



March 20, 2023

Minnesota Senate
Capital Investment Committee
2113 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pappas and Committee Members:

On behalf of the team at Second Harvest Heartland, I recommend inclusion of SF1304 & HF 1265 in any 2023 capital investment package to support Keystone Community Services \$2.6M funding request to renovate and equip a new community food center to support Ramsey County residents with healthy food and household items.

The new community food center proposed by Keystone will bring a much-needed asset to Saint Paul and Ramsey County and will provide more food and crisis resources to more than 50,000 people by 2024. The need for this new center is more urgent than ever as the number of people who need food resources has doubled in the past year due to high food and gas prices and high housing costs. Low-income households are hit harder by inflation when their monthly income does not increase at the same rate as the cost of basic food items like milk, eggs and meat.

Keystone has worked diligently throughout the past two years to gather ideas and input from participants, volunteers and community members to design the new center. Features of the new food center includes a large warehouse area to store and distribute more food and goods on site and for use with their Foodmobile program. The center has a large shopping area for participants as well as a community room for events and space for Resource Navigators to deliver crisis supports. An investment of \$2.6M from the state will be matched by an additional investment of \$8.1M already secured for the project from the City of Saint Paul, community foundations, government grants, businesses, and individual donors.

We look forward to partnering with Keystone Community Services at the new food center to support our neighbors. Please support this request from Keystone Community Services with a onetime investment of \$2.6M to ensure that healthy food resources are available for all in our community who need them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison O'Toole".

Allison O'Toole, Chief Executive Officer
Second Harvest Heartland