



EVERY MEAL

FIGHTING CHILD HUNGER

SF2223/HF2546 (Maye Quade/Becker-Finn)

Request

\$4 million in appropriations bonds through the Department of Employment and Economic Development for **building acquisition to operate statewide distribution hub for backpack food programs at elementary, middle, and high schools**

- Full facility cost: \$8 million (approx. 60,000-85,000sft). State investment of \$4 million to be matched with \$4 million in philanthropic funding (\$1 million secured to-date)
- Site to be in the 7-county Twin Cities metro.
- Funding will expand food warehouse footprint, food storage capacity, packaging assembly stations, volunteer experience, offices, and meeting spaces for community engagement.

Who we are

Every Meal is a national leader in backpack programs and one of the largest non-profit programs of its kind in the country. Founded in 2013, Every Meal, located in Roseville, MN, is the primary resource serving the State of Minnesota working to close the meal gap for disadvantaged populations of school children on weekends, holidays, and extended breaks. The organization purchases and delivers backpack meals to children to be consumed when they are not in school. Unfortunately, no federal child nutrition programs such as the Summer Food Service Program/SFSP or the Child and Adult Care Food Program/CACFP are available to them during weekends. The food provided follows the dietary guidelines of the federal child nutrition programs. Every Meal directs resources to high-need school sites including Special Education designated sites.

The Need

There are 701 Pre-K through 12th grade high-need public schools with 174,982 students verified for federal meal supports (free-and reduced-price meals eligible). This population represents 60% children of color and 20% are English Language Learners.

At the start of the 2022-23 school year, there were 543 school sites Pre-K-12 across the state that needed access to weekend and holiday backpack programs. There are also 171 Special Education sites and 26 private schools that serve low-income students.

Every Meal's weekend backpack food program:

- **Feeds 10,212 children and teens per week.**
- **Provides 40,000 meals weekly.**
- **Serves 371 schools and 24 Special Education sites.**
- **Operates in 43 public school districts.**

Every Meal also provides backpacks to Child Care Centers and HeadStart locations who request support. In addition to working with school district partners, Every Meal provides food to other backpack programs who operate independently through local community-based organizations.



Service with Dignity

We know that providing food to children experiencing hunger on weekends and holidays is most efficiently done through backpack food programs. Working with school district leadership, we coordinate volunteers and host organizations to provide hands-on delivery of backpacks to students whose families/guardians opt-in to participate. Volunteers and staff deliver food to the students on Fridays. Every Meal food bags contain 4-5 pounds of nutritious and culturally relevant food items that have been requested by families. Every Meal developed twenty food bag menus and twelve have been culturally tailored to accommodate cultural dietary preferences. Meal bags are available on the last day of school for the extended breaks while supplies last.

Why Every Meal

Every Meal almost entirely philanthropically funded through donations from individuals, families, businesses, faith communities, civic groups, and hunger-relief organizations. Every Meal has 39 employees, five delivery trucks, and operates out of 30,560 sq ft of leased warehouse space. The organization is led by a logistics expert with 15 years of operations expertise, a management team experienced in child nutrition, community outreach, school-based program implementation, finance, and supply chain specialization. The organization is committed to working with people that reflect all communities and actively engage and hire people with backgrounds who understand diverse cultures and lived experiences. Every Meal has a solid balance sheet, seven years of annual audited financials, a committed independent board of directors, nearly 3,000 individual donors, 419 businesses and civil group donors, and 111 faith community donors. We also apply for and receive community, corporate and family foundation grants to support operations and programs.

While there is state funding designated for food shelves and food banks, and federal funding designated for school-based, after-school and summer meal programs, there is no funding at the state or federal level for programs providing weekend food for children in school. Minnesota can lead the nation by supporting a public-private partnership to meet the nutritional needs of school age children who need food on weekends by supporting Every Meal through a capital investment in a facility that will function as the statewide Distribution Hub for a backpack service delivery network. This investment will set the course for long-term sustainability and increase the capacity to serve all school children struggling with food insecurity on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the school year. We stand ready to address this tremendous need with your support through a targeted and well-orchestrated execution strategy to benefit at-risk children and youth in Minnesota.

For more information:

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Additional Data Resource:

Hunger Impact Partners Child Nutrition Index

