



February 18, 2025

Dear Chair Wiklund and the Members of the Health & Human Services Committee:

We write in support of SF 1412 to maintain funding levels for prepared meals food relief grants.

At Greater Twin Cities United Way, our mission is to “unite changemakers, advocate for social good, and develop solutions to address the challenges no one can solve alone.” Together with our partners, we touched over 500,000 lives across the 9-county metro area. As an organization that partners with over 100 nonprofits and coalitions across the metro region and state, we know that access to nutritious and satisfying food can improve outcomes for individuals and families.

We know that not everyone facing hunger has the health, home or ability to use groceries supplied by food shelves and food banks. Parents who work multiple jobs, going to school, and living paycheck to paycheck often lack the time to cook. People experiencing homelessness don't have access to a kitchen. Those living with an illness or disability might struggle to cook on their own.

Since 2021, our statewide 211 helpline has observed a 57% increase in referrals related to food access and security. While this number may not fully capture the community's needs, it does, however, it highlights a growing demand for food assistance and underscore the urgent need for diverse and sustainable solutions, including prepared meals. Additionally, it amplifies the need for targeted resources to ensure individuals and families facing the greatest barriers have access to ready-to-eat food.

Greater Twin Cities United Way supports SF 1412 to maintain funding levels for prepared meals and food relief grants as it removes the barriers to proper nutrition ensuring that individuals and families have consistent access to nutrient-rich, culturally relevant, ready-to-eat food regardless of financial, physical or logistical challenges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephannie L. Lewis".

Stephannie L. Lewis
Associate Vice President, Advocacy & Community Impact
Greater Twin Cities United Way