



2020 Impact Report



**YOU PROVIDED
9,841,038 MEALS!**

Food for today. Change for tomorrow.

You are Our Silver Lining

2020. What a year.

When COVID cases started to rise in Minnesota and a state lockdown was issued, The Food Group was recognized as an essential service. We were laser-focused on getting food to those who needed it most, quickly and safely. So much was uncertain – how long would the pandemic last, how high would hunger rise, how many people could we help?

In the face of so many challenges, you stepped up to meet the moment.

Then in late May, George Floyd's tragic death highlighted long-standing racial disparities in our community. The uprising that followed dramatically changed the food landscape again. More folks were without access to groceries, more people were out of work. Could we rise to yet another challenge? **With your generosity, we did.** Your support helped us partner with community groups to coordinate culturally connected emergency food distributions and **give away more nutritious food than we have in the history of our organization.**

While there have been so many things to grieve this year, **I continue to be reminded of the strength of our community and to be inspired by our frontline staff.** Facing odds that looked insurmountable, we came together to take care of one another. **In times where things felt impossible, we did something essential – we fed our neighbors.**

You are the silver lining of a truly unparalleled year.

I also acknowledge that you have your own story of the past year's adversities and triumphs and I hope that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy.

There is much work to do in the months ahead, and **I am grateful for your trust and partnership** as we continue to create a stronger community going forward, knowing the power of what happens when we care for each other.

With gratitude,



Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director



Current Leadership

Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director

Tom Mercer
Director of Operations

Ho Nguyen
Director of Programs

Emily Eddy White
Director of Development
and Marketing

Yatta Wehee
Human Resources and
Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion Manager

Board of Directors

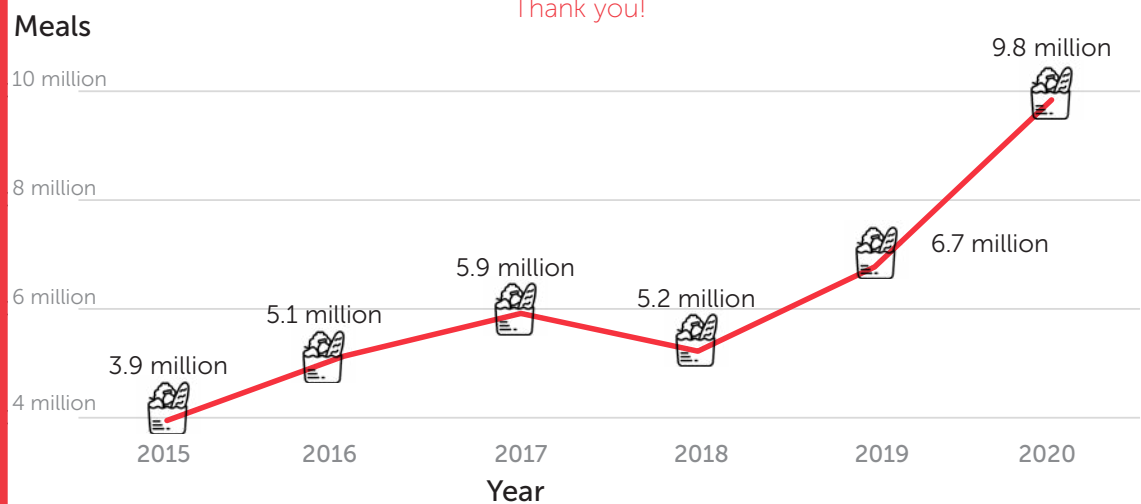
Thank you to these individuals who served on the board between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020

Bob LaBombard, Chair
Barb Hilbert
Kurt Johansen
Vani Karun
Jay Kim
Jennifer Marso
Jenny Mcaab
Annette Miller
Aimee Pappenfus
Sook Jin Ong
Susan Sheely
Dan Tilsen

Measuring Your Impact

Your generosity in response to the surging need for emergency food in 2020 is shown in this graph. **You provided more meals to the community in a single year than ever before.**

Thank you!



Front:: Food shelf participants and staff at Interfaith Outreach greet one another with an elbow bump. All of The Food Group's partners have seen dramatic changes this past year.

Fighting hunger. Nourishing our community.



