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The Food Group
8501 54th Avenue North
New Hope, MN 55428
763-450-3860
info@thefoodgroupmn.org
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Pictured on this page are volunteers supporting our food bank and affordable grocery programs.

2021 Community Impact Report
**2021 Impact**

Total meals provided in 2021: **8,413,702**
An increase of 1.65 million from 2019

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**Increased pounds of culturally connected foods distributed to the community**

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280

1,822,765 Pounds of fresh produce to families

**2021 Impact**

2020-2021

- Aimee Pappenfus, Chair
- Jennifer Marso, Chair
- Naima Dhore
- Bridget Hayden
- Kurt Johansen
- Vani Karun
- Jenny McAab
- Keith Narr
- Sharnym Phipps
- Leah Porter
- Dave Schmiechen
- Ramon Sontolke
- Daniel Tilsen

**Board of Directors**

Thank you to these individuals who served on the board between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021

**2021 Impact**

- In-Kind Contributions $6,755,055
- Financial Contributions $4,023,791
- United Way $47,987
- Government Grants $2,804,121
- Program Revenue $4,344,080
- Total Support & Revenue $18,000,676

**Income & Expenses**

Total expenses $17,562,192*

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** $6,336,092

**Audited Financials, Fiscal Year 2021**

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- Total Liabilities $1,131,805

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- Temporarily Restricted $733,000
- Total Net Assets $5,204,287

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*FY2021 ended with a surplus. This was driven by multi-year funding of both grants and contracts restricted for programming in FY2022.
Thank you for all the ways you bring the vision of a hunger-free community into existence. Your kindness and generosity remove barriers to good food and create a stronger, healthier community.

Here are a few comments from donors like you:

“I want to work on innovative ways to end hunger by working with partner organizations (both public and private). I want to work with hunger insecure people in solidarity—not to tell them what they want, but to partner with them to eliminate the need.”

“I was a hungry kid and will continue to help others by giving what I can.”

“I have never experienced hunger or felt what it is like to not know where my next meal will come from. I want everyone to have access to nutritious food in a cost-effective way. My donation to The Food Group specifically provides for my community and our state. That is important to me.”

Medica is just one example from our expansive network of partners who have joined forces in advocating for equity in our food system. Thank you to all our partners, both new and longstanding, for the important part you play in creating change in your community!

Dear Hunger Relief Partners,

As I reflect on The Food Group’s community impact in 2021, I am struck with the magnitude of need, the ongoing effects of the pandemic, the trauma and fatigue in our community, but also the resilience and generosity of our participants, partners, volunteers, and donors.

In the face of ongoing challenges, you continue to give generously to ensure good food gets to those who need it most. You allow our programs to stay nimble and meet the ever-changing food needs of our neighbors.

Because of you, we can:
• prioritize healthy, local, and culturally connected foods,
• respond to urgent and persistent needs as they happen,
• deepen our commitment to racial justice, and
• work in collaboration with numerous partners to build a more equitable food system.

This report shares highlights of your impact in 2021 and looks ahead to our vision for 2022 and beyond. We offer a few stories as examples of how you empowered and continue to inspire our value-centered work to make a difference last year, today, and into the future.

There is more work to do. So many things remain uncertain. Many of the public programs developed to support low-income families through the worst of the pandemic are sunsetting. Nutrition needs remain high, exacerbated by rising food costs. The racial inequities that impact food access in our region must be tackled head on.

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Thank you for making it all possible.

With gratitude,
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Executive Director

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Bridging the nutrition gap

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“Food is at the center of who we all are. I don’t want to just end hunger, I want people to eat nutrient dense food that nourishes their bodies and minds and also heals the land.”

-KaZoua Berry, Big River Farms Program Manager (pictured at left)

Creating an inclusive food system

Tiffany LaShae was a farmer, educator, activist, visionary, and beekeeper. In her address, she said, “We live under a system of food apartheid, where people of color are disproportionately impacted by lack of access to nourishing, culturally uplifting foods.”

