



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2021 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2021-448

Proposal Title: Diverting Unsold Food from Landfills, Reducing Greenhouse Gases

Project Manager Information

Name: Rachel Sosnowchik

Organization: Second Harvest Heartland

Office Telephone: () -

Email: arog@2harvest.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: We will collect donations of prepared, ready-to-eat foods in the Metro area and send these items to local food pantries and meal programs. *Tentatively recommended for 2020 funding*

Funds Requested: \$130,000

Proposed Project Completion: 2023-06-30

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Air Quality, Climate Change, and Renewable Energy (E)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): Metro

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): Metro, Central, SW,

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

Without an outlet to divert unsold food, businesses will likely send unused product to landfills. According to the MPCA'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 also addresses air quality and climate change in Minnesota by reducing methane emissions. A September 16, 2015 press release from the U.S. EPA 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% 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.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

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. The agencies that receive these valuable donations all have a Certified Food Manager on staff to ensure food safety.

In our program, we will train and supervise volunteers to collect and deliver the prepared food donations utilizing an app available on their cell phones—MealConnect. MealConnect is an innovative online platform that gives caterers, special event centers, restaurants, corporate cafeterias and other commercial food preparers a convenient, free and safe way to reduce waste and connect surplus meals with food insecure neighbors. 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. Just last year, Meal Connect helped SHH rescue over 309,000 lbs of prepared food.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

The goal of our project is to improve air quality and reduce climate change impacts through the diversion of 160,000 additional pounds of food from food service partners in the Twin Cities metro area each year, for a total of 320,000 additional lbs over the two-year grant period.

This would translate to less organic material being put into landfills, lower greenhouse gas emissions through this reduction, increased amounts of food going to hungry and food-insecure Minnesotans, and the establishment of a new framework for food rescue partners to continue reductions into the future.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Engage food pantries and meal programs to successfully accept donations

Activity Budget: \$65,000

Activity Description:

Utilize the time and resources of an Emerging Food Streams Developer to engage food pantries and meal programs to successfully accept donations of prepared foods throughout the duration of this grant period.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Identify a large pool of potential food pantries and meal programs for potential program participation.	2021-09-30
Select and train 12 food pantries and/or meal programs to participate	2021-12-31
Provide monitoring for program compliance and technical assistance/support to participating food shelves/meal programs	2023-06-30

Activity 2: Engage food service businesses to successfully donate prepared foods

Activity Budget: \$65,000

Activity Description:

Utilize the time and resources 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.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Identify a large pool of food-serving businesses for potential program participation.	2021-09-30
Select and train 20 businesses to use MealConnect and prepare food for donation	2021-12-31
Provide monitoring for compliance and technical assistance/support to ensure food safety and successful implementation	2023-06-30

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

Expansion of our prepared food collection and distribution program has been included in our annual program plans for fiscal year 2020, and will be included in plans for 2021, 2022, and 2023. The strategy was identified as priority for our organization after evaluation from the Boston Consulting Group, and has also been identified as having significant potential for expansion by the Feeding America network of food banks. 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.

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Rachel Sosnowchik

Job Title: Public Affairs Coordinator

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

As Public Affairs Coordinator, Rachel Sosnowchik will serve as a liaison between Second Harvest Heartland's subject matter experts conducting food rescue work (such as April Rog, whose expertise is described below) and legislative bodies such as the LLCMR. This is to ensure timely and consistent communication between the organization and LLCMR. She will also be responsible for gathering information and reports due throughout this project's timeline.

As the Director of Food Rescue, April Rog oversees all of Second Harvest Heartland's food recover work. She is experienced in promoting sustainable food systems across sectors. April also has proven success establishing, facilitating, and scaling resilient community partnerships resulting in improved food security, less wasted food, and improved environmental and community outcomes for private and public-sector partners.

Organization: Second Harvest Heartland

Organization Description:

Second Harvest Heartland is one of the nation's largest, most efficient and most innovative hunger relief organizations. Second Harvest Heartland provides an average of 75 percent of all food distributed by its food shelf partners, and in 2019, provided more than 97 million meals to nearly 1,000 food shelves, pantries and other partner programs serving 59 counties in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Second Harvest Heartland leads through innovation, finding efficient, effective solutions to connect the full resources of our community with our hungry neighbors.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Emerging Food Streams Developer		Engage, train, and provide support to food shelves/meal programs and food service businesses participating in Second Harvest Heartland's prepared Food Rescue program.			26%	2		\$130,000
							Sub Total	\$130,000
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								

							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$130,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [07f02c24-af1.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

This infographic provides a one-page overview of SHH's proposed plan, including the opportunity, the plan, and the impact.

Reducing greenhouse gasses by:

Gaining donations of prepared foods from restaurants, hotels, catering companies & related businesses

To prevent food from being disposed in landfills

And help feed hungry Minnesotans

The opportunity:

Each year, food businesses in Minnesota prepare millions of pounds of food to sell to hungry customers. These businesses include restaurants, hotels, catering companies, deli departments at grocery stores, and related types of businesses.

Not all of this food is sold. In fact, large portions are thrown out, to be disposed in our state's landfills. What if businesses could donate their unsold prepared food, so that they wouldn't have to throw it out, and they could feed hungry people instead? Research completed for our food bank indicates that 8 million pounds of prepared foods are available for donation annually in Minnesota.

Our plan:

As a food bank, Second Harvest Heartland is a regional expert in securing vast amounts of donated food. We have well-established processes in place for sourcing donations of shelf-stable foods, fresh produce from farms, and food donated by grocery stores.

Gaining donations of hot and prepared foods, and making arrangements for this food to be given to hungry people in the community, is relatively new for our organization. We recently completed a pilot project with Hyatt hotels. We also implemented a very successful prepared food collection program as part of the 2018 Super Bowl festivities. In addition, the national Feeding America organization (we are 1 of 200 food bank members) has developed best practices in sourcing, handling and distributing prepared food donations. We will leverage this expertise in our proposed project. This project will allow us to bring a prepared food donation program to scale. Grant funds will be used to pay the salary and benefits of a program staff person (Emerging Food Streams Developer). The staff person will secure food donations, and develop partnerships with the donors. The staff person will also assist the agencies that receive the food. The donated food will be transported to nearby food pantries and meal programs so that it can be given to low-income people in need of food assistance.

The impact:

This project will produce the following outcomes:

Reduced organic food waste being placed in Minnesota landfills.

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions because less food waste will be placed in landfills.

160,000 lbs. of prepared food donations secured each year of the grant period.

Increased amounts of food for hungry and food-insecure Minnesotans.

The establishment of a framework for ongoing operations of this program, including forming of new partnerships with 20 prepared food donors and 12 agencies that will give the donated food to their clients.

Financial Capacity

File: [1200eecf-b7d.pdf](#)

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
SHH Board Resolution	2f40bd2f-f7c.pdf

Optional Attachments

Support Letter or Other

Title	File
SHH 2020 Work Plan - Previously Submitted	3549eb03-043.docx

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have patent, royalties, or revenue potential?

No

Does your project include research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No



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Gaining donations of prepared foods

From restaurants, hotels, catering companies & related businesses

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The Opportunity

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