Who We Are

The Food Group is a local nonprofit focused on using nutritious food to strengthen community. For more than 40 years we have worked to provide good foods to those who need it most in our community. We work at the intersection of food access, equity, and nutrition issues related to food and hunger in 30 counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

What We Do

The Food Group works on both ends of the food system from production to distribution. Working towards building a stronger and healthier community for everyone, **we focus on breaking down barriers to growing good food locally and breaking down barriers to getting good food to those who need it most.** Our programs include giving food, selling food, and growing food:

Hunger Relief: Food Shelf Support

Getting good food to those who need it most. We partner with a network of more than 265 food shelves and meal programs to offer distribution of donated, fresh, and purchased food.

Affordable Retail: Fare For All & Twin Cities Mobile Market

Making food more affordable and accessible. We operate a traveling nutritious grocery store, which makes stops at distribution sites across the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota to offer fresh produce, quality meats, and groceries.

Growing Food: Big River Farms

Partnering with emerging farmers to grow food. We operate a 150 acre organic farm with sustainable agriculture education and land access for nontraditional farmers who learn to provide food for themselves and their communities.

2020 Hunger Fighting Statistics & Impact Stories



The Food Group delivers local products such as wild rice and tea from Red Lake Nation to our food shelf and meal program partners.



Kurt (right) celebrates 20 years as a driver with The Food Group. He takes a quick moment to pose with Neighborhood House's Food Market Assistant, Chris.



Every week, The Food Group partnered with Holy Trinity in response to loss of grocery stores as a result of the murder of George Floyd.

provided **9,841,038** meals – up **3 million** meals from last year

You provided more nutritious food to the community than ever before!

The rapid, dramatic increase in need at the onset of the pandemic required the delivery of approximately 50% more than the usual amount of food over the previous year to our food shelf and meal program partners for the first few months—all requiring new measures to keep volunteers, staff and recipients safe.

“ ”

The emergency COVID funding helped tremendously to meet the increased need and gave us the capacity to offer culturally specific items. Your support...was particularly helpful as we hosted pop-up programs for some of our immigrant friends and neighbors who struggled to find access or to participate in regular food programs.”

- Shawn Morrison, Executive Director
Good in the 'Hood, Minneapolis

delivered to **265** food shelf & meal program partners

You delivered **free staple foods** and **culturally connected foods** to food shelves and meal programs, allowing our partners flexibility to use their limited funds for hygiene products such as diapers and sanitizing supplies, or bigger purchases such as new freezers and coolers.

“ ”

It has been scary to think of those that have never needed help, now having to get help. It was wonderful to be able to get some of your amazing culturally specific items! And your produce is the best quality so to have the funds [from donors] to be able to get the high-quality items you offer was a blessing!

-Heather Kliever, Executive Director
CAER Food Shelf, Elk River



Families came together to volunteer at Youth and Family Circle. They packed and delivered emergency food boxes with foods familiar to East African dishes.

offered **4x more** culturally connected food

You greatly increased the amount of culturally familiar foods distributed to the community. **More than 13,000 boxes of culturally relevant foods reached families between July and September.**



COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted the Latino community, both economically and health-wise. We are serving more than 400 households per week (a 300% increase over last year) via curbside pick-up, delivery, and pop-up events. **Funding from The Food Group donors allowed us the financial and logistical ability to respond to increased needs. Access to an increased variety of food, including more culturally specific food, is a tremendous benefit to our participants who can now access healthy food that aligns with their typical diet and preferences.** This increases our ability to provide more individualized support which creates a dignified and more enjoyable experience for participants. We so appreciate this support!

-Faith Clark, Development Officer
 CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio), St. Paul



Partner Highlight

New Oil Christian Center

New Oil Christian Center in the Camden neighborhood of Minneapolis is a new partner since 2020. **Pastor Bruce Carpenter and his wife Brenda are leading the small congregation that prepared and provided 3,000 meals each week**, mostly to homeless adults and families in temporary shelter, and to seniors with medical conditions or mobility challenges.

Learning they could get fresh farm food at no charge through partnership with The Food Group and Big River Farms was “a match made in heaven,” according to Bruce. Volunteers used the church’s commercial-grade kitchen to prepare meals that for delivery to distribution sites on their “Soul Good” food trailer.



We deliver hot, well-balanced meals so our guests can eat healthy food...We so appreciate these deliveries from the farm...And our volunteer cooks are trying new foods and finding new recipes like sautéed turnip greens!

-Pastor Bruce and Brenda Carpenter
 New Oil Christian Center, Minneapolis



Farmer Highlight

Wa Kou Hang

2020 was a good growing year with a bountiful harvest. Farmer Wa Kou Hang was able to grow a lot of food that was purchased by your donations to deliver to food shelves.



