



HUNGER CONNECTION

Investing in Wisconsin Agriculture

Feeding Families in Need Across the State



Hunger Task Force Receives Wisconsin Grant To Support Statewide Food Purchases



Mosinee Pantry Expands Services Through Hunger Relief Federation Support



Build Your Legacy Through Planned Giving and Keep Food Free & Local

A Letter from the CEO



“As costs of living continue to rise, more households are struggling to make ends meet and are looking for a little help to get by. In these challenging times, we’re here to ensure that when people seek help, they find fresh, healthy options.”

- Matt King, CEO

As we enter a new season, I'm proud to highlight our strategic impact across Wisconsin. Over the past several years, we've expanded our statewide network to include nearly 250 food assistance organizations and over 400 service points to ensure families throughout the state can access fresh, nutritious foods. On a monthly basis, we are now serving nearly 60,000 people through our local network, reflecting the growing need in our Milwaukee community. Across Wisconsin, countless additional kids, families and older adults are supported through partner organizations and further reached through our outreach and advocacy efforts.

As costs of living continue to rise, more households are struggling to make ends meet and are looking for a little help to get by. In these challenging times, we're here to ensure that when people seek help, they find fresh, healthy options. We're excited to feature our support of Community Center of Hope, a Hunger Relief Federation partner serving Marathon County, whose grocery-like pantry honors the dignity of those served (Read more on page 3!).

At the heart of our statewide work is Wisconsin's agricultural heritage. Beyond produce grown at our farm, we provide fresh dairy, meats and more that are sourced from Wisconsin businesses. Our investments—through *Connecting Farms to Families* and the Farm—help these small farms and producers expand their markets. Supporting them is good for the local economy and part of our legacy. Speaking of legacy, I invite you as a partner in our Free & Local mission to join the Hunger Task Force Legacy Society. Members have made intentional commitments to support Hunger Task Force through their wills and estate planning. Together, we ensure that our mission will continue for generations to come. You'll find more information in this issue about how to connect with our knowledgeable staff to make this happen in a way that works best for you.

As always, thank you for your support and for standing with us in our work to end hunger.

With gratitude,

Matt King, CEO

**Voices
Against
Hunger**



HUNGER TASK FORCE

Wisconsin State Legislature Passes Bill to Strengthen FoodShare for 700,00 Wisconsinites

Advocacy works! Because you made your voice heard, Assembly Bill 180 passed the Wisconsin State Legislature, strengthening FoodShare (SNAP) and supporting nearly 700,00 Wisconsinites including 270,000 kids. This legislation was officially signed into law by Governor Tony Evers at the end of March. The bill allocates \$72 million to strengthen the FoodShare program following federal changes shifting administrative costs to states.

This progress reflects a coordinated advocacy and outreach effort through Voices Against Hunger, bringing together neighbors, partners and advocates to speak up for policies that help families access the food they need.

A huge thank you to everyone who made calls, sent messages and reached out to policymakers across the state. Your advocacy made a difference. If you're looking to do more, join Voices Against Hunger to stay informed and take part in future advocacy efforts: www.HungerTaskForce.org/voices.



**Hunger Relief Federation
Partner Feature:**

Community Center of Hope

“In our community, and many communities, we’re seeing more people seeking food assistance who don’t meet the poverty threshold on paper.”

- Amy Bergstrom, director of Community Center of Hope

Hunger Task Force is the founding member of the Hunger Relief Federation, a statewide network of independent food banks, food pantries and Tribal Nations working together to strengthen hunger relief efforts across Wisconsin. A newer member in Marathon County, Community Center of Hope joined the Federation in 2024 to help strengthen the pantry’s ability to advocate for clients and feed their Mosinee community.

“I think I learn more about the goings on in the hunger relief space from my connections in the Hunger Relief Federation than any other place,” shared Amy Bergstrom, director of Community Center of Hope.

Through the Hunger Relief Federation, Community Center of Hope was connected with funding

opportunities to increase the capacity for the food pantry to serve its clients. Through a grant, the pantry purchased shopping carts to make the experience at the pantry feel similarly to one at a grocery store – where clients select the items that meet their taste and dietary preferences and put them in their cart.

Additionally, the pantry received shelving to store additional nonperishable food and pantry supplies.

Community Center of Hope facilitates an average of 500 food requests per month. “In our community, and many communities, we’re seeing more people seeking food assistance who don’t meet the poverty threshold on paper,” says Amy.

“Budgets are really tight right now. A recent guest we served is a single mother working full-time, raising three children at home while navigating inconsistent child support. She was behind on bills trying to manage all household expenses. Our pantry helped her stock up on food to feed her family over the Christmas holiday.”

Amy and her volunteer team create a haven for people to get food support, share their stories and feel cared for during times of uncertainty.



For more information about the Hunger Relief Federation, which connects anti-hunger advocate partners throughout the state to combat hunger region-by-region, visit www.HungerTaskForce.org/federation.