How do we create a more just food system? That question touches every aspect of our work—from emergency food distribution to access to quality retail food, to growing and gleaning food. Here is one example of how working toward “systems change for justice” was woven into our work by the keynote speaker at the 2021 Emerging Farmers Conference, hosted by Big River Farms.

Tiffany shared her experiences of learning and working to grow food responsibly while honoring Indigenous and Black agriculture. She relates to a global network of farmers working in food justice and food sovereignty and has done hands-on work with communities in the U.S. and Africa.

Her vision is to “create a system that reflects the voices of all farmers.” She encouraged the 128 virtual conference attendees to rebuild or create a food system that represents their voices, while farming on Dakota land.

Dynamic response to evolving needs

Tiffany LaShae was the keynote presenter at the 2021 Emerging Farmers Conference.

In 2022 Tiffany will be managing a demonstration plot at Big River Farms to use as an educational platform to teach farmers how to use tools and techniques to farm regeneratively and steward the land. She will be working with an apprentice, and mentoring farmers at Big River Farms.

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Over 2021, we engaged with our community through a series of Intentional Social Interaction events with agency partners, hosted the first Re-Rooting the Emerging Farmers Conference, and listened to the community through multiple virtual events, focus groups, listening sessions, and shared meals. We use community voice to shape our programming.

We listened and adapted and are proud to share some of our key community-led accomplishments in 2021, made possible by your support and investment. (See sidebar for examples.)

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Awlyahsi-yó (awl-yah-SEE-yo) is a partnership between two young farmers, Mallory and Lucas. “We started farming together to honor the seeds we each have grown and been given. Our collection includes more than 100 different varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers!” Awlyahsi-yó is part of The Food Group’s Big River Farms.

Mallory says, “Our mission is to feed people.” Farm-to-table food can be expensive, which leaves behind so many people. “People without the financial means to pay for expensive organic produce still deserve fresh, nutritious food, including many varieties of Indigenous corn, beans, and squash,” she says.

Lucas notes, “With the increased demand at local food shelves over the past couple years, the need is more present than ever.” Awlyahsi-yó offers Farm to Food Bank shares to purchase produce from the farm at a fair price that is then provided at no cost to folks who need it most. “Our goal is to distribute half of our farm’s harvest to local food banks for people who have been excluded from the farm-to-table movement for economic reasons.”

“Especially during the current time of uncertainty, it is wonderful to reconnect with the earth and all it can produce. I am grateful to volunteer with an organization which provides quality agricultural opportunities to those who are underrepresented in the production and distribution of nutritious, fresh, delicious foods.” — Ann Hill, Big River Farms CSA Volunteer

“Good hearts” share the harvest

By purchasing from local and BIPOC producers, The Food Group is working to restore justice to an unbalanced food system. Our local communities and economies thrive, and we break down barriers to provide nutritious foods to those who need them the most.

Taking feedback from our partners and the community, we enhanced our sourcing to include foods grown right here in Minnesota. Fare for All, our cooperative grocery program, now sells a package containing all locally made meats. It’s become one of the most popular items ever sold through the program in its thirty 35 years of operation.

“Government funding, foundation and corporate support, and generous giving from individuals are what make it possible to purchase local foods and support BIPOC producers and offer the culturally connected foods we provide to food shelves.”

-Snow Aukema, Sourcing Manager

Every time The Food Group sources and supplies a food product, it’s an opportunity for us to demonstrate our value of equity. Our inventory and distribution of culturally connected foods and our partnerships with local and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) producers continue to grow each year. We source from growers and producers who have historically been intentionally cut out from the food system. We are reaching out to them. Who we partner with and purchase from makes a difference.

Volunteers pause for a photo after collecting fresh food donated through the Minneapolis Farmers Market to distribute to food shelves.
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Your generosity

• Provided 150,000 free meals between April and September to our Emerging Partners.
• Provided capacity building workshops and stipends to a cohort of nine Emerging Partners to learn and practice cultural competency, community engagement, and leadership skills.
• Featured speakers and hosts from the Black and Indigenous community to appeal to a more diverse audience at the Emerging Farmers Conference.

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Executive Director

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