Organic produce should be affordable and cheaper than conventional produce because we manage soil fertility naturally. Supporting good health is one of our core operating farm business principles. I am happy to be part of organic producers who can participate in Farm to Food Shelf. Our produce reaches low-income families who have limited access to quality organic produce.

*-Wa Kou Hang, Big River Farms Farmer
Twin Cities Green Farm, St. Paul*

Meet more Farmers at Big River Farms at www.bigriverfarms.org



After three years with Big River Farms, Farmers Choua and Xiou have purchased their own farmland with their four boys.

farmers completed **1,621** education hours with Big River Farms



Business Owners and Farmers from Mary Dirty Face Farm, Big River Farms, and Mhonpaj's Garden at the Emerging Farmers Conference (pre-pandemic).

380 people attended the Emerging Farmers Conference



The Food Group's fresh produce team, gleans (rescues) dill from Dream of Wild Health to deliver to a local meal program.



The Food Group sources from a variety of local farmers, producers and processors for all or our programs, from food shelf support to affordable retail.

delivered **2,100,000** pounds of fresh produce to families – an all-time high!

You provided 2.1 million pounds of fresh produce to the community (up 20% from 2019). This included the high-quality, organic fruits and vegetables grown by family farmers at Big River Farms. Many of these items were culturally familiar foods to Hmong, West African, Latin-American and other BIPOC families.

You supported new farmers and bridged the market disruption of the pandemic by purchasing produce grown at Big River Farms for free distribution to families, through our partner food shelves.



The Food Group's donors greatly increased the amount of culturally relevant food and produce we could offer! We received so much produce from Big River Farms and other farms in your network. **I have been so impressed by your focus on community, connecting farmers to urban food shelves, and doing it while talking about the systems that create hunger in our communities.**

-Ethan Neal, Food Systems Manager
Pillsbury United Communities, Minneapolis

purchased **4x more** locally sourced food

In 2020 your donations supported a growing number of partnerships with local food producers, including small-scale, family-owned and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color)-owned businesses, which are often excluded from larger corporate food sourcing networks.

You made it possible to purchase more local foods and offer the culturally connected foods we offer to food shelves.

Who Do We Source From Locally?

Tofu from MinnTofu, tortillas from Tortilleria La Perla, wild rice from Red Lake Nation Foods, walleye from Red Lake Nation Fishery, bison from Eichten's Bison, cheese from Gilman Cheese, ground beef from New Geneva Meats, eggs from Larry Shultz Organic Farm, dried mushrooms from Forest Mushrooms, maple syrup from Wild Country Maple Products, produce from farmers at Big River Farms, and more!

Your Crisis Response Reached Thousands



Fiscal year 2020 began October 1, 2019, when hunger in our state had been at heightened levels for more than a decade. By the middle of March 2020, we were in a full-blown **global pandemic** known as COVID-19.

A **second crisis** developed in June as community unrest in response to the murder of George Floyd resulted in whole neighborhoods losing access to their daily sources of food—retailers, restaurants, fresh markets, and convenience stores.

Hunger, food insecurity, and barriers to food access spiked alarmingly as a result.

Your outpouring of financial support made it possible to **respond quickly and nimbly to the dramatic increase in need**. Thanks to you, we were able to use our resources to provide food through new and innovative hunger relief strategies. These included;

- **Safe delivery of food directly to the doors of senior apartment residents,**
- **Drive-through distributions of food in multiple locations in the Twin Cities, suburbs and greater Minnesota,**
- **Community-based pop-up food distributions in collaboration with neighborhood agencies, especially in underserved communities. These events took place at parks, churches, and wherever we could safely host outdoor, walk-up events,**
- **Working with local and indigenous food producers and growers to provide culturally familiar foods to meet a variety of dietary needs.**

We hosted or supported five to eight distributions per week from June through September, reaching tens of thousands of people. The emergency relief you provided was available to any and all who needed help bridging the food gap brought on by the stressful events of 2020.

organized **29** emergency food distributions



fought hunger with **40** new emergency food partners



At a crisis response event hosted in our warehouse, volunteers packed 4,200 essential food boxes, providing 52,500 meals.

volunteers generously donated **15,476** hours to feed our community

We experienced a loss of volunteer hours (down 35.4% from 2019) due to the logistical challenges of the pandemic. We reworked our traditional warehouse model by cutting the team size from 30 to 10 at time and added more shifts per day to keep the pipelines of deliveries to our partner agencies on track. Many of our loyal volunteers had to step back because of age and health concerns, and new individuals took their place.

