**PROJECT TITLE: Diverting Unsold Food from Landfills, Reducing Greenhouse Gases**

**I. PROJECT STATEMENT**

Through this project, Second Harvest Heartland will:

* Reduce greenhouse gases and
* Improve air quality

by reducing the amount of food sent to Minnesota landfills.

Through our project, we will collect donations of prepared, ready-to-eat foods and send these items to area food pantries and meal programs. These unsold foods are available for us to collect at corporate cafeterias, restaurants, hotels, catering companies, “hot food” grocery departments, and other food service businesses. Staff members and/or trained volunteers will visit the businesses to pick up the foods, package them appropriately, and deliver them to food pantries and free meal programs.

Without our program, these businesses will send this unsold food to landfills. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s 2013 Statewide Waste Characterization study, food accounts for 17.8% of all waste sent to solid waste facilities in our state. The report notes that the Project Team identified food waste as a top potential diversion opportunity; with 519,400 tons of food waste available for diversion annually.

Our proposed project addresses air quality and climate change in Minnesota by reducing methane emissions. A September 16, 2015 press release from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes, “Food loss and waste is the single largest component of disposed U.S. municipal solid waste, and accounts for a significant portion of U.S. methane emissions, which fuel climate change. This large volume of wasted food is a main contributor to the roughly 18 percent of total U.S. methane emissions that come from landfills. Landfills are the third largest source of methane in the United States.” Analysis from the Boston Consulting Group indicates that our food bank has potential to divert 8 million pounds of prepared, ready-to-eat foods that are available, but not being currently donated, at Minnesota food service businesses each year.

The goal of our project is to improve air quality and reduce climate change impacts through the diversion 160,000 pounds of food from food service partners in the Twin Cities metro area each year. Specifically, grant funds will be utilized to provide for a metro-area Emerging Food Streams Developer to implement this program.

In our program, will train and supervise volunteers to collect and deliver the prepared food donations utilizing an app available on their cell phones—MealConnect. The app was developed by Feeding America, the national network of food banks to which Second Harvest Heartland belongs, to bring efficiency to the donation process.

Our project will take place in the Twin Cities metro area. As an organization, our service area includes 41 counties in southern and western portions of the state including the entirety of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area; and communities including St. Cloud, Mankato, Hutchinson, Marshall, Willmar and Worthington. In future years, we expect to expand our program beyond the Twin Cities to communities throughout our service area.

**II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

**Activity 1: Utilize the skills of an Emerging Food Streams Developer to engage food pantries and meal programs to successfully accept donations of prepared foods.**

**ENRTF BUDGET: $65,000 (or ½ of 1.0 position salary/benefits for each of two years)**

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| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| *1.* ***Identify*** *a large pool of potential food pantries and meal programs for potential program participation.* | *09/30/2020* |
| *2.* ***Select and train*** *12 food pantries and/or meal programs to participate:*   * *Train them to use the MealConnect platform* * *These partners will receive 160,000 pounds of donated food for each of 2 years (320,000 pounds total over 2 years).* | *12/30/2020* |
| *3. To ensure food safety and successful program implementation, provide the following to the 12 food pantries and meal programs:*   * ***Monitoring*** *for program compliance* * ***Technical assistance*** *and* ***support*** | *06/30/2022* |

**Activity 2: Utilize the skills of an Emerging Food Streams Developer to engage corporate cafeterias, restaurants, hotels, catering companies, “hot food” grocery departments, and other food service businesses to successfully donate prepared foods.**

**ENRTF BUDGET: $65,000 (or ½ of 1.0 position salary/benefits for each of two years)**

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| **Outcome** | **Completion Date** |
| *1.* ***Identify*** *a large pool of food-serving businesses for potential program participation.* | *09/30/2020* |
| *2.* ***Select and train*** *20 businesses to participate:*   * *Train them to use the MealConnect platform* * *Teach them to prepare food for donation and ensure its safety and quality* * *These partners will donate 160,000 pounds of food each of 2 years (320,000 pounds total over 2 years.)* | *12/30/2020* |
| *3. To ensure food safety and successful program implementation, provide the following to the 20 businesses:*  *•* ***Monitoring*** *for program compliance*  *•* ***Technical assistance*** *and* ***support*** | *06/30/2022* |

**III. PROJECT PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS:**

**Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Title** | **Affiliation** | **Role** |
| 1. 20 food donors making donations of food through this program. |  |  | Inform Second Harvest Heartland of food available for collection, through MealConnect or by contacting our staff members, and prepare food for collection according to program standards. |
| 2. 12 food pantries and meal programs receiving food donations collected through this program. |  |  | Receive donated food and use it to feed clients. |

**IV. LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

Expansion of our prepared food collection and distribution program has been included in our annual program plans for fiscal year 2019, and will be included in plans for 2020, 2021 and 2022. The strategy was identified as priority for our organization after evaluation from the Boston Consulting Group. The strategy has also been identified as having significant potential for expansion by the Feeding America network of food banks to which we belong. Regarding future funding, the program will be supported through a combination of public and private grants, major gifts, contributions from individuals, cause marketing campaigns, special fundraising events and earned revenue.