



Food Resources for Families

The Food Security Workgroup has compiled food resources to support families experiencing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Overview

State, local and Tribal governments have changed how they provide food programs in order to ensure that families do not have to put themselves in harm’s way to get healthy food. Access to food assistance programs such as the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) and [Women, Infants and Children Program \(WIC\)](#) has been expanded by simplifying enrollment and waiving in-person requirements. Businesses are also supporting families by offering free meals to youth. These efforts help to ensure that Minnesota children and families have their nutrition needs met during this challenging time.

Food Assistance Programs

Online EBT - Minnesota is now providing online Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) benefits to SNAP participants. [Amazon](#) and [Walmart](#) are the approved USDA vendors, and Amazon is offering free delivery with a minimum order amount. Walmart provides free curbside pickup and delivery services at for a small fee.

[Pandemic EBT \(P-EBT\)](#) - To support families with increased food needs during COVID-19, pandemic EBT benefits are now available. If your child/children receive free or reduced-price school lunches in March



2020, then they are eligible to receive P-EBT food benefits. Additionally, if you have children who receive free or reduced-price school lunch, but your family does not receive SNAP or TA benefits, you still will automatically get P-EBT food benefits for each school-age child in your household. Undocumented families with school-age children are eligible for P-EBT. To receive P-EBT benefits, families must apply by July 31, 2020.

Families with children ages 3-18 as of Sept. 1, 2019, are eligible for P-EBT benefits if:

- They were receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits as of March 18, 2020; or
- Their child was receiving free or reduced-price school meals during the 2019-2020 school year; or
- Their child is enrolled in a school that offers free school meals to all students

SNAP Outreach Specialists - If you need food assistance, Second Harvest Heartland provides SNAP outreach resources and specialists to give you more information about enrolling in, receiving and using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). To learn more about SNAP benefits and how to make informed decisions about buying healthy, nutritious food visit [Second Harvest Heartland's website](#) to connect with a SNAP outreach specialist in your area.

WIC Program - WIC is a [public health nutrition program](#) for low-income women, infants and children up to age five. WIC provides nutrition education and breastfeeding support, supplemental foods, and referrals to other programs and services in the community. To apply for WIC services, call the [WIC Program](#) in your community to schedule an appointment. To find your local WIC program, you can call 1-800-942-4030. The WIC Program continues to offer breastfeeding support and counseling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Breastfeeding is important to protect infant and maternal health, and to reduce health disparities. WIC partners with others to help reduce barriers to breastfeeding and to create systems that assure breastfeeding information and support for all.

Food Shelves & Food Banks

Food shelves are available in communities throughout the state to help individuals and families that have an immediate need for food or are experiencing economic hardships that prevent them from being able to purchase food. Many local food shelves are modifying hours or operations to ensure food can be provided safely. Once you have located a nearby location, call or visit their website to get the most up-to-date information. Visit the Hunger Solutions Minnesota website for a [map to show you locations with free or low-cost meals for kids](#) and a [map with food shelves, discount grocery stores, and other resources](#). Hunger Solutions also operates the Minnesota Food Helpline, which has



staff that can assess your situation and provide solutions that meet your food needs. If you're struggling to afford or access foods, call 1-888-711-1151, use the [chat feature](#), or [fill out this form](#).

Free Meals from Private Partners

The [Free Meals for Kids](#) app, provided by [Hunger Impact Partners](#), is downloadable to your phone or device and is a resource created to raise awareness about free meals that are available to youth under the age of 18. As some school and community meal sites are closed, this application connects kids to healthy free meals in their communities. [Summer Eats MN](#) can also be used to find more than 400 locations across the state that are providing free meals for kids during the pandemic.

Find free meals for children using these resources:

- Download the free **Free Meals for Kids** in the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#) or visit the [Hunger Impact Partners website](#). This mobile app shows Minnesota kids where they can find free meals this summer. Information about the app is also available in [Hmong](#), [Oromo](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#) and [Spanish](#).
- Call the [Minnesota Food HelpLine](#) at 1-888-711-1151 Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Call the **2-1-1 Hotline**, or, from your mobile phone in the Twin Cities metro area, call 651-291-0211. In greater Minnesota, call 1-800-543-7709, or TTY at 651-291-8440.
- After July 6, 2020, families can **text "food" to 877-877** to find the location providing meals near them in English or **text "comida" to 877-877** to receive the information in Spanish.
- Call the **National Hunger Hotline** at 1-866-3-Hungry or 1-877-8-HAMBRE, available from Monday through Friday, 6 a.m.-9 p.m., Central Time.
- After July 6, 2020 families can use the [Summer Meal Site Locator](#) tool released by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. [The Summer Meal Site Locator is also available in Spanish](#).

School & Community Nutrition Programs

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to fill the nutrition gap that can be experienced when children are home during the summer, and to ensure that hunger is not a roadblock to the learning process.

Starting July 1, 2020, Minnesota schools and community organizations transitioned to the traditional United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Summer Food Service Program to provide nutritious, free meals to children under the age of 18. For families who have been depending on school meals to nourish their children during the school year, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) will continue to provide access to healthy meals so students can return in the fall ready to learn.



New this summer, SFSP sites will be able to provide meals for pick-up through August 31. Typically, meals must be consumed at the serving location. Each site will have different pick-up and serving options. However, all sites will meet health guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Minnesota Department of Health.

Use these resources to find a SFSP site near you:

- View the [SFSP Participation Report](#) to find a list of all Summer Food sites.
- To learn more, please visit the [Summer Food Service Program website](#) or contact MDE Food and Nutrition Services (mde.fns@state.mn.us), or call at 651-582-8526 or 1-800-366-8922 (toll-free).
- Text "**Summer Meals**" to 97779. Spanish speakers, text "Verano" to 97779.
- Download the **Summer Eats Minnesota** app to your phone or device.

Farmers to Families Food Box Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is partnering with farmers, ranchers, specialty crop producers, food processors, distributors, and non-profit organizations to ensure that all Americans have access to the nutritious food options they need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the [Farmers to Families Food Box Program](#), families can pick up family-style food boxes containing fresh produce, dairy, and protein from local schools, food banks, faith-based or non-profit organizations in their area who are participating distributors. To learn more, please contact your [local food bank](#).