“ ”

Many tears are shed, hugs given, and anxiety expressed at our distribution days. [At the emergency food distributions, families] are treated with dignity and respect by being served produce that rivals any co-op or farmer’s market. **Every Tuesday like clockwork, Mark (a driver for The Food Group) drives up and unloads exceptional produce. This resulted in us being able to serve over 10,555 people this year.**

-Mark-Peter Lundquist,
Vice President for Farm & Nutrition
Urban Ventures Leadership Foundation, Minneapolis



Program Highlight

Twin Cities Mobile Market — new program —

Formerly a program of The Wilder Foundation, Twin Cities Mobile Market joined The Food Group in March 2020. **Twin Cities Mobile Market is a grocery store on a bus that brings affordable foods—such as fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy and grains—directly to Twin Cities neighborhoods that lack nearby grocery stores or food shelves.**

The onset of the pandemic in early 2020 required the program to rise to the challenge and pivot to support the delivery of free food for COVID-19 relief to partner sites located around the Twin Cities. We plan to relaunch the buses in late 2021.

“ ”

I take two buses to get to the grocery store. There’s nothing here in this area. We appreciate the mobile market here like you wouldn’t believe.

-Tammi, Twin Cities Mobile Market Customer

Learn more at www.twincitiesmobilemarket.org

Thank You Corporate & Foundation Supporters!

The Food Group received exceptional support this year from the following generous foundations and businesses, with many supporting COVID-19 relief and our emergency crisis response.



Beverly
Foundation



Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA



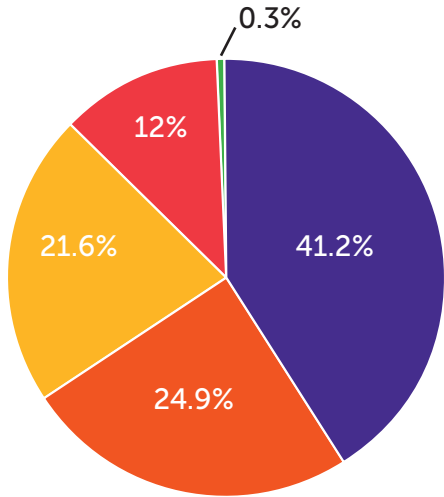
Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® of Minnesota and Blue Plus® are nonprofit independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



2020 Financials (Audited)

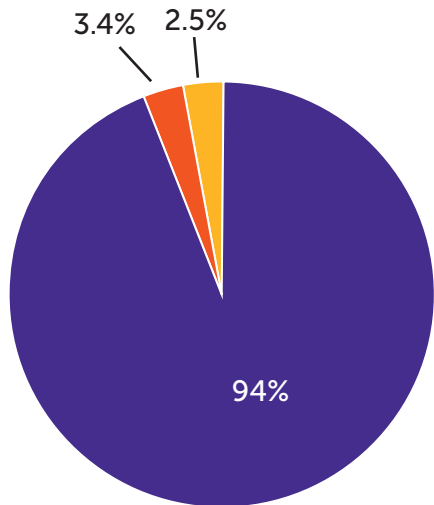
October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020

Income & Expenses



Revenue

In-Kind Contributions	\$7,667,085
Program Revenue	4,631,921
Financial Contributions	4,018,002
Government Grants	2,237,177
United Way	60,191
Special Events	8
Other	-18,494*
Total Support & Revenue	\$18,595,890**



Expenses

Programs	\$17,070,293
Fundraising	622,755
Administrative	460,467
Total Expenses	\$18,153,515

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash	\$1,046,055
Investments	15,332
Accounts Receivable	169,192
Grants Receivable	434,104
Prepaid Expense	172,396
Inventory	1,443,774
Total Current Assets	\$3,280,853

Property & Equipment - Net	\$3,585,739
Total Assets	\$6,866,592

Liabilities

Current	\$580,893
Long-term	1,519,896
Total Liabilities	\$2,100,789

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$4,485,450
Temporarily Restricted	280,353
Total Net Assets	4,765,803
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$6,866,592

*The negative amount for other revenue listed is disposal of some fixed assets.

**FY2020 ended with a surplus. This was driven by capital grant funds received for a truck, TEFAP food received in excess of distributed, and restricted grant funds released from FY2020.