Hunger Task Force Expands Access to Fresh Food



As the growing season begins, rows at the Hunger Task Force Farm will soon be planted with fresh fruits and vegetables for families across Milwaukee. The Farm plays a central role in Hunger Task Force's commitment to expanding access to nutritious, locally grown food, intentionally growing and distributing fresh produce to reduce barriers and ensure families have consistent access to familiar options. Each year, it produces nearly half a million pounds of culturally diverse produce that is

distributed free of charge through our network of food pantries, meal sites and shelters.

With careful planning already underway, farmers began seeding more than 100,000 plants in the greenhouse back in March. They are taking root in trays and will be



transplanted into the fields throughout May. That same forward-looking approach is already delivering results, as this month marks the first harvest of lettuce grown in hoop houses over the winter.

This year, The Farm is evolving growing strategies that improve yield, reduce loss and better meet community need. The strategies include trialing garlic and shifting summer production of melon into our hoop houses; the controlled environment helps manage temperature, moisture and pest pressure. At the same time, real-time feedback from pantry partners and community members informs decisions throughout the growing season, making the Farm Plan more responsive and adaptive while ensuring resources are used effectively to grow crops that families will eat and enjoy.

While The Farm is a vital source of fresh food, it is only one part of a broader strategy to expand access across Wisconsin.



Amplifying Access to Local Produce

In addition to statewide efforts, Hunger Task Force continues to deepen its investment in local agriculture through the Farm to Food Bank Fund.

This 100% community-supported fund was created in response to the federal government's termination of the Local Food Purchase Assistance Program. Through this fund, Hunger Task Force purchases fresh produce directly from local and minority-owned farms to supplement what is grown at The Farm. These fruits and vegetables are intentionally selected to reflect the diverse cultural and dietary preferences of the communities we serve.

To date, Hunger Task Force has purchased over \$600,000 of Wisconsin grown food to help ensure a wider variety of fresh options are available throughout our network.



Investing in Wisconsin Agriculture



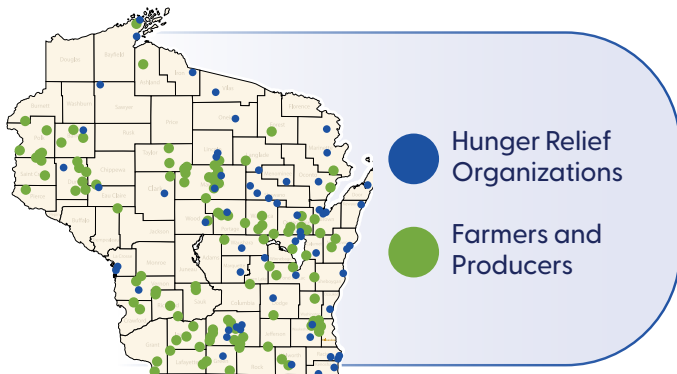
“Having a reliable buyer has given us the confidence to expand our production and grow in ways we wouldn’t otherwise be able to.”

- Ying Lo of GreenGold Gardens

Through the newly launched *Connecting Farms to Families* program, Hunger Task Force is working with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative to purchase food directly from small and mid-sized farmers across the state. Supported by a \$2.5 million grant from DATCP, the program is part of a broader statewide initiative designed to strengthen local agriculture while increasing the amount of fresh, Wisconsin-grown food available to families in need.

Through this effort, Hunger Task Force is building a statewide network that connects local agriculture directly to hunger relief partners. Today, more than 114 Wisconsin producers are engaged and growing, including family farms, small growers, organic producers, sheep and beef farmers, fisheries and mid-sized orchards. Working in partnership with the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative as a central coordinating and distribution partner, Wisconsin dairy, animal protein and fresh produce are reaching nearly 60 hunger relief organizations across the state each week.

This is a win-win, providing a stable and reliable market for farmers and producers while ensuring hunger relief organizations like ours have consistent access to healthy, culturally familiar foods to nourish our community. Built on years of statewide collaboration and advocacy, this model strengthens local agriculture, expands distribution networks and increases access to fresh food for families and individuals throughout Wisconsin.



A Purposeful Commitment to Fresh Options

Together, the Hunger Task Force Farm, *Connecting Farms to Families* and the Farm to Food Bank Fund represent a unified approach to increasing access to fresh and local food. By growing, purchasing and distributing food through multiple channels, Hunger Task Force is building a stronger, more resilient food system that supports Wisconsin farmers while ensuring families have access to the healthy foods they need and deserve.



Support from our community makes it possible to grow, source and distribute fresh, nutritious food to families in need across our network. Make an impact today at www.HungerTaskForce.org/donate.

Planned Giving Provides a Growing Gift to End Hunger



Making a planned gift is a meaningful and impactful way to carry your values forward and support Hunger Task Force's Free & Local mission to build a future where everyone has access to healthy food. Donors who have included Hunger Task Force in their estate plans through a will, trust or beneficiary designation have the option to be recognized as members of our Legacy Society and enjoy exclusive benefits. By sharing your intentions, you allow us to celebrate your commitment today and honor your legacy of providing healthy food for all.

