

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 2, 2023

CONTACT: Samantha Solberg, [ssolberg@2harvest.org](mailto:ssolberg@2harvest.org)

## **SECOND HARVEST HEARTLAND, CHANNEL ONE REGIONAL FOOD BANK PARTNER ON “START SEEING HUNGER” AD**

*Public awareness effort comes on the heels of troubling rhetoric from state and federal lawmakers*

Brooklyn Park, MN – Second Harvest Heartland announced today that it has partnered with the Channel One Regional Food Bank, based in Rochester, to push back on recent rhetoric from [state lawmakers downplaying the existence of hunger](#) in Minnesota and ongoing efforts to cut funding for or further [restrict access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), the nation’s most effective hunger-fighting initiative.

As outlined in today’s full-page ad in the Rochester Post Bulletin, titled “Start Seeing Hunger”, nearly 50,000 Minnesotans in Channel One’s 13-county service area in Minnesota are living in poverty and are at risk of going hungry at any given time. Following [state](#) and [national](#) trends, Channel One is now serving more members of the community than ever before.

These steep increases in hunger rates are being driven by a combination of persistently high food prices and the sunsetting of COVID-era federal food supports, which is why Second Harvest Heartland and Channel One are [advocating at the state level](#) for additional investments in proven hunger-fighting initiatives like the Farm to Food Shelf program and prepared meal programs such as the innovative Kitchen Coalition network.

*“We welcome the conversation about hunger in Minnesota,” said Allison O’Toole, CEO of Second Harvest Heartland, “but we cannot stand by while elected leaders at any level spread misinformation about who is going hungry in Minnesota and why. I hope our ‘Start Seeing Hunger’ ad increases awareness of hunger in our communities and inspires more Minnesotans to become hunger fighters – whether by supporting their local food shelves or by talking to their elected officials about the need to show up for our neighbors in need. We’re all in this together.”*

Second Harvest Heartland is one of the country’s largest food banks, providing 94% of the food distributed through a network of more than 900 food shelves and program partners throughout its 41-county service area in Minnesota. Channel One Regional Food Bank operates the state’s second-largest food shelf and distributes food throughout 13 counties in Southeastern Minnesota. Both are members of the Feeding America network of food banks.

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