs a close second, yet availability of remains a challenge

Brooklyn Park, MN – Last week, [Hunger Solutions Minnesota](#) released the results of the [2022 Minnesota Food Shelf Survey](#), which reflects the voices of more than 7,000 Minnesotans who sought assistance from 288 individual food shelves. Taking place every 2-3 years, this survey is the product of a collaboration between the University of Minnesota Extension, the Foundation for Essential Needs, Minnesota’s Department of Human Services and SuperShelf.

Survey results show that many Minnesotans are visiting food shelves on a regular basis to meet their food needs. Trends continue to point to less short-term, emergency use. Instead, food shelf resources are serving as an ongoing budget-relieving strategy, with 85% of respondents reporting visiting their food shelf once a month or more, and 64% saying they’ve used their food shelf for more than a year. Previously released data showed a [dramatic increase in food shelf visits](#) in 2022, with two million more visits than in either 2021 or 2019.

The survey also shows that fresh foods continue to be a priority for food shelf clients. Fresh fruits and vegetables were essentially tied with meat, poultry and fish as the most important food to have at every food shelf visit, with dairy and eggs both a close second. Unfortunately, food shelf clients reported these nutritious food items were always available at their food shelf only about half of the time.

To help address this need, **Second Harvest Heartland is advocating for an increase of \$4.4 million/year for the state’s [Farm to Food Shelf](#) program**, which offers local farmers the opportunity to donate excess produce to area food shelves. To date, **neither the House nor the Senate Agriculture Committees included this critical funding** in the omnibus finance bills released last week. That is why Second Harvest Heartland joined a [broad coalition](#) of food, agriculture, and hunger-relief organizations in advocating for a \$110 million increase to the Committee’s budget target – a figure that would account for just 0.6 percent of the \$17 billion state budget surplus. This will allow lawmakers to make the necessary investments in proven hunger-fighting policies in the face of rising rates of hunger and expired federal food relief.

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