"My late wife, Ginny, and I always believed it's not important how much you accumulate in your lifetime, but what is important is what you do with what you have accumulated."

- J. Michael McBride, Legacy Society Member

Your gift helps ensure that everyone in our community can access healthy food with dignity, while also strengthening our long-term sustainability. We do this by investing in pivotal access and advocacy programs and growing our endowment, which diversifies revenue streams and allows us to extend the impact of your generosity.

Contact Kim Muench, Director of Development at kim.muench@hungertaskforce.org or visit www.HungerTaskForce.org/legacy for more information.

Earlier this year, Hunger Task Force welcomed two Major Gift Officers, Allen Castillo and Cassidy Skorija. Both Allen and Cassidy are responsible for growing, developing and stewarding Hunger Task Force's individual donor base and leading planned giving efforts.

Meet Allen

To me, as a Filipino American, food has always been more than just fuel. It's how community is built and how love is expressed. Being part of the Hunger Task Force team, on which that same sense of care shows up through ensuring our community can access healthy food with dignity, feels deeply personal. The organization's commitment to both feeding those in need today and advocating for the conditions that prevent hunger in the future reflects the kind of impact I believe in.

Having spent nearly five years at Hunger Task Force working in our resource centers and on food distributions, I've seen the impact of the work up close and what it means to the community we serve. Now, in this role, I'm excited to build relationships with the donors who support it and share what I've experienced along the way. I'm grateful for the opportunity to stay connected to the mission in a new capacity and serve as a resource to those who care deeply about this work.



Meet Cassidy

Before joining Hunger Task Force I knew a little about the organization's impact, but I didn't realize just how far the day-to-day work reaches. Learning how the team fights hunger today by increasing access to nutritious food and works to end future hunger through advocacy efforts has made me proud to be part of a team dedicated to supporting food programs based on community needs throughout the state. I deeply admire Hunger Task Force's commitment to ensuring everyone in our community can access healthy, culturally responsive food with dignity, equity and compassion.

In my role as a Major Gifts Officer, I'm excited to foster relationships with the generous donors who make our work possible and to learn more about the policies shaping hunger in Milwaukee and beyond. Most of all, I look forward to sharing powerful stories of impact and collaborating with a passionate team to help increase support of Hunger Task Force's vital programs.



Event Highlights & Memorable Moments



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Hunger Task Force believes that every person has a right to healthy food obtained with dignity. We work to prevent hunger and malnutrition by providing food to people in need today and by promoting social policies to achieve a hunger free community tomorrow.

OUR CORE VALUES

DIGNITY | JUSTICE | EQUITY
COMPASSION | STEWARDSHIP

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1. Hunger Task Force joined the Milwaukee Bucks, Milwaukee Public Schools and No Kid Hungry to celebrate National School Breakfast Week and recognize the school nutrition professionals who help students start their day ready to learn.
2. Thanks to the owners and shoppers at Outpost Natural Foods Co-op, this year's Buy A Bag fundraiser raised a record-breaking \$172,342. Since 1999, Outpost owners and shoppers have helped provide nearly \$3M worth of food through the Buy A Bag program.
3. Fue Xiong, Associate Community Engagement and Outreach Manager at Hunger Task Force, was honored at Milwaukee's Hmong New Year Celebration with the 'Bridging the Gap' Award! This recognition celebrates individuals who foster connection and unity within the Hmong community and beyond.
4. Hunger Task Force hosted a UW Extension Horticulture Program "Making the Cut" pruning workshop at the Hunger Task Force Farm where participants learned essential fruit tree care through expert instruction and hands-on practice in our Hidden Oaks orchard.
5. Match Madness was a slam dunk success! Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, matching pool donors and our ambassador on the court, NBA Superstar Myles Turner, over \$500,000 was raised to help feed kids, families and older adults across Wisconsin.



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Join Voices Against Hunger!

Voices Against Hunger, Hunger Task Force's citizen advocacy group, is a powerful force for change. By advocating together, Wisconsinites can help shape policies that prevent hunger and expand access to nutritious food for kids, families and older adults.

Members stay informed of the most pressing issues impacting statewide hunger and receive timely updates on legislation at both the state and federal level. Complex policy topics are broken down into clear, actionable steps, making it easy to get involved.

As a member, you can:

- ✓ **Contact elected officials on key anti-hunger issues**
- ✓ **Submit testimony or share your story to influence policy**
- ✓ **Participate in advocacy campaigns at the state and federal level**

Looking ahead, Voices Against Hunger will play an important role in keeping members informed about upcoming federal legislation including the Farm Bill. This major piece of legislation determines funding and policy for the nutrition programs Hunger Task Force administers to help feed families across Wisconsin.

Voices Against Hunger



HUNGER TASK FORCE



Learn more and join
Voices Against Hunger today:
www.HungerTaskForce.org/voices