



February 19, 2025

Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

The Nourish MN Coalition is pleased to offer our collective **support for SF 1412 (Kupec), a bill that appropriates \$5 million annually for a prepared meals grant program which would deliver an estimated 750,000 prepared meals each year to Minnesotans in need.** The prepared meals programs supported by this legislation would benefit Minnesotans who experience both food insecurity and the inability to reliably cook for themselves, whether due to disability, chronic illness, limited mobility, a family crisis, and/or lack of access to a kitchen.

The Nourish MN Coalition is composed of Minnesota nonprofits and community partners who engage in a cross-sector approach to uplift commonsense ideas that reduce poverty, end hunger, increase mobility, and make housing, healthcare, and childcare affordable and accessible for all Minnesotans.

**There is a great need for the ongoing funding for a state prepared meals grant program included in this bill.** The program was funded as a pilot in 2023, receiving \$3.3 million in one-time funds. In total, 33 eligible applicants applied for \$21.6 million in funding, yet only eight organizations received any funding. When this funding disappears in June, many of these organizations will have to scale back or discontinue their programs.

Food banks and food shelves are working around the clock to address the dramatic and unsustainable increase in demand for food assistance, but they cannot do it alone. According to new data, **1 in 5 Minnesota families are experiencing food insecurity, with 15% expressing a need for the prepared meals supported by this bill.**

**Hunger is also a statewide challenge, with food insecurity rates at record highs and virtually identical across the state. Supporting SF 1412 (Kupec) would help provide an effective, tested, and transparent statewide response.** Appropriating ongoing, annual funding for the prepared meals program would help ensure tens of thousands of Minnesotans have the food they need.

The Nourish MN Coalition envisions a Minnesota where everyone has the resources they need to thrive, and where everyone's basic needs are met. This legislation would move us closer to that goal, and it would make a meaningful impact on the people we serve. For that reason, we urge the Committee's support.

Sincerely,

Nourish MN Coalition