

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Samantha Solberg, ssolberg@2harvest.org

SECOND HARVEST HEARTLAND PREPARES ADDITIONAL FOOD RESOURCES FOR POSSIBLE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The hunger-relief nonprofit expects to see a surge in demand due to pause in paychecks and benefits

Brooklyn Park, MN – Second Harvest Heartland announced today that it is planning an emergency response to meet the increase in need resulting from the potential shutdown of the federal government at midnight on September 30.

Plans include extra food distributions throughout the month of October, increased supplies of staples like milk, eggs, protein and produce to food shelves, and additional funding for partners to purchase food and other items for communities most impacted by the shutdown.

Families participating in WIC, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, would be among the soonest impacted. An average of 105,000 Minnesotans access WIC benefits each month, and because of the way the program is administered, there could be a lapse in funding as we move deeper into October. An extended shutdown could also affect the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is a critical support system for more than 400,000 Minnesotans facing food insecurity.

“The fact that this shutdown is looming at a time when so many Minnesotans are struggling to make ends meet is especially frustrating,” says Allison O’Toole, CEO of Second Harvest Heartland. “Our food shelf partners and our own warehouse teams have witnessed record-high levels of need for the past several months due to changes to emergency benefits, inflation and ongoing volatility in gas and grocery prices.”

Food shelves around the state are bracing for a surge in need during a time when they’re already operating at capacity, with food shelf visits trending higher in 2023 than in 2022 – the worst year on record.

“Second Harvest Heartland and our partners are here to support the community in moments like this, but we can’t do it alone,” adds O’Toole. “We encourage Minnesotans to reach out to their legislators and explain how a shutdown would impact their communities.”

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